

US to take more control of spill response website

July 5 2010, by Harry R. Weber , Ap Business Writer

(AP)— The US government is expected to take over control of the central information website on the Gulf oil spill response that has been run jointly by various agencies and BP for the 2 1/2 months since the rig explosion.

The Department of Homeland Security wants a one-stop shop for information that is completely overseen by the government as it settles into the long-haul of dealing with the response to the disaster. The U.S. Coast Guard falls under Homeland Security's authority.

BP and the federal government are part of a unified command that is working together to try to contain the oil gusher, but the government has been directing BP at every turn.

A DHS spokesman told The Associated Press on Sunday that the joint relationship won't change when the website is given a dot-gov address instead of a dot-com address.

But who can post information to the site would change. Details are still being worked out.

The spokesman, Sean Smith, said the government wants to be as transparent as possible and increase Americans' access to information.

BP is helping pay for the current website. The government could still bill BP when it takes over the site.

The deepwaterhorizonresponse.com site may still be maintained during the changeover, but ultimately it will be taken down altogether when the government moves the response information to its own website.

A BP spokesman did not immediately respond to several requests for comment on the move, which could occur within days.

A frequent critic of the administration's response to the oil spill, Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif., was skeptical the change would amount to much.

"Given that the government taking over the [cleanup](#) hasn't exactly fixed things, it's hard to imagine the government taking over a [website](#) making things much better either," Issa, a member of the House Committee on Oversight and [Government](#) Reform, said in a statement e-mailed to the AP.

"In recent weeks, we've heard directly from local officials pleading for less bureaucracy, more resources and expressing an overall frustration with this administration's apparent pre-occupation with the public relations surrounding this catastrophe," he said.

More information: www.doi.gov/deepwaterhorizon/index.cfm

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