UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Interview of: REX VADER

Crowne Plaza Hotel Edmonton, Alberta Canada

Wednesday, February 1, 2012

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: MATTHEW NICHOLSON Investigator-in-Charge

APPEARANCES:

MATTHEW NICHOLSON, Investigator-in-Charge Office of Railroad, Pipeline, and Hazardous Materials Investigations National Transportation Safety Board



BARRY STRAUCH, Ph.D. Supervisory Investigator National Transportation Safety Board

KAREN BUTLER, Supervisor Accident Investigations PHMSA

JAY JOHNSON, Supervisor U.S. Compliance Enbridge Pipelines

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1	<u>INTERVIEW</u>
2	MR. NICHOLSON: This is NTSB Pipeline Case Number DCA-
3	10-MP-007, Enbridge Energy, July 2010 crude oil release in
4	Marshall, Michigan. These are the Human Factors Group interviews
5	being conducted at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Edmonton, Alberta,
6	Canada. Today is Wednesday, February 1st, 2012.
7	This interview is being recorded for transcription at a
8	later date. Copies of the transcripts will be provided to the
9	parties and the witness for review once completed.
10	For the record, Rex, please state your full name, with
11	spelling, employer name, and job title.
12	MR. VADER: Rex Lyncoln Vader, R-E-X, L-Y-N-C-O-L-N, V-
13	A-D-E-R. I'm an operator number 3 in Enbridge's control center.
14	I'm running at the moment the Clearbrook terminal in the United
15	States.
16	MR. NICHOLSON: And for the record please provide a
17	business contact phone number and e-mail address.
18	MR. VADER:
19	believe it is. I don't e-mail myself often.
20	MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. All right. Rex, you're allowed
21	to have one other person of your choice present during this
22	interview. This other person may be an attorney, friend, family
23	member, coworker or no one at all. If you would, please indicate
24	for the record whom you've chosen to be present with you during
25	this interview.

1	MR	VADER:	NΟ	one.
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2	MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. We'll go around the room now,
3	have each person introduce themselves. For the record, my name is
4	Matthew Nicholson, M-A-T-T-H-E-W, N-I-C-H-O-L-S-O-N. I'm the NTSB
5	IIC. My phone number is My e-mail address is
6	
7	MR. JOHNSON: Jay Johnson, Enbridge, Supervisor of U.S.
8	Compliance,
9	MS. BUTLER: Karen Butler, K-A-R-E-N, B-U-T-L-E-R. I
10	work for PHMSA .
11	PHMSA is the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety
12	Administration. I can be reached at
13	and I'm the Accident Supervisor of Accident
14	Investigations for the region.
15	DR. STRAUCH: And I'm Barry Strauch with the National
16	Transportation Safety Board headquarters in Washington, D.C., B-A-
17	R-R-Y, S-T-R-A-U-C-H. My e-mail is and my phone
18	is land the second s
19	MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. These are human factors
20	interviews, so I think we'll start with Barry and continue.
21	DR. STRAUCH: Okay.
22	INTERVIEW OF REX VADER
23	BY DR. STRAUCH:
24	Q. Rex, can you walk us through your background from the
25	time you finished school till the present?

1 When I left school I worked -- the first job I had would Α. 2 have been working at a hospital. I repaired hospital equipment. 3 From there I went to work on the drilling rigs and started 4 roughnecking on the rigs and ended up being a tool push which is a 5 rig manager. I was supervisor over 12 men, moving drilling rigs 6 -- drilling the holes, bringing them into production, that kind of 7 stuff. Of course, the oil business in the '80s went down the tubes there and I moved on, went back to school and went 8 9 apprentice plumbing for a while and ended up at Enbridge and I've 10 been there for 26 years as of March 31st this year.

11 Q. So 26 years, if I do the math correctly, it means you 12 started in 1980 --

13 A. '86.

14 Q. And what have your positions been at Enbridge since 15 then?

A. I started out as a pipeline -- in pipeline maintenance as a repair -- repairing pipelines and putting in loops and stuff, and then I went to the Edmonton terminal as a gauger and worked myself up into being an operator, and then now I'm in the control room as an operator number 3.

