



Winning the War, but Missing the Target

by Robert A. Thomas, Ph.D., Director LUCEC

I just ran across a not-so-old headline, "Presidents come and go, but poverty stays" (Times-Picayune, July 7, 1999, A-3). We all know that there are social ills that seem to evade solution. In fact, most social ills seem to live on and on, consuming incredible amounts of good people's time, often creating huge bureaucracies that consume even more of advocates' time. They often, for purposes known to most, perpetuate the exact issues they were supposed to solve.

A while back I had lunch with a friend who is an advocates' advocate. She truly cares for those who are less fortunate, and works tirelessly for their needs. We were discussing the Shintech issue, a situation in Louisiana where a large, multinational polyvinyl chloride (PVC) manufacturing plant wanted to locate along the Mississippi River.

Shintech, a Japanese firm, had focused on land near Convent, Louisiana, which is located about half way between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Why did they choose Convent? Shintech had commissioned a siting study that, among other considerations, specified a home for a very large plant that would be near major transportation corridors (the Mississippi River, Interstate 10, various U.S. highways, plenty of rail), have inexpensive energy costs, adequate open spaces, easily accessible salt (for the critically important brine for chloride), other nearby chemical industries for shared by-products, and a favorable tax climate (Louisiana classically gives new industries ten year tax breaks).

Shintech's announcement of their siting choice in Convent, a principally African-American community, ignited a firestorm of opposition. The environmental and social services community raised allegations of environmental injustice. Citizens were upset because they did not believe that they and their families would qualify for the jobs being discussed by company officials. Other citizens simply did not want another chemical plant in their neighborhood (St. James Parish has 14 chemical plants).

The fight was long and bitter, and ultimately Shintech decided to go elsewhere. In fact, they downsized their plans and

"Shintech" continued on page 6

Not In Their Backyard

by Kelli Ford, Communications Senior

Residents of the small West Texas town of Sierra Blanca were divided throughout much of the nineties. The Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Authority (TLLRWDA) had its sights set on the town as the site of a low-level nuclear waste dump, and the stakes were high. Some of the townspeople welcomed the dump, touting the jobs and money the dump would bring the impoverished town. Others, however, did not feel the risk of contamination to themselves, their families, or their water was worth a few new jobs and the nuclear industry's money. And they believed the TLLRWDA chose their town in Hudspeth County because the area is poor and predominately Hispanic. "Almost a third of the households live below the poverty level of \$15,000. The town's per capita income is approximately \$10,500, but the entire county's is only \$8,000, [and] Hudspeth County is roughly two thirds Hispanic" (Poshman).

The rift went beyond Sierra Blanca, far beyond, and it crossed partisan lines. Politicians fought long, hard battles both opposing the dump and lobbying for the dump in Congress. Federal law requires states to take responsibility for their low-level nuclear waste, and urges cooperation between states. Texas entered a compact with Maine and Vermont, which requires Maine and Vermont to pay Texas \$25 million dollars each to construct the waste site. Texas could then use the dump for its own nuclear wastes as well as—at a governor appointed committee's discretion—accept nuclear wastes from any generator in the country (Blakeslee). The nuclear industry poured money into campaigns and into the community of Sierra Blanca, but before a dump could be built, Texas Natural Resources Commission (TNRCC), a governor appointed committee of three, had to approve the license for the site. Beginning with McMullen County in South Texas in 1987, Sierra Blanca was the third proposed site for the waste dump. The previous two, McMullen and another site in Hudspeth County were both denied approval through legislative or judicial rulings (Gold, July 7, 1998). Then Texas Governor George Bush was a key lobbyist in Washington in the fight to pass the proposed compact with Maine and Vermont without any amendments restricting additional states from

using the Texas dump (de la Garza, 1998).

