One Incident – Three Beacons (and there could have been more)

If you have been a regular reader of the Beacon for several years, you may recognize the pictures to the left. The top picture shows a large fire at an oil refinery near Sunray, TX, on February 16, 2007. The second picture shows some of the damage. Three workers were injured and the refinery was temporarily shut down. This incident was the subject of three Beacons, with three very different safety lessons:

• October 2008: Ice ruptures unused pipe and causes fire
• May 2010: Fireproofing structural supports
• September 2011: Hazards from abandoned equipment

There are more things to learn from this single incident. You can go to www.csb.gov and look for the Valero Refinery Propane Fire investigation to see the complete report.

Did You Know?
• There is more than one thing to learn from every incident or near-miss in your plant.
• Nearly every incident has multiple root causes.
• Incidents can have multiple contributing causes. Here are some examples of contributing causes: safety equipment or shutdown systems that did not work; failure of control systems and procedures to control a plant disturbance; failure of emergency response systems and procedures.
• You can’t learn anything from an incident or near-miss that is never reported!

What Can You Do?
• Know how to recognize incidents and near-misses, and how to report them so they can be investigated.
• If you are involved in an incident investigation, insist that the investigation be complete. Identify all of the root and contributing causes so you can learn as much as possible.
• When you read an incident report, or the Beacon, look for all of the lessons learned and think about how they apply to your plant.
• Look for more information about a Beacon incident. We don’t have much space so we have to leave things out!!

Look for ALL of the lessons from every incident.