21 Q. Okay. When did you become an operator?

A. I was a step-up operator in the late '90s and in 2000 I became an operator in Enbridge's downtown facility.

24 Q. And what's operator number 3 mean?

25 A. That's the highest you can go.

1 Q. So it was around 2000 when you became an operator at the 2 control center?

A. Yes. I was hired -- I confirmed the field -- in the field I was a step-up operator, so I only got to operator when people were on holidays because I had to wait for somebody to quit or retire.

Q. What kind of changes have you seen since you became anoperator, changes in the control room, since 2000?

9 Α. Well, first of all, we remoted, right, so that was a big step from everybody being on the satellite terminals and running 10 things to bringing it all in. And it actually went guite well and 11 12 I was actually quite impressed at how it all worked, and the nice 13 part was having everybody in the same room. Communication-wise it 14 was good. So that was good because now instead of having to phone 15 somebody or send a message through teletype or field messaging you 16 just stood up and talked to them, so that worked really well.

I think the efficiency has gotten better in the system because of that, the remoting. We may have lost a little bit of -- how do I put it, people with a lot of expertise that were older and with the company for a lot of years because they didn't move into the control rooms. They -- a lot of them retired or just stayed where they were at, right, so we've hired a lot of new people in -- you know, since I started there.

Q. And what's been the affect of the loss of experienced people and the hires of the new people in that time, how has that

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1 affected things in the control center?

2 Α. Well, to be honest with you, it's ran well. I feel 3 myself that the loss of experience is kind of like having a --4 making a tape of a tape. Every time you train somebody you lose a 5 little bit and you train -- that person trains another person and 6 you lose a little bit. That's my feeling. I think experience is 7 a great thing to have, and we do have some experienced people still in the control room with 20-some years and over 10 years 8 9 experience, so --

10 Q. Okay. What about the quality of the supervision, how 11 has that changed in that time?

A. Well, it's become an upside down pyramid. There's been a lot more supervisors than what I've ever seen in my life, and to me, I gather that's the way industry goes, middle management. They've gotten younger, I guess, maybe out of school, hire educations, stuff like that. Did you say guality?

17 Q. Yes.

A. Well, I'm old school. I like the older guys because I think they've seen a lot. So my feeling is we've got some people that know their stuff, but they haven't seen everything that I've seen or other people have seen, and I think experience is a big thing myself.

Q. So how would you characterize right now the experience level in the control room of the operators and the supervisors at the time of the accident?

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1 A. Young, young operators, young supervisors, and I've 2 never been possibly in the situation they were in.

3 Q. What effect, if any, did this have on the outcome of the 4 incident in line 6B?

I would look at it -- through my eyes I would look at it 5 Α. 6 and say that possibly the decision-making was not done with the 7 thought process or the experience of thinking that there could be a greater problem. Now I've -- not to say that the guys weren't 8 9 experienced enough to know because I don't run pipelines, I run 10 terminals, the pressures, looking at everything that's happened on the pipeline. I just think that old guard sometimes has its 11 12 purpose.

Q. Okay. Did you have any sense that people may have been under more pressure to start a line than to stop a line from operating?

A. I think that junior employees that have just become operators would have a feeling of trying to make the supervisors happy, and, yeah, they would possible have that feeling.

Q. Did you see any change in that independent of an operator's experience in the time you've been there, a change in pressure, let's say, for now people to continue operating a line? A. It's better now.

Q. Since the accident? How was it before the accident?
A. I think there was more pressure to run before the
accident. That's my feeling.

