

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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ALABAMA GAS CORPORATION (ALAGASCO) \*

NATURAL GAS RELEASE WITH IGNITION \* Docket No.: DCA-14-MP-001

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA \*

DECEMBER 17, 2013 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: RANDALL DONALDSON

Alagasco Headquarters  
Birmingham, Alabama

Tuesday,  
July 15, 2014

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: MATTHEW NICHOLSON  
Investigator-in-Charge

## APPEARANCES:

MATTHEW NICHOLSON, Investigator-in-Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, D.C. 20594

RAVI CHHATRE, Accident Investigator  
Pipeline Division  
National Transportation Safety Board

BOB GARDNER, Director, Quality Assurance and Compliance  
Alabama Gas Corporation (Alagasco)  
(Party Representative)

KEITH BLACKWOOD, Pipeline Safety Investigator  
Alabama Public Service Commission

WALLACE JONES, Administrator of Gas Pipeline Safety  
Alabama Public Service Commission

REID CARPENTER, Esq.  
(Representative on behalf of Mr. Donaldson)

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I N T E R V I E W

MR. NICHOLSON: Good afternoon. Today is Tuesday, July 15, 2014. My name is Matthew Nicholson. I am an investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board in Washington, D.C. We are at the Alagasco headquarters in Birmingham, Alabama. This interview is being conducted as far as the investigation into the natural gas distribution release and ignition that occurred in Gate City, Birmingham, Alabama, on December 17, 2013. This is case number DCA-14-MP-001.

This interview is being recorded and may be transcribed at a later date. A copy of the transcript will be provided to the interviewee for review prior to being entered into the public docket.

Mr. Donaldson, you are permitted to have one other person present during the interview. This is a person of your choice: supervisor, friend, family member, or no one at all. Please state for the record who you have selected.

MR. DONALDSON: I have selected Reid Carpenter with the law firm of Lightfoot & Franklin.

MR. NICHOLSON: We'll now go around the room and have each person introduce themselves. Please state your name, with spelling, your title and the agency or organization you are representing. I will start and we'll proceed to my left.

My name is Matthew Nicholson -- spelled M-A-T-T-H-E-W, N-I-C-H-O-L-S-O-N. I'm an investigator with the NTSB.

1           MR. CHHATRE: Ravi Chhatre. It's R-A-V-I; last name  
2 Chhatre, C-H-H-A-T-R-E. I'm an accident investigator in Pipeline  
3 Division, NTSB.

4           MR. CARPENTER: Reid Carpenter, R-E-I-D, C-A-R-P-E-N-T-  
5 E-R, and I'm here with -- for Randy Donaldson.

6           MR. DONALDSON: I'm Randall Donaldson -- R-A-N-D-A-L-L;  
7 Donaldson, D-O-N-A-L-D-S-O-N -- with Alagasco. I'm the manager of  
8 technical training, and reference Randy instead of Randall,  
9 please.

10          MR. BLACKWOOD: I'm Keith Blackwood, K-E-I-T-H,  
11 B-L-A-C-K-W-O-O-D. I'm a pipeline safety investigator with  
12 Alabama Public Service Commission.

13          MR. JONES: Wallace Jones, W-A-L-L-A-C-E, J-O-N-E-S.  
14 I'm Administrator of Gas Pipeline Safety for the Alabama Public  
15 Service Commission.

16          MR. GARDNER: Bob Gardner -- G-A-R-D-N-E-R -- Director  
17 of Quality Assurance and Compliance, Alagasco, and party  
18 representative.

19          MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. All right.

20                       INTERVIEW OF RANDY DONALDSON

21          BY MR. NICHOLSON:

22          Q. Randy, well, to begin with, I think we'd like to gather  
23 some background information from you. If you could just maybe  
24 just walk us through when you started with Alagasco and some of  
25 the positions you've held and bring us current?

1           A.    I started with Alagasco in April of 1977, when I was in  
2 college and had a nighttime job answering the phone. I moved  
3 shortly, thereafter, to a dispatch position in operations. I  
4 stayed there until 1986. I moved to human resources in 1986. I  
5 moved through numerous positions within human resources that had  
6 to do with labor relations, compensation, insurance benefits,  
7 employment, EEO, employee relations.

8                   Left that role in 2007 and moved into the position of  
9 manager, western operations, where I had responsibility for  
10 western Birmingham area. Moved from that role to my current  
11 position of manager of technical training in October of 2011.