The proposed dump would hold 1.8 million cubic feet of low-level radioactive waste. Low-level nuclear waste dumps contain wastes from medical facilities and universities, but "most of it would come from nuclear power plants" (Gold, 1998). "According to industry estimates, about eighty-five percent of low-level waste—measured by radioactivity—comes from power plants, and the... 'low-level' waste stream—as Texas's own waste authority has conceded—actually includes some of the most deadly isotopes known, such as iodine-129, nickel-59, and plutonium-23, with hazardous lives measured in the hundreds or thousands of millennia" (Blakeslee). Supporters of the site say the dump is safe and the wastes will be stored safely in underground containers.

Supporters, such as one-time Hudspeth county Judge Billy Love, who placed a half page ad in the Texas capital paper "Austin American-Statesman" in support of the dump, believe the benefits by far outweigh the risk. The town received, from the state of Texas and the nuclear industry, a new medical clinic, a library, two new fire trucks, and a refurbished football field. "The county's take (if the TNRCC licensed the dump) would be a minimum of \$1 million per year" (Nuke dump splits, July 15, 1996). In an impoverished town, the dump would also provide at least thirty jobs if licensed (Nuke dump splits, July 15, 1996). Supporters, such as Hudspeth County Judge James Peace, believe the dump is in a safe area although opponents claim the site lies over a fault line, making the area prone to earthquakes, and over a water supplying aquifer. "There is no threat of an earthquake. There has not been one here in more than 750,000 years. This is a good project based on sound science with great economic benefit for our community" (Montes, July 23, 1998).

Dump opponents have very different ideas concerning the dump's safety. According to a July 7, 1998 article in San Antonio Express-News, "The site is on the Rio Grande Rift, the most earthquake-prone region of Texas. A tremor of magnitude 5.7 struck in Valentine, about one hundred miles away from the proposed dump in 1995." Many believe that the state and the nuclear industry tried to "buy off" and "strong arm" the residents of Sierra Blanca *"Sierra Blanca" continued on page 5*

“Covering the Environmental Beat” High School Workshop Begun

In Winter 2000, LUCEC launched its High School Environmental Journalism Workshop entitled, “Covering the Environmental Beat.” There is currently a lack of environmental reporting on the High School level in Louisiana. To combat this, High School students were invited to the workshop and introduced to basic environmental writing techniques, sources of information, interviewing scientists, and environmental issues relevant to life in Louisiana.

The workshop was sponsored by LUCEC and hosted by Loyola University New Orleans. LUCEC staff coordinated the event with help from Service Learners from Tulane University.

The day began with instruction by Glynn Wilson, Professor of Communications, Loyola University New



Professor Glynn Wilson, Loyola University New Orleans, helps Michael Tuckerson, Jesuit High, edit a story.

Orleans, on the basics of environmental reporting. He discussed objectivity in journalism, developing sources and the inverted style of writing versus the narrative news feature. Dr. Bob Thomas, Director, LUCEC, taught the importance of research and expert sources and how to interview scientists.

A mock news conference gave the students the opportunity to use the skills they had learned. Staff members represented developers, community members, scientists, and Army Corps members in the exercise. Students were then given a deadline and told to write a story resulting from the press conference. These stories were edited by members of the Loyola Maroon and Loyola Faculty.

Interested in attending? Contact us at lucec@loyno.edu for more information.

Visitors from Abroad



Portuguese Journalists attended a “Wetlands Workshop” hosted by LUCEC to learn the implications of coastal erosion and what is being done to combat it. (L-R) Ricardo Garcia, *Publico*, Paulo Chitas, *Visão*, Rita Siza, *Publico*, António Marques, *R.T.P.*, and José Pedro Frazão, *Radio Renascença* are shown on top of the flotant marsh. Their visit was sponsored by LUSO-American Foundaion, Lisboa.

2000 Institute of Environmental Communications Fellows Named

The Center for Environmental Communications is pleased to announce that the following people have completed the 2000 Institute of Environmental Communications (IEC) and have been designated fellows.

IEC brings together a diverse group of citizens (environmentalists, scientists, journalists, industrialists, Brown Field Community people, politicians, government employees, teachers, business persons, and the like) for 14 evening sessions to discuss issues of vital environmental importance to the region and nation.

