

## Plans under way for a Cook Inlet harbor safety committee

The first informational meeting for a Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee held in Kenai on November 12, drew a large number of representatives of Cook Inlet's maritime community, industry, interested stakeholder groups, and local, state and federal government officials, and Cook Inlet RCAC. Since the Cook Inlet Maritime Risk Assessment was an important foundation for the meeting, the agenda began with a detailed overview of the Cook Inlet Risk Assessment (CIRA) presented by Tim Robertson, representing the CIRA project management team. Creating a harbor safety committee was a priority risk reduction option that grew out of the risk assessment as one means to reduce the risks of spills in Cook Inlet waters.

U.S. Coast Guard Captain Paul Mehler, Lt. Eugene Chung, and Lt. Will Albright, all explained various aspects on establishing harbor safety committees and emphasized that the committee is not a federal or state-run organization, but is owned by the committee. Membership is typically comprised of voting and non-voting members who are representatives of governmental agencies, maritime labor, industry organizations, and public interest groups working together for the mutual benefit of all port users. An example of an organizational structure includes full membership, a managing board with expertise, ad hoc committees, and subcommittees. Examples of potential subcommittees could include ice guidelines, Cook Inlet risk assessment implementation, tug and barge, LNG, resource development, and other maritime issues. They emphasized, however, that organizational structure is open to interpretation and can be developed to suit the needs of a particular region.

Harbor safety committees have been successfully implemented throughout the United States and have become an excellent avenue to share best practices and lessons learned from previous incidents through national annual conferences. Harbor safety committees are not another regulatory body, but are, rather, a vehicle for industry, public, state and federal agencies to come up with non-regulatory solutions.

The U.S. Coast Guard will be publicizing a web link to inform the public of next steps in organizing the Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee. We will highlight the web address on our home page at [www.circac.org](http://www.circac.org) once it becomes available. For more information about the Cook Inlet risk assessment, click [here](#).



Capt. Paul Mehler addresses the audience at the informational meeting at the Kenai Convention & Visitors Center (Rombach).