12           Q.    And you're currently manager of technical training. Can  
13 you just describe for us what that job entails, what you oversee?

14           A.    My group is responsible for the technical training needs  
15 of the organization. The field employees, that includes different  
16 training programs, whether they're apprenticeships or formalized  
17 training. Operator qualification also comes under my area.

18           Q.    Okay. So that means what? You come up with curriculum  
19 that these technicians require --

20           A.    Yes.

21           Q.    -- to be qualified?

22           A.    For instance, a journeyman position requires a 24-month  
23 apprenticeship. We have a documented program where they are  
24 assessed for both skills and communications, different things of  
25 that nature during the 24-month; there are assessments associated

1 with that. And then at the end of that there are company  
2 assessments and state certifications that they have to master  
3 before they are released in the field to work on their own.

4 Q. Okay. And by field technicians, we're talking about --  
5 we've seen corrosion technicians. Would that be part of that?

6 A. Let me give you an example. Roughly half of our  
7 employees are bargaining unit positions.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And those would be things like construction crewmen,  
10 construction journeymen, construction apprentices, service  
11 journeymen, distribution mechanics. The corrosion technicians are  
12 not covered under those positions. As such, they really don't  
13 come under the purvey of my area, but we may do some things to  
14 help or coordinate training with them if we're requested. But we  
15 do monitor their operator qualifications to make sure that those  
16 needs are met.

17 Q. You do?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. For corrosion technicians?

20 A. For operator qualification.

21 Q. Although they're not bargaining unit?

22 A. Correct. Operator qualification for all jobs within the  
23 organization that fall under DOT-192, specific technical training  
24 is primarily for the bargaining unit positions within the  
25 organization.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Does that help?

3 Q. A little bit. Okay, so corrosion -- so, you handle the  
4 OQ program for the corrosion technicians. What about leak survey  
5 crew, do you manage -- because we understand that you oversee the  
6 OQ requirements of the third party or the --

7 A. Right. Contractor leak survey?

8 Q. Right.

9 A. We do oversee the necessary qualifications for all  
10 contract employees, whether it be something like the leak survey  
11 or pipeline contractor.

12 Q. Okay. Well, how do you do that? How do you make sure  
13 these guys are qualified? What do you -- is it a paperwork  
14 exercise or --

15 A. It's part of the bid process. When somebody expresses  
16 an interest to do business with us, they're given a packet of  
17 information that includes what our requirements are. One of those  
18 is operator qualification. With that, if someone moves forward in  
19 the process, we would look at their operator qualification plan,  
20 cross-match that to our plan and come up with a recommendation for  
21 what their crews would need to do the work.

22 Q. Okay. So Alagasco has their own qualification plan?

23 A. Well, I mean, we have our own operator qualification  
24 plan --

25 Q. Okay.



1           A.    -- which Wallace's folks audit annually.

2           Q.    Right.

3           A.    Yes.

4           Q.    And you compare them -- oh, and you're just making sure  
5 that Southern Cross has a plan that's compatible --

6           A.    We would expect -- yes. We would expect any third-party  
7 contractor to have an operator qualification plan prior --

8           Q.    Sure.

9           A.    -- to entering into an agreement to do business with us.  
10 Then we would ask to review that plan and -- you know, we would  
11 give them a list of here is what we expect leak survey individuals  
12 to have as part of operator qualification, and work with them --  
13 because MEA, the Midwest Energy Association; Energy World Net, and  
14 several other groups give -- whether they're online classes or  
15 CBTs, whatever, and we just need to make sure that we're talking  
16 apples and apples instead of you qualify on this, we qualify on  
17 that. So we do our due diligence at that point to ensure they  
18 match.

19          Q.    Terrific. How often do you review those qualifications?

20          A.    Well, if it is a contractual period, it would be  
21 associated with the contract. We expect them -- we update our OQ  
22 plan annually. We expect them to let us know of any updates or  
23 changes to their plans.

24          Q.    Okay. What if they change out employees? Then is  
25 that --

1       A.   Well, under -- their obligation to us in the contract is  
2   to notify us when employees change and to provide us with those --  
3   with the appropriate documentation for that employee prior to them  
4   coming to work on our jobs.