1. **Renee E. Allie**, Executive Director, The Green Project, New Orleans
2. **Lyonel Bailey**, Environmental Project Compliance Specialist, DynMcDermott, Inc., Metairie
3. **Lea Campbell**, Baton Rouge Community College
4. **McChord Carrico**, Resident Managing Partner, Milling Benson Woodward L.L.P., Mandeville
5. **Jason Cuevas**, Americas External Affairs, Mirant Corp., Atlanta, GA
6. **Doug Daigle**, Hypoxia Program Director, Mississippi River Basin Alliance, New Orleans
7. **Elizabeth Davey**, Environmental Affairs Coordinator, Tulane University

8. **Vickie Duffour**, Environmental Specialist, Coastal Engineering & Environmental Consultants, Inc., Westwego
9. **Lynn Dupont**, Environmental Planner, Regional Planning Commission, New Orleans
10. **Suzanne Hawes**, Manager of the Environment, US Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans
11. **Sally Hayes**, Greater New Orleans Foundation, New Orleans
12. **Michael Hollis**, Benefits Consultant, Hollis Companies
13. **Dr. James Johnston**, Chief, Spatial (Habitat) Analysis US Geological Survey, National Wetlands Research Center
14. **Dr. David Lesley**, Biology Teacher, St. Martin's Episcopal School, Metairie
15. **Rodney Littleton**, Deputy Director/Environmental Affairs Coordinator, Mayor's Office of Environmental Affairs, New Orleans
16. **John Lopez**, St. Tammany & At-Large Director, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, Slidell
17. **Michael Lyons**, Manager, Environmental Affairs, Mid-Continental Oil & Gas Association, Baton Rouge
18. **Kirk Menard**, Manager, Safety, Health, and Environment, Motiva Enterprises, Norco

19. **Jeff Moore**, Public Affairs Representative, Chevron Chemical, New Orleans
20. **Dr. Chidi Onyenekwu**, Associate Professor of Environmental Engineering Technology, Delgado Community College
21. **Ann Lundelius Pettit**, Environmental Committee Chair, League of Women Voters, New Orleans
22. **Kathy K. Russo**, Industrial Development & Research Coordinator, Jefferson Parish Department of Environmental Affairs, Metairie
23. **Dr. Joseph Sejud**, Medical Director, Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, New Orleans
24. **Beverly Smiley**, Executive Director, Solutions through Science, Baton Rouge
25. **Jim Stone**, Environmental Specialist, Department of Environmental Quality
26. **Sheila Stroup**, Metro Page Columnist, Times-Picayune, Mandeville
27. **Linda Mather Walker**, President, League of Women Voters, New Orleans
28. **Micah Walker**, Interpretive Naturalist, Louisiana Nature Center, New Orleans
29. **Glynn Wilson**, Assistant Professor, Loyola University, New Orleans
30. **Jan Windhorst**, Former Instructor of Broadcast Journalism, Loyola University, New Orleans

Economic Value of the Coast

The following is the keynote speech given by R. King Milling, President of Whitney National Bank, at the Governor's Coastal Summit 2001. It expresses the urgency for every citizen of the United States to be aware of the ramifications of the impending loss of coastal Louisiana. The Summit, themed "Reaching To The Future," was sponsored by the Governor's Office of Coastal Activities and was held at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge on August 15, 2001.

I first want to extend my most sincere thanks to Mike Foster and his executive staff for having the foresight to convene his summit. Until today, the overriding question has been, "when can we begin to develop a true consensus as to how to take the blueprint laid out within the four corners of Coast 2050: and turn it into a work in process?" I believe the question has now been answered.

In making this observation, I do not wish to suggest that the efforts undertaken since the publication of Coast 2050: have note achieved some remarkable successes. Indeed, much of what has been accomplished has proven that if appropriately motivated, financed, and directed, Louisiana and the United States can in fact reestablish a sustainable coastline.