1 Where do you think this pressure came from? Q. 2 I think -- how would I put that in words? I think it Α. 3 would be more so from trying to prove something. As a supervisor 4 that -- or shift leads, you know, we did so much throughput. We 5 did so much -- everything ran. We did a bang up job. That's my 6 opinion, but -- and I've seen it before in the oil patch and the 7 drilling rigs, but that's sidetracking. But no, that's just my opinion, but --8 9 Ο. So you think it came from the shift leads? 10 Α. Partially. What other -- what would be the other sources? 11 Q. 12 Well, there must be people above them, but, you know, I Α. 13 have no idea what they talk about. I'm not in those 14 conversations. At the time of the accident were you working any of the 15 Ο. 16 shifts? 17 The day of the accident? Α. 18 Yeah, because it was actually two days, the 25th and Ο. 19 26th. Yeah, I wasn't involved. No, I came later after it was 20 Α. 21 over. Okay. Did you work on any of the shifts with Tim Chubb 22 Q. and Ghazal Derhami? 23 24 Α. Yes, I have. I work directly with them because I do a 25 lot of line 4, deliveries and injections, and I've done so much

1 that I could do it with my eyes closed. Let's put it that way, 2 so --

Q. Okay. How would you describe Tim Chubb as an operator? A. He was still on a learning curve and very conscious of what he was doing, but also wanted to please, so he might have been a little naïve.

7 Q. Naïve in what respect?

A. Believing that what he was told by his supervisors to 9 start the line up or something like that, he did it because they 10 told him to. You know, that might have been maybe not to his best 11 judgment himself.

12

Q. And how would you characterize Ghazal?

13 I like Ghazal. She's a nice girl. And she was still on Α. 14 They didn't have a lot of a learning curve as an operator, too. 15 time under their belt, either one, and she was doing okay. Tim was, I would say, a smoother operator pipeline-wise. If I had to 16 17 pick of the two to spend the shift with I would have picked Tim 18 because he was smoother. He was not sold, looking, jumping at 19 little conclusions so far on things happening, where I watch the pressures. I watch everything that's happening when I do stuff 20 21 right, so I know what's going on. I know if a valve's opening, if 22 it isn't, and I always have an escape route. But yeah, they're 23 both good people. I like them.

Q. But they were both relatively inexperienced is what you're saying? The words you used were on learning curves.

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A. Well, yeah, because, you know, they've only been there a few years and as far as I'm concerned an operator with one or two years is still well on a learning curve as far as I'm concerned.

4 Q. How long does it take before someone is no longer on a 5 cleaning curve?

6

A. Well, some people are faster than others, right?

7 Q. Right.

You know, we have some young fellow there, Shane Gummell 8 Α. 9 (ph.) or Greq Poulin (ph.), who have been there for less than 10 years that are fantastic operators. 10 Shane started the line back up, and they just have more of a knack. You know, some people 11 pick up on stuff faster. So to me 2, 3 years and they start to 12 13 feel -- to get a little more comfortable, and I start to, you 14 know, not question things and, you know, look at the stuff they 15 send me and whatever.

16 Q. Was it common to pair two relatively inexperienced 17 people together in the control room?

A. It happens. It happens, yeah, because of a shortage of people, yeah, a shortage of -- like right now what do we have? We've got -- you know, the percentage of the new people in the control room is unreal. Yeah, it is.

Q. What would you say the percentage is of new people right now?

A. Well, less than 10 years there's go to be 50 percent in there probably.

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Q. Okay. Well, how do you think this affected their working relationship, Ghazal and Tim, in that they were both on learning curves?

4 Α. Well, I would put it this way. If you were new at a job 5 and your boss told you what to do, you would jump in with both 6 feet, and that's what happens when you're new and you're on a 7 learning curve. You trust the people that are above you because they've been put into those positions because they are supposed to 8 9 be knowledgeable into those positions and make the right decisions 10 for you and what's going on, so they both would have had to basically trust what they were told, right? 11

12 Q. Um-hum.

13 A. And it's up to them. We're always told that it's up to 14 us to say no if we don't feel something is safe.

Q. But with somebody new that may not have been the case? A. They may have been afraid. They may have been afraid to lose their job or who knows, you know. You never know what goes on in people's minds, right?

19 Q. How well did they get along, Ghazal and Tim?

A. I don't think that was -- I think they got along. I don't think too bad, not that I know of. I know that Ghazal, you know, had some feelings of people not getting along with her, but I can't remember which ones, you know, which people it was. I got along fine with her. I didn't think Tim and her got along too bad. I may be wrong, though.