5       Q.   Okay.  So it's incumbent on them to notify you?

6       A.   Um-hum.

7       Q.   Okay.  Okay.

8           MR. NICHOLSON:  Ravi, you want to --

9           MR. CHHATRE:  Yeah.

10          BY MR. CHHATRE:

11       Q.   So you're saying your corrosion technicians are not the  
12   people that you controlling them for training and operator  
13   qualifications?

14       A.   Under operator qualifications, yes.  Under general  
15   training like the NACE certifications and those that are  
16   corrosion-trinsic (ph.) that does not come under my area.

17       Q.   So how do you develop the operator qualifications then,  
18   if you are not involved --

19       A.   I'm responsible for operator qualifications for everyone  
20   in the organization.

21       Q.   I understand that.  But how do you develop for NACE to  
22   come for the corrosion technicians?  What do you -- how do develop  
23   your OQ document for them?

24       A.   Well, we have specific -- and I'm not really familiar  
25   with NACE, so --

1 Q. No, whatever. I mean, I thought that you said you  
2 develop the operator qualification --

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. -- requirement for your corrosion technician. What I'm  
5 asking is since you are involved in the training, how do you  
6 develop that OQ program?

7 A. I don't know what you mean by --

8 Q. Develop.

9 A. Develop. Okay. I'm sorry. I didn't understand you.

10 Q. No, that's okay. No problem.

11 A. What we do is get a group of subject matter experts from  
12 within the organization to talk about operator qualification plan,  
13 how things have changed within the industry. We try to monitor  
14 any changes in 192. We also attend industry-related meetings, and  
15 there may be PHMSA speakers there. Some of Wallace's folks might  
16 be there to talk about changes that are up there to make sure  
17 those things are included in our plan.

18 We use Energy World Net as our learning management  
19 system, OQ provider, however how you want to say that. And they  
20 have courses that are developed through there and we will take  
21 this and match needs based on what our people do in the field and  
22 develop a task list for that job.

23 Now, you know, B31Q is -- a lot of buzz going on in the  
24 industry trying to get it to be accepted on a nationwide basis.  
25 We do use some of the B31Q components in looking at it, but that's

1 not our sole force. We just try to match what the employees  
2 actually do on the job every day to ensure that their OQ  
3 qualifications match tasks that they perform.

4 Q. And who will be your subject matter experts for  
5 corrosive technicians?

6 A. Well, it would be -- for instance, the people that work  
7 in the area, the supervisors in that area -- if you look at the  
8 one that it has been, is Milton Chandler, who has recently  
9 retired. So going forward, we look -- when we revamp, we look at  
10 other people who currently work in that area that are considered  
11 our most knowledgeable to help us bring it up to speed the next  
12 time we do it.

13 Q. Yeah, I thought there are no corrosion engineers. I was  
14 told there are no -- particularly, corrosion engineers in the  
15 company. And the only people who deal with corrosion are the  
16 corrosion technicians. So --

17 A. To my knowledge, that's correct.

18 Q. And so, if corrosion technicians are the ones you are  
19 developing OQ, then who would be the subject matter experts?  
20 Supervisors, or whoever, is not really knowledgeable in corrosion.  
21 So I have a disconnect in my mind as to how to connect those two.  
22 So who --

23 MR. GARDNER: Excuse me. The supervisor -- in the case  
24 of Milton Chandler, now as current supervisor, they have -- each  
25 of those gentlemen have been corrosion technicians in the past.

1 It is the corrosion supervisors today and the one prior, again  
2 Mr. Chandler, they were both formerly corrosion technicians.

3 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

4 MR. GARDNER: So they do have knowledge about the work  
5 of a corrosion technician. They're not a generic supervisor.  
6 They have -- they are former corrosion technicians.

7 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. All right. Somebody had to start  
8 being a qualified corrosion technician, and somebody had to accept  
9 them under OQ as being the corrosion technician. So, granted,  
10 these people became corrosion technicians and they were corrosion  
11 technicians. But how were they --

12 MR. GARDNER: Well, they have NACE certifications.

13 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. So you are saying NACE has --

14 MR. GARDNER: And within their job descriptions, there  
15 are requirements for both work experience and certifications. So  
16 along the way to advance from one step to --

17 MR. CHHATRE: I understand.

18 MR. DONALDSON: Well, and there are -- there used to be  
19 levels within that job based on the certifications that they had.  
20 I've been away from that for a while.