Having said that, however, once we get beyond the conceptual reconstruction of coastal Louisiana and begin an analysis of, not if, but how it must be accomplished, the challenges and obstacles magnify in number. As is always the case, the devil is in the details. At the end of the day, however, they too have to be confronted for the coastline must be redeveloped and to do so Louisiana must be prepared to implement and adopt an unwavering commitment to this end. Hopefully, this summit shall result in the formation of the cornerstone of that commitment.

There have been two almost ephemeral impediments to our ability to achieve the necessary consensus in the past. The first I believe is that the restoration of coastal Louisiana in a sense requires the implementation of a different mindset, a different mental discipline, a discipline which in large measure runs counter to normal political cycles of 2, 4, and 6 years. The implementation necessarily means that decisions made today may only become a reality in 10 to 20 years in the future, and many of those decisions, whether we like it or not, may conflict with existing political pressures and potentially will be contra to historical turf ownership. In short, some decisions made to meet the long-term objective of coastline stability may be construed to have adverse political consequences in the short term. I suggest to you that this point is perfectly illustrated by the recent oyster damage decision issued by the District Court in Plaquemines Parish. If there were ever a case where Louisiana should have anticipated that result and acted many years ago to protect the greater

interest of this state, I cannot imagine. We failed to do so. That failure resulted from our lack of resolve to make difficult long-term decisions.

The second impediment is the reality that the scope of the ultimate solution appears on its face to be so immense as to be beyond our rational grasp. For at the end of the day we face a \$15 to \$20 billion project funded primarily by the federal government, which, among other things, requires fundamental change in federal water policy—a systematic massive reintroduction of the Mississippi River on to its delta. This effort will take extensive preparation and analysis, critical communication and total cooperation among government and quasi-governmental agencies at both the state and federal level.

The question then must be asked, "How do we transcend those impediments? How do we get beyond their presence?" he simple answer is—we have no choice. There is no doubt that unless Louisiana's coastline is reestablished and stabilized, the state of Louisiana and this nation will face a crisis of untold cost and expense to its culture, business, commerce and population. We can no longer delude ourselves with the thought that someone else will take on these challenges. It is in our hands alone to assume that mantle of leadership.

What is the nature of the crisis? On its face, we shall lose a portion of the state over the next 40 to 50 years equivalent in size to the state of Rhode Island. (No one dares to contemplate what happens thereafter.) I have often wondered if a similar set of circumstances were to face Maryland, New Jersey, Massachusetts, or Virginia, how much urging would be required to garner support from Washington. But, quite frankly, we cannot whine. We have neither the time nor luxury to feel sorry for ourselves.

We, as a state, must force a consensus which will translate into a nationwide sense of urgency. A telling story needs to unfold. The true cost of failing to act, in terms of dollars, commercial impact and cultural values, must be developed and documented. For the loss of geography only begins to define the problem. That it shall be an ecological disaster is clear—an ecosystem contributing 30% of the total commercial fishing harvested in the lower 48 states will be decimated. Entire related industries will disappear. Our petroleum industry will be greatly impacted. Oil and gas

platforms and facilities, including pipelines, originally designed predicated upon the inherent protection from the forces of the Gulf of Mexico afforded by 40 miles of marsh, will have to be either rebuilt or totally replaced—let's not even speculate as to the likelihood of extensive related environmental catastrophes.

But these results are only the tip of the iceberg. The negative impact upon our local industrial and municipal infrastructure will be even greater and have longer lasting consequences. As our coastline recedes and our industrial and municipal infrastructure becomes more vulnerable to these changes, their value will be threatened. I suggest that you only consider the factor of insurability. As the Gulf of Mexico encroached ever closer on the industrial and urban boundaries of South Louisiana, the insurability of infrastructure will be called into question. From a purely financial standpoint, that increased exposure will either make the cost of operation potentially noncompetitive, or if deemed uninsurable, totally non-commercial as being unable to support even a modicum of financial leverage.

