

TUSCALOOSA COUNTY LEPC OFFICIALLY RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The Tuscaloosa County Local Emergency Planning Committee has been designated as the best Medium Size Population LEPC in the nation by the Chemical Education Foundation (CEF).

The CEF is located in Alexandria, VA and conducts an annual LEPC competition for three population designations and presents the awards to winners at its annual convention. Recent Past Tuscaloosa County LEPC Chairman Dwight Wood (right) was presented the award by CEF Managing Director John



Rice at the organization's annual awards breakfast in Orlando, FL.

Rice noted that CEF is "proud to reward the hard work and dedication of LEPCs that make our communities safer. Too often their work is taken for granted or overlooked," he added.

Tuscaloosa County Emergency Management Agency Director Ron Hampel says the Tuscaloosa County LEPC deserves the recognition. "These men and women represent a broad cross section of Tuscaloosa County and have worked diligently to make this community safer and increase the public's knowledge about all hazards safety."

Local Emergency Planning Committees are mandated by Congress to promote chemical and other hazards safety, document hazardous materials threats to the community and receive pertinent information from local businesses and industry that produce, store or use hazardous materials. Membership is comprised of representatives from business, industry, media, government and public interest groups.

Judges for the 2004 awards included Paul Little of Rohm and Haas Co., Philadelphia; Steve Mason from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Dallas; Janet Wilmouth from Fire Chief Magazine,

Chicago; Janet Moylan from the AIG Environmental Division of AIG Insurance, Columbia, MD; and J.J. Adame from the Nueces County.

Since 1992, the Chemical Educational Foundation has been serving the allied chemical industry and the public by promoting chemical safety and the protection of the environment. The Foundation's educational programs foster product stewardship awareness throughout the chemical supply chain and product life cycle.

Winners in the other two categories are Deer Park LEPC in Deer Park, TX — under 50,001; and Ingham County LEPC in Lansing, MI — 250,001 and above. Runner-up for the 50,000 and under category is the Lewis/Upshur LEPC in Buchanan, WV. Others are: Greene County LEPC in Springfield, MO, and Sauk County LEPC in Baraboo, WI — 50,001 to 250,000; and Tampa Bay LEPC in Tampa, FL, and North Central Florida LEPC in Gainesville, FL — 250,001 and above.

Among the Tuscaloosa County LEPC activities that contributed to the Best in the Nation for Mid-Sized Populations award was sponsorship of a statewide LEPC/EMA Workshop for emergency managers and first responders, sponsorship of a full-scale hazardous material exercise, development of a Spanish language all-hazards safety awareness brochure and development of an LEPC web link.