21 BY MR. CHHATRE:

22 Q. And what kind of training are the -- correct my  
23 terminology if it's not correct. The people who actually go and  
24 do the repair of leaks, are they called technicians, or --

25 A. Our employees or --

1 Q. Yes. Yes, your employees.

2 A. Okay. We have a combination of on-the-job training  
3 programs and documented formalized training programs. A  
4 construction journeyman, who would be the lead person on a truck,  
5 has gone through a formalized apprentice program that was  
6 developed internally and is carried out by, I guess you would say,  
7 by local supervision and the training department working together  
8 to make sure that they meet appropriate skill levels at certain  
9 intervals within the program.

10 A lot of what goes on is also passed on through  
11 knowledge transfer from an experienced person to the newer people  
12 riding on the truck. Our -- a person moving into a construction  
13 apprenticeship has probably been on that truck as a crewman, our  
14 entry level position, for anywhere from 4 to 6 years before they  
15 move into a 2-year apprenticeship, and they're exposed to a lot of  
16 this every day. The level of responsibility varies with their job  
17 and time at the company.

18 Does that answer your question, Ravi?

19 Q. Yes, you answered it. So there is no formal training  
20 program of 6 months before a person becomes a crewman or  
21 journeyman, or whatever, to fixing leaks --

22 A. Well, let me ask you a question. What time period are  
23 you talking about?

24 Q. I'm really talking about prior to the accident. I  
25 was -- that's a good question.

1           A.    Yeah, let me give you my -- I'm not trying to be  
2   difficult, but I want to make sure we've got the proper time  
3   frame.

4           Q.    Right.

5           A.    I moved into this role in November of 2011. We have  
6   implemented some significant enhancements to training programs  
7   since I've been in this role. One of the things is a brand new  
8   crewman who's hired in off the street, starting in about 2012, was  
9   going through a 4 to 6-month training program that was more rigid  
10   and documented, where in the past it would have been OJT. Early  
11   2014, we moved that short program to a 12-month program that they  
12   go to now.

13          Q.    Um-hum.

14          A.    Our apprentice program has also been enhanced in that  
15   period of time to take supplemental training in addition to the  
16   formalized documented program, where they may spend a half a day  
17   learning how a backhoe really works, the maintenance and things of  
18   that nature; or working with someone from a contracting company  
19   that we buy materials from, whether it be a tapping machine or an  
20   underground line locating machine, or whatever, to learn more  
21   specifically, a half-a-day or a whole day, how those processes  
22   really work as opposed to it being just classroom. Because we  
23   feel like you need a mix of classroom to understand the concepts,  
24   but you also need the hands-on experience so the transfer of  
25   knowledge occurs to the individuals.

1 Q. When the changes happen, when the improvement happen,  
2 couple of years before the --

3 A. Yeah, we are constant -- I would tell you that we are in  
4 an ongoing process of trying to find best practices. Are we there  
5 yet? No. But if you look back a year, 2 years, 3 years, we've  
6 made incremental progress during that period of time.

7 Q. So in this training program for the crew who does the  
8 repair work, what kind of corrosion training do those people  
9 receive?

10 A. Okay. Corrosion training at this point would just be  
11 on-the-job training, from experience of being with people who've  
12 been out there in the field and recognizing differences in what  
13 they're seeing when they do the work.

14 Q. So, there is no --

15 A. But there's no formal classroom training associated with  
16 corrosion for field employees at this time.

17 Q. And the reason I'm asking is because these are the  
18 people, I guess, if I can use the term, they are the eyes of --

19 A. Um-hum.

20 Q. -- telling in your mapping system, or what is that  
21 terminology they use for drawing the map -- MAGI, I guess?

22 A. Yes, yes.

23 Q. That is -- they are putting input as to medium, mild  
24 corrosion, or whatever terminology they might use. So I'm just  
25 trying to understand, if they have no formal knowledge of -- the



1 way I see it is, they are the eyes putting information in the  
2 system.

3 A. Yeah, I think I understand what you're saying, but the  
4 best answer I could say is, an individual is going to spend 4 to 6  
5 years as an assistant on that truck before he moves into a 2-year  
6 apprenticeship before he is actually the lead man on the truck.  
7 And during that whole 6 or more years, he is exposed daily to  
8 what's underground, and that's how they pick up their knowledge  
9 through the -- just the years of work.

