CRCOG Holds Staff Appreciation Luncheon

CRCOG Policy Board Chair, East Hartford Mayor Melody Currey (shown at right in the photo) congratulated five CRCOG staff members for their contributions and years of service to CRCOG at a July 9 staff luncheon. Receiving awards from the left in the photo were Erik Snowden, 11 years of service, Karen Olson, 12 years of service, Mario Marrero for ten years of service, Sandra Fry for ten years of service and Cheryl Assis for ten years of service.

CRCOG Receives MPO Certification Review

On July 14th CRCOG hosted an all-day meeting with the US Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, to look at how CRCOG manages and implements its responsibilities as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Almost 30 people from a variety of agencies across the region attended. Sessions covered technical programs (travel model, traffic analysis & GIS), intermodal transportation planning programs (transit, bike & pedestrian planning), special studies, MPO coordination, congestion management, and Title VI efforts (environmental justice, alternate language and public outreach.) The prior review in 2004 found CRCOG’s program to be “exemplary” and recognized the public participation program as a model for other planning agencies. The report is expected in several months.

CRCOG Completes Solid Waste RFI

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) has spent the last year researching solid waste management options for Mid-Connecticut Project members. Most of the CRCOG membership also belongs to the Mid-Connecticut Project, whose contracts expire with CRRA in 2012. CRCOG hired Mid-Atlantic Solid Waste Consultants in August 2008 to research the solid waste environment in Connecticut and advise the towns on possible ways forward.
when their contracts expire in 2012. MSW Consultants concluded that there are viable options for the 70 towns in the Mid-Connecticut Project. Based in part on this report, the CRCOG Solid Waste Study Group formulated a Request for Information to gauge interest in the vendor community for serving all or some of the 70 Mid-Conn municipalities. On the July 8, 2009 deadline, CRCOG received a total of six responses to the RFI. MSW Consultants is currently reviewing these responses.

**Together We Can Grow Better Workshop Held**

CRCOG received a Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Grant through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency which will provide the region with guidelines for developing in a more green and sustainable manner. This technical assistance brought national experts from the consulting firms of Terra Firma Urban Design, Wallace Roberts and Todd and Jonathan Rose Companies to the region to conduct two-day workshop, Together We Can Grow Better. This workshop, which built the case for why the Capitol Region should engage in sustainable development practices, looked at four specific sites to learn about selecting, designing and building mixed use, transit friendly developments with affordable housing. A range of municipal officials including planners, engineers and town CEOs were involved in this project either at the planning stage or at the workshop. A Together We Can Grow Better Report as well as a set of Sustainable Development Guidelines will place a strong emphasis on site location, site design and green building techniques for residential and mixed use development. To learn more about this initiative, download presentations, site briefing books, and download the final report and guidelines as they become available, visit [http://www.crcog.org/community_dev/sustainable-dev.html](http://www.crcog.org/community_dev/sustainable-dev.html).

**Bicycle Education Program is Up and Pedaling**

Over the past year, CRCOG has been working with the Central Connecticut Bicycle Alliance (CCBA) to set up a bicycle education program. Education is one of the four “E” strategies in our Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan (engineering, encouragement and enforcement are the other “E’s”). Two grants from Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) to the CCBA have enabled the training of a cadre of League of American Bicyclists’ Certified instructors (LCIs) and the purchase of a fleet of 20 bicycles to use for bike classes with City youth. CRCOG has provided administrative support and management of the program. The first class for children in Hartford was held the week of July 13th at the Asylum Hill Boys and Girls Club. Twenty children participated and they all improved their bicycle handling skills and safety skills. The fleet of bicycles is available for other youth programs and we expect that this small start will lead to an extensive bicycle education program throughout the region. Contact CRCOG staff Sandy Fry or Brenda Watson for more information.
Edgeless City Course Held in Region

Redesigning the Edgeless City Course, a yearly collaboration of the Regional Plan Association and Lincoln Institute for Land Policy to address sprawl and climate change issues in regions throughout New York, New Jersey and New England was held this year in the CRCOG region. The course focused on the New Britain to Hartford Busway and the New Haven – Hartford – Springfield Rail Line as critical investments to prepare the region for prosperity in an age of carbon-constraint. Data gathered at the workshop showed that implementing these transit corridors in tandem with intensifying mixed-use development and a range of housing options along them would cause significant reductions in household carbon emissions across the region. This event was also attended by municipal planners, economic development directors and town CEOs, not-for profit groups, planning professionals and citizens. For further information, please visit: http://www.crcog.org/community_dev/sustainable-dev.html.

EZIQC Program Launched July 1, 2009

CRCOG is very pleased to announce the launch of our new EZIQC (EZ Indefinite Quantity Construction) program. CRCOG and Gordian Group staff has been busy setting up a new on-call construction and construction-related services program for all Capitol Region Purchasing Council members. CRCOG competitively bid and awarded four regional contracts for these services for a two year period. CRCOG held four regional kick-off meetings the week of July 13, 2009 to help all 80 of CRCOG’s Purchasing Council members best understand how to use the system. For more information, please contact Jennifer March-Wackers at jwackers@crcog.org or 860-522-2217 ext 239. Further information may be found at: www.crcog.org/purchasing%20_coun/job_order.html.