Consider also the threat to existing communities built over many years on the banks of our bayous and rivers. In the past these communities have survived hurricanes and high water through the natural protection afforded by 40 to 50 miles of swamp or marsh, enhanced in some cases by the construction of levee systems. The loss of our coastline will place those communities at risk. I ask the question, "What will be the cost of extensive and ongoing levee construction, or worse, will we at the end be forced to abandon entire communities, municipal infra-structures and related businesses and industries as the only way to achieve cost synergies?"

The financial consequences of failing to address this issue are not limited to South Louisiana. The State's revenue shall diminish through the cessation of industrial activities, the shrinkage of municipalities and communities, and the erosion of a taxable land. The Federal Government's revenue streams will likewise be impacted as the Corps of Engineers, FEMA and the EPA, among others, diligently work to offset the effects of gradual erosion. The rest of the country will also be impacted as navigation becomes more difficult and expensive, and oil and natural gas become more costly and less predictable. The economic and commercial linkage between the adverse consequences which will unfold in Louisiana and their impact upon the economy in the rest of the country cannot be minimized. From farming in the Midwest, to the needs of the industrial East, to energy consumption in the West, South Louisiana's natural resources play a significant role.

Finally, I suggest for just one brief moment that you focus on the changes which "Milling" continued on next page

Milling

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will occur to the culture, diversity, history, and the idiosyncratic lifestyle that is a part of South Louisiana. While it may be difficult to quantify that impact, while those costs may also be considered ephemeral, I would suggest to you that the loss of such a rich culture would be unacceptable in any other portion of this country.

There are those who might suggest that I am guilty of hyperbole, that these prognostications are overstated. I suggest to you that the contrary is true. The true cost to this state and to this country by failing to take actions necessary to reintroduce the Mississippi River on its natural delta as to create a natural infrastructure from the growing threat from a receding coastline, will be absolutely staggering. Those projected costs are being analyzed today—they must be quantified for it is clear that the only way to provide a rational case for the up-front expense of \$15 billion is to analyze the need for that expenditure against the sum total of the potential cost of failing to act.

What must we as a state do then to direct our attention to this devastating reality? It is fair to observe today that those concerned with this issue are few and far between. In the past we have had a tendency to go to meetings attended by a relatively small group of individuals where we preach to each other. This must change.

With the support and direction of our Governor, we are now hopefully in a position where we can begin to work towards the solution. We must establish the organizational structure with the appropriate personnel, expertise, mandate, and system of accountability to organize a campaign. We must identify the stakeholders and begin the process of educating them about the consequences facing their state and the Union. They must be called upon to join in the effort of solidifying the consensus. Who are they? Landowners, port administrators, oil, gas and pipeline companies, utilities, communities that are truly threatened, taxing districts, insurance companies, financial institutions, and any other business or individual who would be financially and directly harmed.

National stakeholders, some of whom, such as the Corps of Engineers, are already directly involved, must also be brought into the picture, as well as numerous powerful environmental interests. Each of these groups, to the extent not already at the table, must be invited. Undoubtedly there will be differences of opinion regarding the manner and approach, some of which will not be appreciated, but without the support of all of these individuals and groups working together it is probable that we cannot succeed.

Of greater importance, I would suggest that our political representatives in Washington and Baton Rouge have not been forced to confront these long-term problems and the long-term solution. It is imperative that we solidify the direction of all of our representatives so that they will march to the beat of the same drum. The efforts to date of our congressional representatives have been remarkable in that they have fought for greater income and capital to offset the damage that oil and gas activity has done to this state. There is no doubt that we as a state have borne a significant and under-appreciated burden. These efforts expended by our Senators and House Representatives, however, do not address the issue of the holistic reestablishment of coastal Louisiana.

It is time for them to focus on this issue, for only with their support can we commence the process of engaging the rest of the nation. At present we are not taken seriously by the rest of this nation and while there may be many reasons for that, including our colorful political history, our alleged laissez-faire attitude, and an other real or imagined characteristic and idiosyncrasy, the fact remains that if we are to solve this problem we must find a way to grab the attention of our national leaders and the national government.