10 Q. Okay. Are these guys on a continuous education basis?  
11 Are these guys checked somehow whether their judgment on corrosion  
12 is correct by somebody? Or what is the cross-check there, the guy  
13 is picking up the -- the person is picking up -- and I don't know  
14 that at all, but how do you verify that he has picked up enough or  
15 even a journeyman has picked up enough corrosion information to  
16 make that judgment?

17 I guess what I'm saying is, just because you spend 8  
18 years does not necessarily make you an expert. A person can be an  
19 expert in 2 years if --

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. So what is the cross-check there? If there is one. I'm  
22 not saying there is, but --

23 A. I don't think I have an answer to your question.

24 Q. Okay. That's fair.

25 Now, as far as the contractors go, in terms of -- we are

1 specifically talking about the leak surveys. When the person  
2 comes in, you have, I guess you require them to submit to you  
3 their qualifications, all the people who are doing the work?

4 A. Um-hum.

5 Q. And is there a process in place to verify that these are  
6 the people, their qualification is current, when they start the  
7 job?

8 A. That is correct.

9 Q. And how you knew that?

10 A. Historical, it's been a paper document was submitted to  
11 show who the individual was and a list of qualifications and the  
12 date that those qualifications were taken and the date they  
13 expired. We are moving at this point to more of an electronic,  
14 but from really prior to this year, I would just say paper files  
15 were transported to us.

16 Q. Okay. So -- and how does that, if you find a certain  
17 person is not qualified, does that -- does your contract say --  
18 with whoever the company is, in this case Southern Cross, does  
19 that prevent them from sending that person on the scene or that  
20 person can still be on the scene and perform work under somebody's  
21 supervision?

22 A. Most of these leak survey individuals were working by  
23 themselves. So we would expect there to be no span of control,  
24 but that individual would be qualified to do the work, and if we  
25 were aware that they weren't qualified, we would shut down the

1 job.

2 Q. Okay. Has it ever happened?

3 A. Not -- like I said, in my brief history of this, I have  
4 never dealt with that from a leak survey standpoint.

5 Q. And what happens if the person who is supposed to show  
6 up on the job gets sick or has emergency and somebody else comes  
7 along, and you are the person who verified the qualifications -- I  
8 guess, when I say you are, I'm talking about a year ago. How  
9 would that information get translated to the person who's  
10 responsible for getting that job done? I understand they are two  
11 different people.

12 A. Okay. If a person was out -- these surveys go on all  
13 year long, so I think I need to qualify. If a person was just out  
14 for a day or two, I don't think they would look at replacing them.  
15 But say they brought in a new employee, we would be aware there  
16 was a new employee. We would expect them to supply us with the  
17 documentation that shows they're qualified, and we'd update it in  
18 our database.

19 Q. Okay. But these are communication between your group or  
20 your people and the person who's handling the contractual work,  
21 about -- do you communicate to them that on this job these three  
22 people didn't show up?

23 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: That is not done.

24 MR. DONALDSON: No, I mean, we're not aware of -- nobody  
25 calls in sick to us. I mean, if our inspectors were out there,

1 they could ask for information.

2 Wallace, I think your people routinely will come up on a  
3 job and ask for information. So I feel like my role is to catalog  
4 and keep the information and respond to those that ask the  
5 questions. We're not the ones that are involved in enforcement in  
6 any way.

7 BY MR. CHHATRE:

8 Q. So how does the list of employees that are qualified --  
9 like just take example, Southern Cross -- and they provided you 10  
10 people that their qualifications and you okayed them that they are  
11 qualified.

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. Does that list get to the person who is doing the  
14 contractual work, that these are the 10 people qualified?

15 A. Our people who interact on those jobs would have access  
16 to that information.

17 Q. Through?

18 A. Just as a -- how do I say this? If you were an  
19 inspector and you notified us that you're going to a Sixth Avenue  
20 North jobsite and you would like information on the crew, the  
21 contract crew that's out there, then we could supply you with a  
22 list that we've been given by the organization of who the crew was  
23 and their qualifications for the work.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. So when you were there you could check if you wanted to.

1           Q.    I mean, it -- so it happens only when somebody requests  
2   it, but there is no process that for every job that is being --  
3   that is being scheduled, the information gets through a process  
4   transferred to the person who is handling the contractors?

5           A.    Are you asking -- once a contractor provides us a list  
6   of their qualified individuals, how then do we know, number one, I  
7   guess, has that been done, and secondly, who they are, before they  
8   go to work for us?

