Autumn Storm Table Top Exercise

On April 28th, the region conducted a Table Top Exercise (TTX) as part of the process initiated to establish a Homeland Security consistent exercise program. The series of three exercises, dubbed Autumn Storm, consist of the TTX just conducted, a Functional Exercise (FX) scheduled for July 15th, and a Full Scale Exercise (FSE) scheduled for September 23rd. Shown in photo left to right are: Jeremy Kaufman and Dan Reilly from Tetra Tech EM Inc, reviewing elements of the TTX with DEMHS Deputy Commissioner Wayne Sandford, and CRCOG Homeland Security Planner Carmine Centrella. The focus of Autumn Storm is a severe weather event impacting local and regional infrastructure, as well as a series of cascading events to enhance overall exercise “play”. The TTX and FX are focused on a Pandemic event as well as a crippling ice storm. The TTX was conducted on the Tuesday following the H1N1 (swine flu) outbreak in Mexico with probable cases here in Connecticut highlighting the fact that this is not all play acting but real world. The scenario and timing of the TTX just happened to coincide with the H1N1 events and created a news media buzz for the day.

The TTX was well attended with approximately 130 individuals participating. The TTX was preceded in the morning by a Chief Elected Official briefing highlighting the various plans in place through the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee, and the Capitol Region MMRS. This brief, delivered by CRCOG's Homeland Security Planner Carmine Centrella, was presented as an educational opportunity for community leaders in the event they could not attend the full TTX.

CREPC’s exercise planning team is awaiting the preliminary findings from Tetra Tech EM Inc (contracted exercise planning and support) but it was easy to see there is still a great concern throughout the Region regarding the authorities associated with carrying out response and coordination activities as well as communication and coordination from the locals, to the region, to the state. The TTX “After Action Report” will highlight successes as well as identify gaps in capabilities from a regional perspective. The
identified gaps will yield recommended Improvement Actions which will help CREPC and CRCOG move forward with strategic planning efforts aimed at enhancing the regions overall preparedness posture.

$7 Million Traffic Signals Upgrade for West Hartford

The Town of West Hartford was successful a few years ago in working with CRCOG and the Connecticut Department of Transportation to secure $7 million federal dollars under the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality program to replace aging and obsolete traffic signal devices and install new video detection systems. The new equipment is currently being installed at numerous intersections throughout town. The video detector systems that are being installed can better track vehicles at intersections, even allowing for the detection of bicycles in the roadway; something the older systems could not do. Other traffic signal technologies include the installation of radio frequency antennas, allowing the traffic signals to communicate with the Public Works Department, and equipment that allows firefighters to have better control of the traffic signals directly from the fire station. The new equipment is expected to save the Town of West Hartford approximately $30,000 per year in energy costs.

Armsmear CERT Graduation

The City of Hartford Police department recently held a graduation ceremony for their first Civilian Emergency Response Team (CERT). The 25 graduates include Armsmear Director Mary Sullivan, staff and residents of the Armsmear housing complex, the former home of Samuel and Elizabeth Colt. Hartford Emergency Management Director Katherine McCormack and Officer Mike Allen were very instrumental in the initiation of the training. Viola Heath, CRCOG Program Assistant and CERT Coordinator was the lead trainer for the group and was honored with an award at the reception. CRCOG Assistant Karen Stewartson also attended the event and assisted in planning. The team is now equipped to respond to emergencies within their complex or throughout the region as needed.
Cities Readiness Initiative POD Exercise

The City of Hartford led the region in a two day Point of Dispensing (POD) exercise, conducted on May 4th and 5th. The Cities Readiness Initiative (CRI) is a CDC sponsored program aimed at preparing large metropolitan areas with enhanced prophylaxis activities in response to an aerosolized anthrax attack. The Capitol Region/DEMHS Region 3 makes up the Hartford area CRI and is coordinated through the West Hartford/Bloomfield Health District which serves as the Regional Public Health Liaison for the CT Department of Public Health and the Region 3 Emergency Support Function 8 – Public Health and Medical Services. As the anchor city for the Region 3 CRI, Hartford has been planning the CRI POD Exercise for over a year through the city’s Department of Health and Human Services. In photo is City of Hartford Mayor Eddie A. Perez discussing POD operations with Health and Human Services Director Carlos Rivera, and Assistant Director (Incident Commander) Michael Pascucilla.

The scenario revolved around an intentional anthrax release over the course of a day of festivals and parades in the city. Once identified, the city and the region would be required to dispense antibiotics to the region's population who may have been in Hartford during the anthrax release. The POD set up and dispensing activities have a window of 48 hours once the authorities are notified to establish POD operations. The POD site was the CT Expo Center on Reverend Moody Overpass in Hartford. The site was set up to handle a target population of approximately 250,000 at 5,600 individuals per hour. The endorsed approach is dispensing through a Head of Household or responsible parties which obviates for the entire population having to report to a POD. The Head of Household in essence picks up for everybody under their roof after completing a form which asks 3-4 simple questions regarding a person’s ability to take one of the two medications being dispensed.

The actual exercise consisted of the set up operation, Just in Time Training for the city’s Health and Human Services Emergency Response Team, the Capitol Region Medical Reserve Corps, and volunteers from the Windsor/South Windsor Mass Dispensing Area starting on May 4th at 6:00AM until 8:30PM. The second day of the exercise was dedicated to educating and orienting elected officials, regional stakeholders, and community groups to POD operations at the Expo Center.
As with the Autumn Storm TTX, this exercise coincided with the H1N1 outbreak and although not specific to a pandemic the principals and practices associated with dispensing of antibiotics for anthrax apply to the overall distribution of anti-virals, or mass vaccinations.

