

AFR PITTSBURGH
SUMMARY ARTICLE
FROM TOM CLARESON, 7/2/10

SUBJECT LINE:

**CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS, FIRE SAFETY, AND INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENTS
REVIEWED AT AFR PITTSBURGH JUNE MEETING**

A JAM-PACKED AGENDA AWAITED MEMBERS OF THE PITTSBURGH ALLIANCE FOR RESPONSE AT THEIR JUNE 17, 2010 MEETING, HELD AT RODEF SHALOM CONGREGATION IN PITTSBURGH. PRESENTATIONS COVERED TOPICS INCLUDING “PUBLIC RELATIONS DURING A CRISIS,” FIRE SAFETY AND FIRE INSPECTIONS, AND A TOUR THROUGH THE RODEF SHALOM ARCHIVAL FACILITIES TO ASSESS DISASTER VULNERABILITY AND PRESERVATION CONDITIONS.

THE MEETING BEGAN WITH CRYSTAL MCCORMICK WARE, COORDINATOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH LIBRARY SYSTEM, TALKING ABOUT STEPS TO AVOID A PUBLIC RELATIONS DISASTER IN CULTURAL HERITAGE INSTITUTIONS. WITH THE BP OIL LEAK FRESH IN THE MINDS OF MANY ATTENDEES, THEY LISTENED TO WARE’S STRATEGIES TO “ACKNOWLEDGE AND REACT” TO DISASTERS, WITH PLANNING AND STRATEGY IN MIND. A KEY POINT WHICH MANY IN ATTENDANCE APPRECIATED WAS THE IDEA OF AN ORGANIZATION MAKING A “CORE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES ANNOUNCEMENT” SOON AFTER ANY EMERGENCY OR DISASTER, TO LET THEIR VARIOUS AUDIENCES KNOW THAT THE AIM OF THE ORGANIZATION IS TO MAINTAIN ITS MOST IMPORTANT OPERATIONS DURING AND AFTER RECOVERY. WARE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT INSTITUTIONS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED A DISASTER SHOULD KEEP IN REGULAR CONTACT WITH THEIR STAKEHOLDERS AND PATRONS AFTER THE EVENT TO LET THEM KNOW WHAT THE ORGANIZATION IS CONTINUING TO DO TO RECOVER FROM AND IMPROVE UPON THE DISASTER CONDITIONS.

CYNTHIA CZUCZMAN, THE FIRE PREVENTION INSPECTOR FROM THE PITTSBURGH FIRE DEPARTMENT, SPOKE WITH THE GROUP ABOUT A VARIETY OF FIRE SAFETY ISSUES. FOLLOWING UP ON THE SEPTEMBER 2009 PRESENTATION BY NATIONALLY-KNOWN FIRE SUPPRESSION CONSULTANT NICK ARTIM, CZUCZMAN’S PRESENTATION WAS FULL OF EXCELLENT PRACTICAL TIPS, INCLUDING BECOMING KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT FIRE EXTINGUISHER TYPES AND OPERATION, KNOWING AT LEAST TWO EXITS FROM THE BUILDINGS IN WHICH YOU WORK AND VISIT, UTILIZATION AND MAINTENANCE OF SMOKE DETECTORS, AND KEEPING MECHANICAL ROOMS AND STORAGE AREAS SEPARATE IN CULTURAL HERITAGE INSTITUTIONS.

AFTER THE GROUP VIEWED A DVD PRESENTATION ON “THE PRESERVATION SURVEY: A FIRST STEP IN SAVING YOUR COLLECTIONS” (AVAILABLE VIA INTERLIBRARY LOAN AND FROM AMIGOS LIBRARY SERVICES), CZUCZMAN ACCOMPANIED THE SESSION ATTENDEES ON A TOUR OF THE RODEF SHALOM CONGREGATION ARCHIVAL FACILITY, LED BY ARCHIVIST MARTHA BERG. THE GROUP SAW THE OBVIOUS CARE WITH WHICH BERG HAS PROCESSED AND STORED THE ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS OF

THE ORGANIZATION, BUT ALSO HAD SUGGESTIONS ON STORAGE IMPROVEMENTS AND SAFETY PRACTICES WHICH CAN ENSURE THAT THE COLLECTIONS ARE EVEN SAFER IN THE FUTURE.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED WITH UPDATES FROM JOHN BARNETT, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMIC LIBRARY CONSORTIUM, INC. (PALCI) ABOUT A RECENT GRANT SUBMITTED TO SUPPORT A CENTRAL CACHE OF DISASTER RECOVERY SUPPLIES FOR PITTSBURGH INSTITUTIONS, AND THE POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING ON DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RECOVERY IN THE PITTSBURGH REGION AND THROUGHOUT PENNSYLVANIA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE PITTSBURGH ALLIANCE FOR RESPONSE, PLEASE CONTACT TOM CLARESON, SENIOR CONSULTANT FOR NEW INITIATIVES, LYRISIS, AT TOM.CLARESON@LYRISIS.ORG OR JOHN BARNETT, PALCI, AT BARNETT@PALCI.ORG.