9           Q.    No, that's not my question was. Question is -- let's  
10   just take example Southern Cross. Southern Cross provides  
11   Alagasco 15 -- there are 15 people that these are all staff and  
12   these are their qualifications. And you approve them and say,  
13   yup, they meet my OQ requirements of my staff.

14          A.    Um-hum.

15          Q.    Now, this process happens -- like you said, 3 years in  
16   contract, right? It happens only once in 3 years, at the  
17   beginning of the contract?

18          A.    No. It happens at the beginning of the contract. Then  
19   as new employees are added or --

20          Q.    Well, I'm not saying employees aren't added. I'm just  
21   saying it happens at beginning of the contract, 3 years ago.  
22   Right?

23                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: But you just asked a few minutes  
24   ago about what happens in somebody leaves and gets replaced.

25                MR. CHHATRE: No, what I'm saying is --

1 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I think that's what he's answering.

2 MR. DONALDSON: Yeah, I'm a little confused.

3 BY MR. CHHATRE:

4 Q. What I'm saying is the crew that reports to the person  
5 we talked earlier, that he's responsible for doing the survey.  
6 How would the information you have gets translated to him, that,  
7 look, for these 3 years, these are the 15 qualified people? Does  
8 that happen?

9 I'm not saying that you have to submit list of every  
10 three or four people. But does the list of your qualified people  
11 gets translated by some official means to the person who is  
12 responsible for contract, that that person knows, okay, Southern  
13 Cross, these are the 15 people; as long as the crew reporting to  
14 me is on this list, I'm good?

15 MR. GARDNER: I believe it does. But you were going to  
16 say something?

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No. I was going to say, what it  
18 sounded like to me what he's asking is, you know, you get the list  
19 or, you know, you all are doing the contract, you're setting up  
20 with the surveyors or whatever. And then is Phillip getting the  
21 list of the qualified people for his people to check behind? Or  
22 how is that being done?

23 MR. DONALDSON: We're in a state of flux because we're  
24 moving things to this electronic system, so -- yes and no. I  
25 mean, it's a hard question to answer because -- let me back up.

1           A new contract takes place and there are 15 employees.  
2 All of those employees are told -- or the company's told, these  
3 are the things we need. So we get a list on all 15 people and we  
4 check them off; they're good. So they're entered in our database,  
5 and they're good, and they're good until 3 years. Okay?

6           Two things happen. One, if the qualification period  
7 occurred before the start of our contract and their renewals came  
8 up during the contract time, which I was trying to understand --  
9 that's what confused me -- then they would be updated in our  
10 database as we receive that information. Because my  
11 administration person is the one that does the data entry and she  
12 sees that something's coming up in sort of a spot audit, nothing  
13 formal, but she's going to know Wallace's person's about to  
14 expire, so she's going to keep an eye on him and make sure there's  
15 communication if something didn't happen.

16           Now, the second piece is as new employees are added, we  
17 expect them to do that. Another piece of this, is Wallace's group  
18 -- we send them some certification information on welders. So we  
19 print off reports for the same type thing that they get so they  
20 know our welders and contract welders are certified. But does  
21 Phillip Heard get a report every month showing who is certified?  
22 No. Is the information available to Phillip and his people? Yes.

23           BY MR. CHHATRE:

24           Q. But I'm not going to say every month. I'm just saying  
25 once you qualify people --

1           A.    Yeah, when the contract --

2           Q.    -- they are qualified until they are disqualified either  
3    through contractual means or for other reasons.

4           A.    Um-hum.

5           Q.    Does that list through a standard procedure  
6    automatically goes to Phillip saying, until I send you another  
7    list, these are the qualified people for the contractor?  You  
8    don't have to send it every month.

9                   And I guess my question is very simple:  Is there  
10   protocol in place between the two groups for this to happen, or  
11   there is no protocol for this to happen?

12          A.    I would say, based on that question, there is no  
13   protocol.

14          Q.    Okay, that's --

15          A.    And, I'm sorry, I just didn't understand the question at  
16   first.

17          Q.    I'm saying -- that's pretty much it.  And I was really  
18   focusing on corrosion, but that answers my question.

19          A.    Okay.

20          Q.    Thanks much.

21                   BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

22          Q.    We have something -- we might be confused here, but we  
23   were talking about visual inspection of pipe in a ditch that's  
24   been uncovered.  Ravi was talking about how you identify areas of  
25   corrosion on it.