Q. Why do you think Ghazal would have felt that some people didn't get along with her?

A. Just some of the, you know, things that she said when she was working there, that she felt pressured and stuff like that.

Q. In your position and observing things in the control7 room do you feel her feelings were justified?

8 A. At times, yes.

9 Q. What would have caused that, what would have caused 10 people to treat her that way?

A. My feeling would be if I was to sit back and look at the situation, which I have done, and maybe I'm talking too much here, but just looking at it I think it was because of her performance as an operator trying to please the supervisory staff and get her performance where they wanted it at. That was my feeling.

16 Q. Wouldn't they have taken into account the fact that she 17 was relatively inexperienced?

18 A. I would hope they would have done that, yes.

19 Q. Why do you think they didn't?

20 A. I don't know.

21 Q. Were other women treated the same way as Ghazal?

A. None that comes to -- that I could say any names of, like being female or anything at Enbridge never has been -- I think has ever been an issue. We have some fantastic female operators and some -- you know, some really sharp girls there

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1 doing really great jobs that I work with on a daily basis. No. I 2 think that -- no, I really don't think so. I think it was more 3 just performance.

4 Ο. You said -- you were talking about the shift leads and 5 commenting on their relative inexperience. You know, during the 6 time that you have been serving as a controller Enbridge made a 7 deliberate attempt to provide their shift leads with supervisory training and managerial trainings and the attempt was made to 8 9 refocus shift leads' interpersonal skills. Did you witness any 10 change in the outcome of these efforts, you know, the quality of the supervision that you experienced at Enbridge? 11

12 Α. Well, I took a management course myself when I worked on 13 the rigs because they sent me to it, and I came out of there 14 knowing that if you gain respect from your employees they will 15 work harder for you and do a better job than if you slam your fist 16 on the table and yell at them. Not all people should be 17 supervisors obviously, and some did and some didn't, I guess. And 18 maybe I'm just old and I look at things differently, but I know how I treat people and I've been down the road of training people. 19 A lot of people I've trained for Enbridge. And I've been a boss 20 21 myself, and I know yelling and screaming didn't get my anywhere 22 when I first started out as a young fellow, and I know how I'd handle the situations, but some did and some didn't I would say. 23 24 Ο. So is it fair to say you have seen supervisors yell and 25 scream at people?

1	Α.	Yes.
2	Q.	Some supervisors more than others?
3	Α.	Yes.
4	Q.	Were any of these supervisors on duty during the
5	accident?	
6	Α.	No.
7	Q.	If I asked you to name the supervisors would you do
8	that?	
9	Α.	Aaron Zimmel and Darin Parsons.
10	Q.	Yes. Do they yell and scream at people?
11	Α.	No. They were decent guys.
12	Q.	Allister Ewing?
13	Α.	Are we going to go through all of them?
14	Q.	We might.
15	Α.	Well, I've seen him get a little heated.
16	Q.	Okay. Bob Donald?
17	Α.	Bob Donald is one of the fairest guys you'll ever meet
18	in your l	ife and the only time he gets excited is if the young
19	fellows g	et out of hand and he straightens them out because it's a
20	professio	nal place and that's the way it should be, is a
21	professio	nal place, so no, Bob's a good guy.
22	Q.	Brad Ashcroft?
23	Α.	One of the best supervisors you've got in the room
24	probably,	very easy to talk to, easy to approach, and he evaluates
25	what you	say, and no.

1 Q. Kelly Saprovich (ph.)?

2 A. Good guy.

3 Q. Randy Andruachuk (ph.)?

A. Has changed. He was one of the more aggressive. We'll 5 put it that way.

6 Q. Curt Goeson?

7 A. He's our supervisor now.

8 Q. Yes.

9 A. He's writing down stuff over there that might go right 10 over to him.

MR. JOHNSON: If you don't want to answer that's fine. I understand. I mean if I need to leave the room I'll leave the I room. I don't have a problem with that.

14 MR. NICHOLSON: Do we need to go off the record here 15 or --

16 MS. BUTLER: And you can do both, you can ask him to 17 leave the room and go off the record.

18 MR. NICHOLSON: Why don't we go off the record here. Is 19 there something you need -- do you need to send Jay out? Is there 20 something we want to talk about here?

