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American Red Cross Plans Together

Disastrous events fall into two basic categories – Naturally occurring and Man-made. The Munich Re-Insurance Foundation estimates that during 2005, natural disasters caused by weather events were responsible for more than \$200 billion of damage globally.

In the United States, the American Red Cross has been responding to disasters of all kinds for 125 years. As this paragraph is being written, we read headlines that 63 tornados ripped through eight states last night, killing at least 27 people and affecting more than 1500 families in just one county in Missouri. And as their saying goes, "*The Red Cross is there*".

The Red Cross' response to one of these events isn't some ad-hoc plan thrown together on the spur of the moment. The Red Cross engages in pre-event disaster planning using the same techniques that project managers use in working on projects; although typically under slightly-less traumatic circumstances.

At our next meeting, **Glen Lindahl** explains how the Red Cross initiates their disaster responses, how they pre-plan their responses, and how they execute and control those responses. You can also surmise that their event closure activities include capturing lessons learned from one event in order to better prepare for the next one.

Please join us on April 26 for an informative presentation on how the American Red Cross uses project management techniques in their disaster pre-planning.

Click here to learn more about the [Northeast Indiana Red Cross](#).

Social time begins at 5:30 PM at the Don Hall's Guesthouse, Dinner at 6:00 PM, Program at 7:00 PM [Click here to RSVP now!](#)

Want to write an article for *The Milestone*? Guest writers are encouraged to contribute.

[Email us \(click here\)!](#)

April 26, 2006

PMI-NEIC Meeting

"Together We Prepare"

Hall's Guesthouse

5:30 Social Time

6:00 Dinner

7:00 Speaker:

Greg Lindahl of the American Red Cross

Members: Bring a guest and you both eat dinner free!

[RSVP \(click here\)](#)

April 26, 2006

PMI-NEIC Meeting

Project Essentials

"Project Management"

By Greg L. McCormick, PMP

(Note to readers: it is important to know the meaning of *italicized words and phrases* that appear in this article. Definitions can be found in the Glossary of the **PMBOK® Guide**.)

In my [last column](#), I discussed the official definition of the word "project" – a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result. In this column, I'll discuss the term "project management".

People generally understand project management to mean the actions taken to run a project in such a way that the activities are orderly and the project is successful. In our more specific context, PMI defines *project management* as "the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet project objectives".

Success in project management involves general leadership and management skills, "people skills", knowledge of the performing organization and its "corporate culture", as well as best practices distilled from the practice of project management. This large sum of knowledge represents the entire *Project Management Body of Knowledge*. The **PMBOK® Guide** is that **subset** of this body of knowledge that is generally recognized as best project practices – that is, the knowledge and practices that are applicable to most projects, most of the time. It is important for each project team to determine which parts of the Guide are appropriate for each project, and to decide how the "knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques" should be applied.

The information contained in the PMBOK® Guide is considered so essential to the successful practice of project management that the Guide has become the world's de facto standard for project management, and it has been accepted as a national standard by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI/PMI 99-001-2004). A *standard* is defined in the Third Edition of the PMBOK® Guide as:

"A document established by consensus and approved by a recognized body, which provides, for common and repeated use, [the] rules, guidelines, or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context".

The **PMBOK® Guide** organizes project management materials using several strategies:

- **Process Groups.** At a high level, projects are commonly initiated, planned, executed, controlled, and closed. The standard *project life-cycle* therefore formalizes project activities into five standard Process Groups: Initiation, Planning, Execution, Controlling, and Closing. Each of the 44 standard project processes belongs to one of these Process Groups.

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Columnist Bio

Greg L. McCormick, PMP, is a member of the Project Management Institute's Northeast Indiana Chapter (PMI-NEIC). He is also a member of Midwest Contingency Planners (MCP), and a Senior Member of the Society for Technical Communication (STC) and past President of its Indiana Chapter.

Greg owns and operates **Cedar Canyon Consulting, LLC**, a Fort Wayne area firm providing business continuity planning, project management, and technical communications services.

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Project Essentials continued

- **Knowledge areas.** Each project should be considered from several standard aspects in order for it to be successful. A Knowledge Area addresses managing one particular aspect of the project, and has a standard set of the 44 standard processes. The standard Knowledge Areas are: Integration, Scope, Time (schedule), Cost (budget), Quality, Human Resources, Communications, Risks, and Procurement Management. Knowledge Areas may align with departments or functional groups within the *performing organization*. Knowledge Areas are used more formally or informally, or to greater or lesser extent, based on each individual project.
- **ITTO.** This acronym stands for *Inputs, Tools & Techniques*, and *Outputs*. The Guide uses this documentation model to identify the inputs, activities (and their tools and techniques), and outputs for each of the 44 standard processes. An *input* is "any item, whether internal or external to the project that is required by a process". An *output* is "a product, result, or service generated by a process". Notice that processes are integrated through inputs and outputs – the output of one process may become the input to others.

Companies that perform projects on a regular basis usually take the PMBOK® Guide and shape it into a project management *system* by which they conduct projects within their organization. This allows each organization to customize the standard elements of the Guide according to their management structure and corporate culture, their level of internal resources, their tolerance for business and project risk, and so on. A company that is inherently hierarchical in functional structure may choose to conduct their activities using project management techniques. This is called "*management by projects*". Companies may even establish and maintain a *Project Management Office (PMO)*, which is "an organizational unit [used] to centralize and coordinate the management of projects.

Finally, the Project Management Institute has developed a measurement of a company's project management maturity. This measurement is defined in another PMI *standard* called the *Organization Project Management Maturity Model*, known by the acronym *OPM3*.