1           We're talking about the guys who actually go out and dig  
2 up a piece of pipe and they're fixing a leak. You said there was  
3 no formal classroom training on like looking at the corrosion  
4 inspection on that? Well, see I know visual inspection of coating  
5 and stuff like that is on you all's covered task list.

6           A. Well -- and I'm separating training from operator  
7 qualification in this instance. I mean, those things are going to  
8 be included as part pf both QCBTs and field assessments. But as  
9 far as a formalized training class that is part of the apprentice  
10 or the training program, no, we don't a have a class where David  
11 Renault (ph.) comes in and teaches half a day.

12          Q. Okay, but they're covered in OQ --

13          A. Yes.

14          Q. -- and then they're evaluated by a field guy that says,  
15 all right, Bob Gardner can identify this right here --

16          A. Yeah.

17          Q. -- according to section whatever in the Energy World  
18 Net's OQ plan?

19          A. Exactly. Yeah, yes.

20          Q. So they are receiving training --

21          A. Yes. Yes.

22          Q. Okay, I wanted to clear that up for our benefit on the  
23 OQ part because that kind of confused us.

24               MR. NICHOLSON: Is that it?

25               BY MR. NICHOLSON:

1           Q.    You're saying they are receiving training, but you're  
2 saying on-the-job training; is that what you just said?

3           A.    Well --

4           Q.    Not classroom training?

5           A.    Yes.

6           Q.    Okay.

7           A.    Yes.

8           Q.    I want to be sure I'm clear on it.

9           A.    Oh, I -- I didn't mean to confuse everyone. But I think  
10 one of the things is -- OQ is -- you know, compliance is very  
11 important to what we do, but there are also training aspects we  
12 try to meet and I almost -- it's a given to me that OQ is done,  
13 and we try to maintain and do the right thing, but I'm looking at  
14 issues for training that we need to shore up, and corrosion's a  
15 great example. That's something, as we enhance these programs, it  
16 would be great to say, let's bring in a corrosion tech to teach a  
17 half-a-day class to new apprentices. That's something we could do  
18 as we keep evolving and getting better. So that's a good lesson  
19 learned for me from this.

20                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: But they are receiving some sort  
21 of module through Energy World Net --

22           MR. DONALDSON: Yes.

23                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- and then they are evaluated by  
24 a field evaluator.

25           MR. NICHOLSON: Oh, okay.

1           MR. DONALDSON: Yeah, like they'll sit down and do their  
2   CBT computer training. It probably takes 30 or 40 minutes, and  
3   then --

4           UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And then the field evaluation.

5           MR. DONALDSON: Our field evaluators are 40-year  
6   construction guys that go out and do this with all the crews.  
7   So, yes.

8           BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

9       Q.   And this is in the OQ context?

10      A.   Correct.

11      Q.   For covered tasks that are filed by position --

12      A.   Under 192.

13      Q.   -- they have a CBT and a field certification that are  
14   companions?

15      A.   Correct.

16      Q.   And those are courses contractually we have through  
17   Energy World Net that other gas companies use --

18      A.   Yes.

19      Q.   -- other contractors use, nationally recognized in terms  
20   of their content and recognized by PSC as being valid based on  
21   past inspections.

22           MR. CHHATRE: This is Ravi, let me see if I understand.  
23   According to me, it's a little bit different than corrosion, per  
24   se. Is corrosion a covered task?

25           MR. GARDNER: Well, visual inspection of a buried

1 pipeline unit is what you're looking for. You're looking for  
2 corrosion. You're looking for the -- you're looking for the  
3 coating disbondment. It's all about finding corrosion on the pipe  
4 or something abnormal.

5 MR. DONALDSON: Yeah, abnormal piping, but also  
6 atmospheric corrosion comes into play, too, on the above-ground  
7 facilities. So when all that dissolves --

8 MR. NICHOLSON: And who are we talking about in this  
9 scenario? This isn't a corrosion technician --

10 MR. DONALDSON: This would be all construction field  
11 personnel, whether they're crewmen or the guys driving the truck.  
12 Now, the corrosion folks may have some atmospheric corrosion, you  
13 know, a more advanced --

14 MR. NICHOLSON: Sure.

15 MR. DONALDSON: -- corrosion piece than the field  
16 people.

17 MR. NICHOLSON: Right. Okay.

18 MR. GARDNER: And, again, construction people are making  
19 the leak repairs.

20 MR. DONALDSON: Correct.

21 MR. GARDNER: Just for that clarification.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And they're the ones evaluating  
23 the pipe. So that's why I asked you if they did have that visual  
24 inspection --