Reverse Auction Saves $400,000 in Electricity

CRCOG conducted its first reverse auction for the CRCOG Electricity Consortium on July 14 with an estimated savings of over $400,000 for its members over a two-year contract term. Over 41 million kWh were auctioned for 14 municipalities, boards of education, and agencies participating in the first reverse auction for this consortium conducted by CRCOG consultant World Energy Solutions, Inc. Savings estimates were based on average current market pricing prepared by World Energy for fair market value of the consortium’s load profiles. Capitol Region Purchasing Council members participating included: CRCOG, the Eastern CT Health Network, the Greater Hartford Transit District, Town of Bloomfield, Town of Bolton and the Bolton BOE, Town of Canton and the Canton BOE, Town
of Darien/BOE/Library, Town of East Granby, Town of Newington, Town of North Branford, Town of Plymouth, Town of Wethersfield and the Wethersfield Board of Education.

**Accessible Pedestrian Signals: Web Resource**

Accessible pedestrian signals or APS refers to traffic signals that communicate information about pedestrian timing in nonvisual formats such as audible tones, verbal messages, and/or vibrating surfaces. Modern signals, with constantly varied cycles based upon traffic, can be very difficult for persons with low or no vision to navigate. While standards are not yet in place to guide the design and use of these signals, the Federal Highway Administration recommends the 2005 Draft Public Rights of Way Accessibility Guidelines as currently recommended best practices. These guidelines recommend APS for signal installations or upgrades. CRCOG has placed links to the 2005 draft and to the APS Design Guidelines at: [http://www.crcog.org/transportation/bicycle/bp_access.html](http://www.crcog.org/transportation/bicycle/bp_access.html)

**CRCOG Assesses Regional Capabilities**

All emergencies are local, but what happens when your local emergency response and/or recovery needs exceed your local capabilities? The short answer is local mutual aid, recognizing that a large scale incident involving your community may also involve neighboring communities. With that in mind, through pre-planning, we extend our organized network of resources. In concept, we first look to the sub-state region (DEMHS Region 3), then state resources, and finally we tap into the federal level support network. (Photo above shows Newington's Mobile Command Post). To determine the extent of resources we could coordinate regionally, CRCOG has undertaken a regional capabilities assessment. This project is contracted to the Tetra Tech/All Hands Consulting team and is funded under the region’s 2008 Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant program. To determine our capability we assembled the subject matter experts for each assessed capability (29 total) including police, fire, public health, EMS, HAZMAT, and local emergency management experts. The groups scored, on a 1-10 scale, a series of questions that were rolled up into an overall capability score. After all of the capabilities are assessed, we will have a good picture of where our strengths are, and where we have capability gaps. This information is used to structure our strategy and homeland security grants to fill gaps and bring our capability to the desired level. This initial phase of the project was completed in six full days. Refinement and assessment of the results will continue and the final briefing is scheduled for the October 22 CREPC meeting. We thank all who participated for your very valuable inputs into this foundational endeavor.
Region 3 Incident Management Team (IMT) Called to South Windsor Hostage Incident

The call came at 7:22 p.m. on July 7th as many team members were settling in for a quiet evening. "This is a CT-IMT 3 full team call out. Report to South Windsor Fire House #2 as soon as possible for an extended law enforcement incident." Team members responded, broke out recently purchased equipment, and settled in to develop an incident action plan as they had trained hard to do. By 8:30 p.m. 17 members responded and shortly after 9 they had their marching orders – DEVELOP AN INCIDENT ACTION PLAN FOR THE NEXT OPERATIONAL PERIOD STARTING AT 12:00 AM. ATTEMPT TO CONTACT THE LIAISONS AT THE SCENE, LOCAL SHELTER AND SOUTH WINDSOR POLICE DEPARTMENT AND DETERMINE WHAT THEY NEED FOR SUPPORT. Information was scarce, but the team used all the resources at their disposal to build their situational awareness and determine what was necessary to support the hundreds of first responders and the displaced citizens from the surrounding homes. Fortunately for all concerned, the incident ended with no loss of life and shortly after midnight the CT-IMT 3 packed up their gear, conducted a hot wash and safely went home. (Photo above shows CT-IMT 3 Supporting the South Windsor Hostage Incident).

Air Disaster Planning Presentation

New York State Emergency Management Office (NY SEMO) representatives gave a special presentation at CREPC’s June meeting on air disaster planning. The three NY SEMO speakers - Robert J. Conklin, Region 1 Special Assistant, Thomas J. Fargione, Deputy Director for Response, and Theodore J. Fisch, Region 1 Director - are pictured to the right with CREPC Vice-Chairs Bruce Lockwood and Laurie Ann Scotti and CREPC Chair Dan Vindigni. The speakers shared their experiences in managing major, high-profile incidents such as TWA Flight 800, the World Trade Center, the Hudson River Plane Crash, and the Buffalo Plane Crash in 2009. The meeting was well attended and CREPC members appreciated the time and information shared by the SEMO representatives.
Upcoming CRCOG Meetings

**CRCOG Executive Committee** – August 12, Noon, CRCOG Board Room

**CT River Assembly** – August 13, 7:30 p.m., Wethersfield Town Hall

**Jobs Access** – August 20, 9:30 a.m., CRCOG

**Bike/Pedestrian Committee** – September 22, Noon, CRCOG

**Community Development Committee** — September 10, Noon, CRCOG

**Public Safety** – September 10, Noon, South Church

**Municipal Services Committee** – September 15, Noon, CRCOG

**CREPC** – September 17, 9:30 a.m., South Church

**Regional Planning Commission** – September 17, 7:00 p.m., West Hartford Town Hall

**Transportation Committee** – September 21, Noon, CRRA Trash Museum Board Room

**CRCOG Policy Board** – September 23, Noon, CRRA Trash Museum Board Room