

NEFRC Highlights

Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

August 2011

Florida Interoperability Workshop Summit 2011



On behalf of the Florida Division of Emergency Management, the Northeast Florida Regional Council planned and coordinated the first statewide Interoperability Workshop Summit. This three day event was held in St. Petersburg, Florida from August 16-18, 2011.

There were over 175 participants from various agencies throughout the State of Florida in attendance. Keynote Speakers for the event included Charles Hagan of the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM), Carlton Wells of the Department of Management Services (DMS) and several members of the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC/ICTAP).

The Summit provided opportunities for meetings, training and workshops. These included an Interoperability State Working Group Meeting and Regional Interoperable Communication Meetings; Narrowbanding, Mobile Broadband, National Emergency Communications Plan Goal 2 and Communications Assets Survey and Mapping workshops; and Mutual Aid Radio Communication Emergency Deployable Interoperable Communications System/Emergency Deployable Wide Area Remote Data System and the Florida Interoperability Network (FIN) training. There was also a FIN lab to educate users on the upgraded software that will be introduced in November. This software provides interconnectivity to all agencies. The establishment of the Florida Interoperability Network was awarded a Regional Leadership award by NEFRC in 2009.

This was a very successful event that provided important information about the future of interoperable communications and the opportunity to network. For more information, please contact Traci Hochhalter at 904-279-880 or thochhalter@nefrc.org.

JSO Bomb Exercise

The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Bomb Team hosted a one (1) day Regional Bomb Team exercise at the University of Florida Ben Hill Griffin Stadium in Gainesville, Florida June 23, 2011. NEFRC staff was responsible for scenario design, planning, coordination, material support and development of the Exercise After Action Report. The University of Florida Police Department (UPD) and the Alachua County Sheriff's Office (ASO) coordinated the activities at the stadium. The exercise was designed to evaluate local Law Enforcement policies and procedures when a vehicle with a bomb is discovered on the property of Ben Hill Griffin Stadium, four hours prior to game day.

This exercise evaluated steps taken to determine how the bomb can be rendered safe. Coordination between local agencies, state agencies and the FBI along with participants from outside agencies evaluated steps and conducted follow up intelligence. These leads were

designed to require outside counties to provide information to the incident site. There were two "off-site" locations used to support the exercise, St Johns and Marion Counties.

A vehicle displayed addresses which led UPD officials to a location in St. Johns County and Marion County. Intelligence was gathered at both locations and shared with the Incident Commander (Alachua County Sheriff's Office) on scene at the UF parking lot.

Simulating this type of scenario is evidence of the growing public safety partnership between Federal, State and local jurisdictions for the response to the constant threat of terrorism to our Nation and communities.

The exercise drew the attention of the Gainesville Sun, with positive comments from the exercise participants. The public observed from a distance.

NEFRC Hosts Meeting on Microenterprise

NEFRC convened a meeting on August 18 to discuss whether there is a need for services to microenterprise in our Region, and a need for micro loans. Representatives from a diverse group of banks, community agencies, chambers of commerce, economic development professionals and business people attended, and generally concurred that there is a need. They discussed the

initiatives already operating in the Region, and considered what information and resources would be needed in order to create a mechanism that might be a comprehensive way to provide assistance to microenterprise throughout the Region. They will meet again on September 23 at 9am, and the meeting will include speakers with experience in micro lending. All are welcome. For more information, contact Margo Moehring at 904-279-0885 x 161.

Transportation Implications of the Community Planning Act

On August 11, 2011 NEFRC CEO Brian Teeple addressed the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization on HB7207 and its implications for transportation. The presentation focused on several key features of the new law, especially issues related to proportionate share calculation and the relationship of Sector Plans to the TPO's Long Range Transportation Plan. For more information, contact Brian Teeple at 904 279 0880

Innovate Northeast Florida Kick-Off

Innovate Northeast Florida is a Targeted Industry Sub-Cluster Analysis and Implementation Strategy being lead by the NEFRC and JaxUSA Partnership (formerly Cornerstone). Project funding is coming from the Economic Development Administration and WorkSource. A project team being lead by Avalanche Consulting is providing the technical expertise for the project.

A Steering Committee, jointly led by Elaine Johnson and Bob Rhodes, will provide project guidance through the life of the project, which is scheduled to conclude in April 2012.

For additional details and to take the brief on-line survey go to www.innovatenortheastflorida.com. For more information, contact Brian Teeple at 904-279-0880

Local Emergency Planning Committee Elects new Chairman

Members of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) recently elected a new Chairman. Mr. E.R. Ashton, Emergency Management Director for St. Johns County, served as chair since August 18, 2004, and a member of the LEPC since July 1, 1992. The LEPC is grateful for his service and recognizes his tremendous contributions to hazardous materials emergency response, both as a member of the LEPC and as its Chairman.

The newly elected Chairman, Richard Knoff, currently serves as Deputy Chief for Clay County Fire Rescue.

Chief Knoff has over thirty five years of experience as a volunteer/career firefighter and administrator. He organized the first Hazardous Materials Response Team for Clay County in 1987 and has been active at the local, state, and federal level in fire and emergency service for more than twenty years. Chairman Knoff has been a member of the LEPC since April 4, 1997. He has also served as Vice-Chair and the Training Committee Chair, and has participated in many different exercises and training events sponsored by the LEPC. For more information on the LEPC, please contact Jason Taylor at 904-279-0885 x136 or jtaylor@nefrc.org.

NEFRC provides Emergency Management Assistance to Nassau County

With the retirement of the Nassau County Emergency Management Director in May 2011, just before hurricane season, Nassau County requested the NEFRC to provide assistance while the county looked for a new EM Director.

The NEFRC provided close to 65 hours of technical assistance over the 5-6 weeks. The Council viewed this as

an excellent opportunity to provide temporary assistance while a county is looking for replacement staff. The original thought was to provide weekly guidance to the current staff to make sure quarterly reports and daily operations were maintained. However, once Tropical Storm Emily formed (it never really became a threat), and Hurricane Irene formed, ongoing technical assistance was needed to provide Situation Reports to the State and Web EOC, a regional tool for information sharing. For more information, contact Jeff Alexander at 904-279-0885 x134.