21 MR. VADER: I'm just -- yeah, let's go off the record 22 for a minute.

23 MR. NICHOLSON: We're off the record now.

24 (Off the record.)

25 (On the record.)

1

MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. Back on the record.

2 DR. STRAUCH: Yeah. I just have a few more questions. 3 We're back on the record?

4 MR. NICHOLSON: Yes, we're back on the record, Barry. 5 BY DR. STRAUCH:

Q. Okay. Yes, Barry Strauch. Were you interviewed at all
by Enbridge as part of their internal investigation of this
accident?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Okay. Were you aware of anybody who asked to change 11 their pod mates in the control room?

A. That has happened. I wouldn't say pod mates, just change shifts so they didn't have to work with certain people, ves.

15 Q. And their response was favorable when a request was made 16 like that?

A. It was just -- yeah, they didn't -- sometimes it didn't happen that I seen, so --

19 Q. What didn't happen?

20 A. They didn't change.

21 Q. So was -- were people changed or -- and people not 22 changed? It just depends or --

A. The only one that I was involved in was a fellow asked to change with me and I said I would do it. It was up to the shift leads to make that decision, the supervisors, and their

1 decision was that that person could get along where he was at.

2 Q. Do you know why they made that decision?

3 A. No.

Q. Are you aware of any other experiences like that or is5 this the only one?

- 6 A. That was the only one.
- 7 Q. Okay. I have no more questions at this time.
- 8 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. Karen?

9 MS. BUTLER: I've got a question.

10 BY MS. BUTLER:

Q. You kind of alluded to a statement, and I can't repeat it back to you, but Ghazal may have had a desire to please. You were talking about taking what her supervisors talked to her about and trying to improve or trying to make adjustments.

A. Well, I'll put it this way. If you're new in the work force and you've got a mortgage or you've got bills and it's your job, yeah, you're trying to please your supervisors, so, you know, she was trying hard to do her best.

19 Q. So you didn't see her respond in a way with trying --

20 A. Oh, yes.

21 Q. -- to address anything that was --

22 A. Oh, yes. She was trying hard, yes.

Q. Okay. And because you have so much experience I'm going to take it as an opportunity to ask you a bigger question, and that is do you believe that there's anything that needs change in

1 this control room to make it safer?

A. I would like to see more of the old guard or more mature people in power. That's my feeling and I -- I'm not an expert.

4 I'll tell you that right now.

5 Q. So when you say more mature, does that also translate in 6 your mind to more experienced?

7 A. More experienced, yes.

Q. Okay. So more experienced on the consoles or the9 terminals at your desks?

10 A. Supervision.

11 Q. Okay.

A. More so supervision. They're going to have a hard time getting experienced people on the pods because of the shortage of labor nowadays and this problem, so probably all over.

15 Q. Okay. And --

A. It's probably like North Dakota is right now. It'scrazy there, too.

Q. So having seen what you saw with Ghazal and possibly being more experienced and possibly more mature it sounds like you've trained a lot of people in your life. What would you do different if you could take the goings on, I guess, and maybe make a control room, that fit in the control room?

A. Some people take longer times to train than others,
number one. Number two is people train differently. Some people
don't get it one way. You have to look at a different approach.

1 I've trained people that have done things that made me laugh and people that were so smart that it just amazed me that they would 2 3 pick up on things before you even told them. For me, calmness and patience is a big factor because you can't have a nervous person 4 5 who is afraid that they're going to make a mistake because now 6 they're not focusing totally on what they're doing. So to me the person has to be comfortable, number one, not thrown into the 7 position too early, and confident in themselves and confident in 8 9 the people -- and comfortable with the people who are supervising 10 them.