We have the opportunity, beginning as of today, to change our methodology. We must begin to reorganize and establish a process by which issues and methods of resolution can be appropriately vetted, answered, discarded or adopted. We must create a telling story designed to engage and capture the imagination. We should look where necessary to other examples of similar activities in various parts of this country—Florida, Chesapeake Bay, the Pacific Northwest—to determine whether there are lessons which might be learned and which could be utilized here.

The fact remains, however, that until Louisiana is prepared to assume the risk of ridicule, and possibly the risk of failure, by forcefully presenting a picture which shows the scope of the economic and ecological loss we shall face, this problem will not be resolved. It is time that we invoke the interest of a significantly larger audience; that we begin daily to focus on the size and scope of this looming problem; that we recognize that we are in a tunnel, we see the light, and it is in fact a train moving in our direction. I don't know necessarily how to accomplish any of this from an engineering standpoint, but as of this day we must go about the business of creating a structure which will allow us to give maximum unfettered attention to these larger, albeit challenging issues.

LUCEC at Home



(L-R) René Salmon, Tulane University, Babu Bangaru, Shell Oil Company, and Lisa Boe, LUCEC, relax after loading Christmas trees which are used to slow coastal erosion.

LUCEC Abroad



Students from Dr. Robert Thomas' class entitled "Tropical Ecology" explore the Belizean Rainforest

Visitor from Abroad



Dr. Robert A. Thomas, Director, LUCEC, and Yu Suhua, Full Professor, Institute of Technology Economic & Energy System Analysis (ITEESA), Tsinghua University Beijing, China. Suhua came to LUCEC to discuss her specialties which include: Economic & Energy System Analysis, Geographical Information System, Tarim Basin Desertification and Water Management, and Environment Studies.

Sierra Blanca

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Blanca. One science teacher, who refused to lead students on TLLRWDA-funded field trips to nuclear power plants, was fired by the superintendent—a dump supporter (Boren, January 30, 1998). Further, many believe that the area was chosen because the area is poor and mostly Hispanic:

Opponents of the Sierra Blanca dump, a diverse coalition that includes local residents, statewide environmentalists groups, and Mexican officials, have filed a Title VI civil rights complaint. It alleges that the state—frustrated after years of fruitless searching for a suitable site—deliberately targeted a minority population to minimize political opposition to the site. The TLLRWDA commissioned a study back in 1984 as part of its effort to locate its radioactive dumpsite. Authors of the study recommend targeting special populations such as “Hispanics, particularly those with little formal education, lest they turn against the dump like everyone else.” (Blakeslee)

“Lee Mathews, general counsel for the TLLRWDA, the entity charged with selecting the disposal site since the early 1980’s, called the racism charge the ‘least meritorious of all the arguments’... (and) characterized it as ‘fashionable.’ Mathews said Sierra Blanca was selected partly because the area has little rainfall, a small population, and because the groundwater beneath the proposed site is about six hundred feet deep” (de la Garza, October 19, 1998).

Mexico was also particularly concerned with the proposed dump. Sierra Blanca lies just sixteen miles from the Mexican border. Mexico believed the dump would violate the La Paz Agreement of 1983. La Paz “prohibits environmentally risky projects within one hundred kilometers on either side of the U.S./Mexico border” (Staff, vol. 18, issue 09). Several members of the Mexican federal congress traveled to Austin and staged protests and a hunger strike the week prior to the TNRCC’s vote on the dump’s future in Sierra Blanca (Staff, vol. 18, issue 09).

On October 22, 1998, TNRCC surprised many by voting unanimously to reject the waste dump’s license in Sierra Blanca citing concerns of safety and socioeconomic impact (Poshman). The TNRCC is a Bush appointed committee that follows Bush’s recommendations, and Bush had been a big supporter of the Maine/Texas/Vermont compact. Many look toward political motives for Bush’s apparent about-face. The incumbent governor was up for reelection three weeks after the committee’s decision. Many also believe that Bush was already eyeing the 2000 presidential race (Staff, vol. 18, issue 09).

