RESF-1 Transportation Minutes
April 16, 2008

In attendance: Ken Loock, East Hartford, Chair; Bill Austin, West Hartford FD & CREPC; James Bradford, CT Transit; Jim Strillacci, West Hartford PD; Edward DeMarco and Roger Hart, East Windsor PD; Wayne I. Rioux, Manchester Health Department / Emergency Preparedness; Tom Gavaghan and Gordon Harris, DEMHS; Bob Smith and Lynwood Pollard, AMTRAK PD; Phil Moberg, Jim Mona and Bob Kennedy, ConnDOT; Linda DeLallo, Ulises Himley and Joseph Rodriguez, GHTD – paratransit; Margus Laan, Central CT RPA; Robert Haramut, Midstate RPA; Karen Olson, CRCOG.

Welcome: Chair Ken Loock called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m., welcomed everyone and asked for introductions around the table.

Minutes: The minutes of the March 19, 2008 meeting were approved without changes.

ConnDOT CMS Signs and More: Jim Mona, Director of Highway Operations for ConnDOT, brought the group up-to-date on the guidelines for local access to the Changeable Message Signs (CMS) and other methods of informing the public about emergency events. He noted that advertising of special events is discouraged, and that messages are limited to transportation and / or safety items, such as weather, road conditions, and lane closures. Homeland Security information and Amber Alerts are also approved message subjects. An example of a non-highway, but event with a regional impact, that was announced on the CMS is the NAMCO fire that took place several years ago. The signs have been in place since 1990. If an event is significant enough, messages about it can be placed on CMS from Maine to Florida in order to give travelers advance warning with sufficient time to change their travel plans. Established protocol is that messages from local entities should be made through local or State police to the DOT.

Mr. Mona also reminded the group that while messages on the CMS have to be extremely brief, additional information about an event can be broadcast over the Highway Advisory Radios (HAR). The transmitters have a five-mile radius and broadcast over 1610 or 1670 AM frequency. Messages are broadcast continuously even when the beacons along the highway are not blinking. Mr. Mona also stated that about several municipalities in the State have their own radio broadcast systems.

Responding to a question about prioritizing messages on the CMS, Mr. Mona stated that the system has an internal prioritization system. He also said that events that will last at least one hour are given consideration for broadcast either on CMS or HAR.

An additional method of reaching out to the public is the State’s E-Alert system where individuals have signed up to receive emailed messages from the ConnDOT regarding traffic incidents. Mr. Mona said that soon the CT State Police Computer Aided Design system will soon...

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1 Subsequent discussion with George Carbonnell of ConnDOT confirmed 5 municipal systems (West Hartford, Manchester, Glastonbury, New London and New Haven) and 12 ConnDOT HAR systems.
offer another media for “pushing” messages out to the public. Finally, Mr. Mona remarked that the Department is always interested in improving communications with local emergency responders and encouraged especially local police to take advantage of the Department’s ability to reach out to the traveling public.

**Camera Image Sharing Project:** Mr. Mona next brought the group up-to-date on the status of the State’s project to share its highway camera images with local responders. The images are now posted on ConnDOT’s website (www.ct.gov/dot see link in left hand blue column), but when accidents happen, the images are blanked out, prohibiting the public and emergency responders from viewing the event. The State has been working on a project since late last summer to provide emergency responders access to the camera images at all times. The outcome is two projects: one short term and one longer term.

The short term project, expected to be operational in April 2009 would allow first responders access to streaming video through a password protected website. The longer term project, the first phase of which will also be operational in April 2009, is the development of a network system that would integrate data and video information to 167 PSAPs statewide. The second phase which will not be operational for several years will expand the system to the individual municipalities.

**CT Transit Update:** James Bradford, CT Transit, reported that the training of drivers interested in volunteering as “emergency responder” drivers will take place in the near future.

**New Business:** Deputy Chief Robert Smith of the AMTRAK Police Department discussed the role that AMTRAK has in emergency preparedness, through training, drills and evacuation planning.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the RESF-1 will be **May 21, 2008 at 1:30 p.m., place TBD.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.