So do you think they can become afraid or that change, 11 Q. 12 how you respond or you don't respond in a calm way, based on the 13 console you're asked to operate or based on the supervision you're 14 given or the training that you're given? Is it all those factors? 15 Α. It could be all of those factors. If you're not ready to do the job and you're thrown into it, yes, you would be 16 17 nervous, and if a person that's training you has a limited time on 18 that console they haven't seen everything also, yeah. So like I 19 said earlier on, it's like making recordings from a tape. Every time you do it you lose a little bit. And over the years you see 20 21 a lot of stuff and you can relate that with the experience more so 22 than this is the way I was trained and this is the way -- when 23 somebody asks you why, you say I don't know, but this is the way 24 we do it.

25

Q. Okay. I believe that Barry asked you a question about

supervisors and if they had yelled at somebody, and he went
 through some names and he mentioned Randy's name and you said he's
 changed. Does that mean since the accident or Marshall or --

A. Since for sure.

5 Okay. All right. And have you ever had an opportunity Ο. 6 to -- say somebody tells you that they were going to go in and 7 talk to management about something that was bothering them or went into management and they came back and said I'll never do that 8 9 again, has anything like that ever occurred that you can recall? 10 Well, you've got to remember you've got to take a grain Α. of salt with what people tell you, you know --11

12 Q. Right.

A. -- because you ain't going to always get the truth. I think sometimes that the people that would come out and say that have possibly had a problem before they went in there that -that's the question that I really -- it's jilted.

17 Q. Okay.

A. I think it's jilted because I -- you know, unless I sat in on the meeting then I would just be a third party on something like that.

Q. Okay, more than fair, your response. So have you ever
seen anybody come out of management's office and they were crying?
A. Not directly.

Q. Okay. So I take it you've been told about that when you said not directly?

A. Well, I know that there has been people that cried,
 2 yes --

3 Q. Okay. All right. That's all I have.

A. -- but I'm a guy.

5 Q. Okay, fair enough.

6 MR. NICHOLSON: Jay?

7 MR. JOHNSON: No questions.

8 MR. NICHOLSON: Barry?

9 BY DR. STRAUCH:

Q. The people that cried, how would you characterize them?
 You said you were a guy.

A. Well, let's put it this way. My oldest brother who's 65 this year says to me you're either on the ball or on the bus, and if you're going to go up there to do the job you might as well do your best and become as high up in there as you can be. I would say that those people were feminine, females, and possibly felt overwhelmed.

18 Q. How do you think they were treated by whoever they saw, 19 whose office they left crying?

A. One of them was treated all right as far as I know, and the other lady that you guys talked about, it would just be hearsay if I said anything about that.

23 Q. So it would just be --

A. Hearsay. Like I would just be gossiping. That's all it would be, so I'd rather not repeat anything that's gossip because

1 it's, you know --

2 Okay. Did you observe any instances of people in the Ο. 3 control room being treated unfairly by supervisors?

4 Α. By unfairly what do you mean?

5 Ο. Whatever was said or done to them was undeserved or 6 other people who had done the same thing were treated differently. 7

Α. I can say that happened.

What do you think would cause the unequal treatment? 8 Q. 9 Α. I think it's a thing that happens in the world. It's the way the person might look or the way the person -- their 10 personality or maybe you've been outspoken and angered that 11 12 person.

13 Was there something about people who were outspoken at Q. 14 Enbridge that --

15 Α. If I answered that it would be my own personal feeling. 16 Q. Please.

17 I feel that some supervisors, yes, if you're outspoken Α. 18 you would become a pain to them or whatever. But then again you 19 can be too outspoken and be a pain if you know what I mean. I think you have your right to voice your opinion on stuff, but 20 21 you've got to know when to let it go because your supervisors don't have time to argue with you 24/7 on an old issue or 22 23 something. If it's a really important thing then you have the 24 right to talk to them and if you don't get what you want you have 25 the right to go above them.

1 Q. Okay. DR. STRAUCH: Karen? MS. BUTLER: I think that that's it. That's all I have. Thank you. MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. At this point I guess we'll conclude the interview. Thank you so much, Rex. (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: ENBRIDGE - LINE 6B RUPTURE IN MARSHALL, MICHIGAN Interview of Rex Vader

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-10-MP-007

PLACE: Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

DATE: February 1, 2012

was held according to the record, and that this is the original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed to the best of my skill and ability.

> Cheryl L. Phipps Transcriber