In April 1999, the Texas House of Representatives tried again:

A piece of legislation that would allow counties to store low-level radioactive waste in secured vaults above ground was approved.... Any county showing interest in housing a dump would have to hold a nonbinding referendum to show voters are not against it. It would then need approval from the local county commission. Counties bordering the Texas/Mexico border would be excluded. (Castillo, April 8, 1999)

The search goes on.

MEDIA ANALYSIS

The media covered this issue as expected. The more liberal papers such as “Austin Chronicle,” and especially “Texas Observer” and “Salt for Slugs” were very critical of the proposed dump. Rarely did these papers ever present the dump supporters’ or nuclear industry’s side of the battle. Some information I only found in the more “left” papers. I only included the information presented in this paper if I found it presented in at least two publications. The “Austin American-Statesman” was more middle of the road, although generally a much more “right” oriented paper as well as a Bush endorser. The people and the emotions involved would prevent almost any publication—mainstream publication that is—from being overly critical of dump opponents and activists. Environmental racism speaks loudly. “The San Antonio Express-News” was initially very critical of the dump. It even reported: “Tuesday’s recommendation (Austin Judges recommended that the TNRCC reject the license) came a week after a “San Antonio Express-News” series on the proposed dump reported the existence of the controversial fault” (Gold, July 7, 1998). After the dump’s license was rejected; however, the paper’s reporting seemed less harsh, and presented more pros than cons in Texas’ need for a nuclear dump facility. “The Express-News” carried a great deal of coverage on the issue, perhaps due to a large Hispanic population in San Antonio. Perhaps the best, most unbiased and complete coverage came from a paper, surprisingly, not even in the state of Texas. The “Chicago Tribune’s” article contained a lengthy coverage of the dump proponents and opponents. It gave me a good idea of the facts associated with the issue as well as opinions of residents. Maybe, a paper with substantial distance from an issue must cover the topic more thoroughly. The “Tribune” cannot take for granted that any of their readers are already associated with the issue, and heated subjects affect our personal biases more if they are near us. The proposed Sierra Blanca dump was not in their backyard.

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Shintech

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partnered with Dow Chemical in Plaquemine, a town up river from Convent.

Environmentalists claimed victory, and the business community interpreted the move as a sound business decision due to other sets of issues.

Things began to settle down in Convent as activists directed their attention to Plaquemine. Time passed.

During lunch, I asked my friend if she was pleased with the Shintech victory. She said everyone felt good about saving Convent citizens from having to deal with the plant. I asked if she had been back to Convent and she said, "No." I asked if she thought anyone in Convent could now read and write who

couldn't before the controversy. She said she doubted it. "Do any have jobs that didn't before?" She said, "No."

My next question was obvious - "Who won?" We agreed that victory was not complete.

Mind you, I was not picking on my friend. I had not been back either. After all is said and done, we usually do the human thing. We work hard on issues that are important to us, and then we return to our normal lives, consequently we often fail to provide for those in need what we originally set out to do.

Until we overcome this crack in our armor, we will continue to obliterate the target while missing the bull's eye. Our society will not advance, as it should.

Visitors from Abroad

A delegation from Nigeria attended a workshop at LUCEC to discuss industry's responsibility to its neighbors. The program was facilitated by Strategic Management Services, USA.

(Back L-R) Lee Gary, Chidi Onyenekwu, O.B. Moro, S.D. Yusuf, U.K.Ndanusa, G.E.Nwachukwu, (Front L-R) Uto Iheukwumere, Dr. Robert Thomas, Buchi Sibeudu



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Center for Environmental Communications
Loyola University New Orleans
6363 St. Charles Avenue, Box 199
New Orleans, Louisiana 70118-6195
<http://www.loyno.edu/lucec>
lucec@loyno.edu

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Robert A. Thomas
Production Editor:
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ENVIRO*Decisions* is a
periodic newsletter
published by the Loyola
University New Orleans
Center for Environmental
Communications.