**Trout Brook Trail Opens!**

The Town of West Hartford celebrated the completion of a portion of the Trout Brook trail with a ribbon cutting on May 16th. This trail, which parallels the Trout Brook, will eventually link the Elmwood section of town including the Elmwood busway station, with the northern end of town, in the vicinity of the University of Connecticut West Hartford campus. The segment that opened on the 16th extends not only provides a traffic free pathway for bicyclists seeking to avoid busy New Britain Avenue, but also reveals new views of the previously hidden Trout Brook. Funding in the amount of $203,000 was provided from the STP-Urban program for this $250,000 project. (Note, due to ConnDOT rulings, these funds are no longer able to be used for bike path development.) The Town has been working with its own funding to develop other sections of the trail, completing an important section in 2008 which passes under the Boulevard, a major east west roadway.

**CRCOG Electricity Consortium Update**

The CRCOG Electricity Consortium is expected to hold its first reverse auction on June 17, 2009. The RFQ to qualify suppliers for the auction will be released on May 21. Over 41 million kilowatt hours from 15 members will be auctioned in June. We will update everyone on the results of the auction shortly after June 17th.
**Indefinite Quantity Construction Update**

CRPC staff is very excited about the potential response to its Invitation to Bid for Indefinite Quantity Construction Related Services. Currently, there are over 25 contractors who have picked up bid packages for the June deadlines. Four regions are being competitively bid for a catalog of construction services which CRPC members will be able to use to accomplish small to medium sized projects in their communities. Contracts are expected to be in place by July 1, 2009, so stay tuned for your chance to use this new procurement tool!

**Middletown Shelter Exercise**

On April 17 and 18, 2009 the City of Middletown’s Office of Emergency Management, Health Department, and School District sponsored the Middletown Safe Haven Disaster Exercise. The Safe Haven Exercise was a full scale exercise (FSE) designed to establish a learning environment for planners, players and participants while exercising the City’s emergency response plans, policies, and procedures as they pertain to a disaster that is significant enough to warrant the activation of the City’s emergency management, public health, and school disaster preparedness, specifically shelter protocols. Shown in the photo are members of Emergency Support Functions 5, 8 and 19 and representatives from the State of Connecticut.

The purpose of the exercise was to evaluate player actions against current response plans and capabilities for sheltering the general population, people with disabilities and pets over a period of twenty-four hours. In addition, the exercise was to test the ability of medical personnel to triage and handle people who appear to be ill. The disaster scenario was based on a sudden snow storm, temperatures dropping and heavy snow falling, causing several events to take place, including a sudden loss of power in parts of Middletown and in the adjacent town of Cromwell. Residents from the affected areas were evacuated to a shelter at Middletown High School where students who could not be transported home were also being sheltered. Middletown included multiple resources from the Capitol Region in planning and exercising. Thanks to George Dunn for coordinating public safety and public health partners and for encouraging regional participation across multiple disciplines.
CRCOG Members Attend Communications Conference

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of Emergency Communication (OEC) held its first national conference in Chicago last month. The two year old agency aims to engage the nation's emergency response community on numerous initiatives designed to ensure, accelerate, and attain interoperable emergency communications. The conference gathered over 450 professionals, government officials and industry representatives from around the country. Keynote speakers included Juliette Kayyem, Assistant Security of DHS, Office of Intergovernmental Programs and the Honorable Ross Ashley, DHS FEMA Grant Programs Directorate. State and local case studies and experiences were shared and a presentation on the planning for the 2009 Presidential Inauguration was given by the Chief of Washington DC’s Fire and EMS Department. CRCOG’s Kristin Dean, Keith Victor, and Chief Varney (pictured) were invited to attend the conference by DHS. Chief Varney was a featured speaker in the Technical Assistance Overview breakout session.

Upcoming CRCOG Meetings

Policy Board – May 27, Noon, CRRA
CRCOG ANNUAL MEETING – THURSDAY, JUNE 4
Bike/Pedestrian Committee – June 9, Noon, CRCOG
Public Safety – June 11, Noon, South Church
CT River Assembly – June 11 – 7:30 p.m., Wethersfield Town Hall
Municipal Services Committee – June 16, Noon, CRCOG
CREPC – June 18, 9:30 a.m., South Church
Jobs Access – June 18, 9:30 a.m., GHTD
Regional Planning Commission – June 18, 7:00 p.m., West Hartford Town Hall
Transportation Committee – June 22, Noon, CRRA
Executive Committee – August 12, Noon, CRCOG
Community Development Committee — September 10, Noon, CRCOG
Capitol Region Update is published ten times per year by of the Capitol Region Council of Governments (www.crcog.org). The May 2009 issue is Volume 41 Number 4. CRCOG was formed January 28, 1968 and organized under the laws of the State of Connecticut. Member municipalities of CRCOG are: Andover, Avon, Bloomfield, Bolton, Canton, East Granby, East Hartford, East Windsor, Ellington, Enfield, Farmington, Glastonbury, Granby, Hartford, Hebron, Manchester, Marlborough, Newington, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, Somers, South Windsor, Suffield, Tolland, Vernon, West Hartford, Wethersfield, Windsor, and Windsor Locks. The officers of the CRCOG Policy Board are: Melody A. Currey, Chair, Mayor of East Hartford, Eddie Perez, Vice Chair, Mayor of Hartford, Vice Chair John Adams, First Selectman of Granby, Mary Glassman, Treasurer, First Selectman of Simsbury, and Susan Karp, Secretary, Chair, Glastonbury Town Council. Lyle D. Wray, PhD, Executive Director.