25 MR. GARDNER: But there is, there is a visual inspection

1 of the pipe training embedded in the OQ --

2 MR. DONALDSON: Yes.

3 MR. GARDNER: -- where the concepts of what you're  
4 looking at when you look at a pipe is, this is what you're looking  
5 for, et cetera, which certainly we have access to that information  
6 as far as what's in that module and what the outline is --

7 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

8 Q. Well, what I was going to ask -- so, this is all in your  
9 qualification program, do we have a copy of that?

10 A. The OQ plan was included in the documents we sent  
11 earlier. But we did not include specific modules because if we  
12 did, you can imagine, there's probably 200-and-some odd modules.  
13 But anything you need specifically, we can get for you very  
14 easily.

15 Q. And so, then the -- I guess, the leak survey people is  
16 also a covered task?

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. Okay.

19 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. I think it could be nice to get the  
20 corrosion side operator in the OQ document.

21 MR. NICHOLSON: But he's saying we have that, right?

22 MR. DONALDSON: Yeah.

23 MR. GARDNER: I need to verify that you have the OQ  
24 plan.

25 MR. NICHOLSON: Did you want to pull it up?

1           MR. DONALDSON: If not, we can -- I can get a copy very  
2 easily.

3           MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah, I mean, OQ plan and then, you  
4 know --

5           MR. DONALDSON: And it's going to have a grand list in  
6 there of all of the jobs and what the tasks and you know, the --  
7 based on 50 different ways to match it out.

8           MR. GARDNER: I don't think we've been asked for that.

9           MR. NICHOLSON: I don't think so, either.

10          MR. GARDNER: I'm glad to give it to you, but I don't  
11 think -- I don't recall --

12          MR. NICHOLSON: Okay, I'm requesting it now.

13          MR. GARDNER: All right. Good.

14          MR. NICHOLSON: On the record.

15          MR. GARDNER: I'm accepting your request.

16          MR. DONALDSON: Matt?

17          MR. NICHOLSON: Yes?

18          MR. DONALDSON: Did you need my contact information?

19          MR. NICHOLSON: I will get that off the record from,  
20 Bob, thank you.

21          MR. GARDNER: And so, since this request has been made  
22 on the record, for the record, what do you want besides the OQ  
23 plan, so we can get this to you in a timely manner?

24          MR. NICHOLSON: Well, I guess I'm looking for the OQ  
25 plan, and then any kind of curriculum, I think, that would --

1           MR. CHHATRE: Well, I'm more interested in -- this is  
2 Ravi -- what the OQ training or qualifications are for these  
3 people who do the repairs, and information about corrosion. So I  
4 need to know what kind of corrosion training they are getting.

5           MR. GARDNER: And that may land in the visual inspection  
6 world. Is that not correct? The corrosion training may land in  
7 the visual inspection of a pipe curriculum.

8           MR. NICHOLSON: But it normally will say you'll spend X  
9 hours with the appropriate year veteran.

10          MR. DONALDSON: But what you're saying is, from the OQ  
11 standpoint, do you want to see anything besides the plan  
12 associated with CBTs that have to do with corrosion, or did you  
13 want that much detail?

14          MR. CHHATRE: No, I want to know if I'm the person sent  
15 to fix a leak, what kind of training has been given to me by  
16 Alagasco to assess -- make sure that I can -- I determine whether  
17 it's a general corrosion, it's a pitting, it's a moderate  
18 corrosion, a serious corrosion --

19          MR. NICHOLSON: We can take this off the record.

20                 Are we done with the questioning, for --

21          MR. CHHATRE: Yes.

22          MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. I think at this point let's end  
23 the interview and we can continue this.

24                 So, we are off the record. Thank you.

25                 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:           ALABAMA GAS CORPORATION (ALAGASCO)  
                                  NATURAL GAS RELEASE WITH IGNITION  
                                  BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA  
                                  DECEMBER 17, 2013  
                                  Interview of Randall Donaldson

DOCKET NUMBER:           DCA-14-MP-001

PLACE:                    Alagasco HQ, Birmingham, Alabama

DATE:                     July 15, 2014

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.

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Valerie Grieder  
Transcriber