

**Free Speed-Seminar – Federal Communicators Network
Communications Lessons Learned from TWA Flight 800
*A Case Study and Planning Model***

When: March 18 (Tuesday), 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Where: Government Printing Office

732 North Capitol St. NW, Washington, DC

(Two blocks from Union Station Metro at the corner of N. Capitol and H Streets)

A free continental breakfast will be served at 8:30, compliments of the IABC (International Association of Business Communicators) and ACE (the Association for Communication Excellence). Please register using the link below.

8:30 - Continental Breakfast

9:00 - 11:30 Seminar

When TWA Flight 800 - en route from JFK Airport to Paris - exploded off Long Island in July 1996, many people thought it was the result of a terrorist attack. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) managed rescue and recovery efforts while investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and the FBI initiated parallel investigations into the causes of the crash. This was the first major incident where the perception of a terrorist attack overrode all communications plans. Nearly 12 years later, investigators, researchers, and communication experts are still discussing and debating the actions, results and findings of this incident, and we are still learning important lessons from the management - and mismanagement - of this tragedy. Concern for the surviving families and a plan for communicating with them in a crisis was developed by law from this incident.

Join us for a lively presentation and discussion of Communications Lessons Learned from TWA Flight 800. Our speakers will include: **Judy Tenney**, instructor of crisis communication at the University of Maryland and American University; **Ted Lopatkiewicz**, Director of Public Affairs for NTSB; and **Capt. Jim McPherson**, Chief of Public Affairs for the USCG.

Learn how to develop a crisis communications plan, how to manage communications during the crisis (who, what, when, where and how), and how to get your organization through the post-crisis recovery period.

Registration, Logistics, Breakfast:

Please use this [link](#) to register. After registering, you will be directed to a map showing the location of the event.

What's a Speed-Seminar?

Many federal communicators have little time for continuing education. In response, the **Federal Communicators Network** is hosting a series of free Speed-Seminars this year. Go to the seminar first thing in the morning, learn the latest, and still get to work before lunch.

Questions? Contact Jeffrey Brooke at Jbrooke@gpo.gov.

Speaker Biographies

Judith B. Tenney

Lecturer, Department of Communication, University of Maryland
Adjunct Instructor, American University
Project Manager, NASA Strategy and Performance Team (Retired)

For over 35 years, Mrs. Tenney has combined a career in the Federal service with a second career teaching college-level courses in organizational and interpersonal communication and public speaking. Her Federal career included 10 years service as Director of Employee Development and Training for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, two years as Director of Training and Outplacement for the Peace Corps, and, most recently, four years as project leader for managing and producing the Strategic Plan, Annual Performance and Accountability Report, and Annual Performance Plan for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Mrs. Tenney also spent two years detailed from NASA to the Vice President's National Partnership for Reinventing Government Communication Team where she served as managing editor of the Vice President's online ezine, *REGO*, and participated in developing the Federal government's Plain English Guidelines.

Mrs. Tenney retired from the Federal service in April 2007 and now teaches college full-time. She has developed and/or revised a number of communication courses and currently teaches courses in Nonverbal Communication, Crisis Communication, Communication and Strategic Planning, Communication in Complex Organizations, and Speech Writing. She also is continuing her role with the Federal Communicators Network as guest speaker and seminar director.

Ted Lopatkiewicz

Director, Public Affairs
National Transportation Safety Board

Ted Lopatkiewicz has been a press officer for the Federal Government for 34 years, the last 22 of which have been at the National Transportation Safety Board. Among the other Federal agencies at which he has worked are the Civil Aeronautics Board and the Department of Transportation.

Mr. Lopatkiewicz assumed the post of Deputy Director of Public Affairs in February 1997, and was named Director in 2002. He has been a press officer on 51 Go-Teams for the Board, including two USAir takeoff accidents at LaGuardia Airport; the crash landing of a DC-10 in Sioux City, Iowa; two train collisions in Boston's Back Bay Station; a runway collision in Los Angeles; a runaway school bus in Palm Springs, California; the crash of an FAA aircraft in Virginia; the Amtrak derailment in Mobile, Alabama; the ATR crash at Roselawn, Indiana; the crash of a commuter plane in Monroe County, Michigan; a transit bus accident in St. Louis; a cruise ship fire in Miami; the loss of John F. Kennedy, Jr.'s plane; the crash of EgyptAir flight 990; the crash of Alaska Airlines flight 261; the collision of an American nuclear submarine with a Japanese fishing vessel; the crash of an Airbus A-300 in Belle Harbor, New York, and the Staten Island ferry accident. He has also been a press officer for almost 30 Safety Board public hearings.

He is a graduate of the University of Virginia.

Capt. Jim McPherson

Chief, Public Affairs
US Coast Guard

Captain James McPherson assumed the duties as Chief, Office of Public Affairs at Coast Guard Headquarters on February 2007. He is responsible for directing the Coast Guard's public affairs program Service-wide. In addition to establishing service-wide media policy he is in charge of developing and executing crisis communication strategies for incidents of national significance.

Captain James McPherson returned to Washington after completing duty as Chief, Office of Law Enforcement, First Coast Guard District in Boston in July 2005. He was also the Commanding Officer of the USCGC ESCANABA homeported in Boston. Other seagoing duties include service as the Executive Officer aboard the Coast Guard Cutter SENECA in Boston, MA. In addition to assuming command of USCGC ESCANABA, he has been the Commanding Officer of two patrol boats- USCGC POINT KNOLL in New London, CT. in 1985 and USCGC MAUI in Miami Beach, FL in 1989.

Captain McPherson earned a bachelor's degree from the US Coast Guard Academy in New London, CT in 1983. He received a master's degree in mass communications from Florida International University in North Miami Beach, FL in 1993. After completing studies at FIU, he attended the Public Affairs Officers Course at the Defense Information School at Fort Benjamin Harrison in Indianapolis, IN, earning recognition as an Honor Graduate.

Captain McPherson's recent public affairs deployments include assignment as Press Secretary to the Principal Federal Official in charge of federal recovery efforts in the Gulf Region following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. As a public affairs officer, he handled numerous national media events including being the lead spokesman for the Coast Guard response to the crash of TWA FLT 800 off New York in 1996. During that same tour of duty, Captain McPherson was the Coast Guard Representative to the US National Joint Information Bureau, Operation Joint Endeavor, in Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In addition, he assisted the Commander, Coast Guard Group Woods Hole in the federal response to the 1999 plane crash off Martha's Vineyard carrying JFK Jr, his wife and sister-in-law. At Coast Guard Headquarters, Captain McPherson was Chief of Media & official spokesperson for search and rescue policy issues concerning the federal response to the air crashes of Air Egypt off Nantucket Sound and Air Alaska off San Diego in 2000. Captain McPherson helped established the Joint Information Center in Lufkin, TX following the loss of Space Shuttle Colombia. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, Captain McPherson established the CG Public Affairs Detachment at the Pentagon.

Captain McPherson's decorations include five Meritorious Service Medals, four Coast Guard Commendation Medals, Joint Service Achievement Medal, and two Coast Guard Achievement Medals. His other awards include the Coast Guard recognition for excellence in the public affairs program. He has earned three Alex Haley Awards for overall excellence in managing a public affairs office and two Commander Jim Simpson Awards for best media relations program. In March 2001, Captain McPherson was honored as Florida International University, School of Journalism, and Mass Communication's Alumni of the Year.