

CREPC

Strategic Planning Report

May 22, 2003

In the period of time since September 11, 2001, many changes have occurred in the United States. Attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and preparation for emergencies have all undergone a dramatic shift in focus.

From a regional perspective, the emphasis has been on developing a response to terrorism and weapons of mass destruction incidents. Connecticut towns and cities for the most part are relatively small and cannot support full tactical response for terrorism events. Add in the fact that Connecticut does not have county government and the situation reveals the reason we approached our concerns from a regional perspective.

The Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee (CREPC - *pronounced see-rep-see*) was formed in the fall of 2001 because leadership from all venues realized the need to work together to solve our response and resource needs. We drew together as a group based on a willingness to share; a concern for everyone; an understanding of the fiscal responsibility; a patient sense of urgency to address the preparation needs; and a promise to maintain an agenda free atmosphere. These values have held us in good stead and have served as the guiding light for all the necessary work that lies ahead.

With this mission in mind, CREPC worked for the next year in researching and writing the Regional Emergency Disaster (RED) Plan. The plan lays out the framework for a network of people who know each other and work closely on a regular basis to ensure the safety of area citizens. Along the way, we built in a method of activating the system called the Regional Integrated Communication and Coordination System (RICCS), established regional emergency support functions (R-ESF's) based on similar federal support functions to allow ease of transition, and developed a system of three emergency coordination centers (ECC's) to assist when the RED Plan is activated. We developed a lexicon of our own and a confidence that we are headed in the right direction.

We remain determined, even with limited funding. As we expand our knowledge of emergency management techniques, help has arrived in many forms. Local officials and

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communities agreed to support the process. We have received great support from the State of Connecticut. The state has provided hazardous materials equipment, decontamination units, communications equipment, drills and exercises, and technical support. This assistance has added to our value. Direct grant assistance from the Office of Emergency Management and the State Emergency Response Commission for Hazardous Materials (SERC) will continue to enhance the capabilities of the RED Plan and the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee.

The Federal government through the Department of Health and Human Services and the City of Hartford provided the spark that allowed us to establish the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS). The MMRS is a key component in the advancement of emergency support function 8, Health and Medical Services. The MMRS has spearheaded the regional efforts in decontamination. The Rapid Action Mass Decontamination Protocol sets the standard for procedures centering on the region's ten hospitals. The MMRS will provide the link for medical training (i.e., the nerve agent antidote kits) and forward movement of patients to other areas of the United States. A critical area of MMRS responsibility involves the regional pharmaceutical stockpile for the protection of the region's first responders.

Maintaining the energy and vision of CREPC depends on two vital things. First, the hard work of many dedicated persons and second, having a road map in place to keep the focus on clearly defined objectives for the next twelve months.

Committee Members

The strategic planning committee met on March 18, 2003, at West Hartford Town Hall to develop this plan for the next year.

The committee interaction was a dramatic demonstration of what dedicated persons from different professions can accomplish when they believe and understand a common threat. Public health, fire, hospitals, police, emergency management, amateur radio, town governments, private organizations, and regional non-governmental groups were all involved in this committee.

A complete listing of all committee members is included at the end of this report.

SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)

To focus the committee and begin the process of decision making, a SWOT analysis was conducted. This analysis allowed the committee to concentrate on the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee's strengths and weaknesses during its first eighteen months of existence. This was followed by an in-depth look at the many opportunities that will present themselves through training, funding, planning, exercising, and political interaction with state and federal authorities. The committee also determined that some very clear threats existed to CREPC and emergency management preparation. The

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impact of state grants, the smallpox clinics, continuation funding for MMRS, and state budget cutbacks were taken into serious consideration.

As mentioned the committee began by determining that the strengths of CREPE included:

Resource sharing
Knowledge of participants – education
Coordination – unity of command – opportunity to develop brought towns together
Teamwork – uniformity of communication
Common goals – focus- understanding problems
Strength in numbers
Emergency planning – sense of security – diversity of input
All inclusive
Can do attitude
Timely and on target effort
RED Plan – equality for communities
Location in state – political influence
Built on solid power base
Networking
Support of the Capitol Region Council of Governments
Size – about 27% of state population covered
Regional hazardous materials effort
Leadership
Adaptability – flexibility – commitment
Diversity - age – training – backgrounds – experience
Strong incentive – threat
Willingness to break through political barriers
Involvement of local elected officials
Innovative
Dedicated emergency support function chairs
Trust and understanding
State Office of Emergency Management support
Proactive organization – not reactive
Continuity of goals
Cost effective focus
Open to new ideas
Tremendous drive
Number of participants
Buy-in by represented organizations

After analyzing the thirty-four (34) strengths listed above, the committee determined that the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee had thirty-six (36) weaknesses. As indicated below, those weaknesses are:

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Funding shortages
The economic situation in the state
Continuing commitment
Direction by one leader
No county governments
The ability for anyone to just pick up and go home
Keeping the spirit alive
Lack of training – education
The amount of buy-in by some town leaders
Regional concept is new
Representation on CREPC by political – managerial – and policy makers
State agenda
Missing key leaders
Lack of plan detail in some areas
Lots of work – little time
Communication system
Organization appears to be on the fly
Lack of paid staff
Legal representation
LEPC/CREPC confusion
Small town parochialism
Multiple threats to plan for
What's in it for us attitude
Lack of RED Plan knowledge at lower organizational levels
Slow nature of grant distribution process
Complacency
Lack of RED Plan exercises
Citizen education
Narrow window to act in an emergency
Breaking traditions
Hesitation to activate RICCS
Largely untested
Turf issues
Believability – it cannot happen here attitude
Community size limits resources
RICCS staffing from 2400 to 0800 hours

Based on the perceived and real strengths and weaknesses associated with CREPC and the RED Plan, the committee felt that a number of opportunities existed. The thirty (30) opportunities identified are listed below:

Change the system
Bring the RED Plan to the politicians
Recognize the need to educate the public
Unification

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Learn from our neighbors
Learn from our mistakes – look to the future
No mandate – CREPC decides
Increased clout in applying for funds
Use the regional concept for training and equipment
The interaction of education among disciplines
Availability of the Internet
Ability to tap into additional resources
Increase momentum
Improve local infrastructure by regionalization of assets
Serve as leader in state for regionalization
Provide a comprehensive response – public health and hospital efforts
Advocacy for local regions
More resources as others join
Alternative funding – private sources needs development
Efficiency of large-scale purchases
Using the CROCOG municipal status – purchasing – funding – grants
Obtain political support
Policy development – memorandums of understanding with non-traditional sources
Develop organization framework
Increase municipal awareness
Community/business awareness
Continue developing the RED Plan
Increase drills and exercises
Seek funding
Cross training for operational effectiveness
Increase regional responses

At this point in the strategic planning process, our budding strengths, obvious weaknesses, and emerging opportunities increased our awareness of some definite threats to CREPC and the RED Plan. The committee determined that the following twenty-seven (27) threats existed:

Fragmentation of the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee (CREPC)
Fighting over the money
Limited use of the Region Emergency Disaster (RED) Plan
State agenda and uncertainty – diversion of resources
Lack of regulatory power
Lack of a Memorandum Of Understanding on decontamination trailers
Political intervention
Withdrawal or lack of local government support
Regionalization is a dirty word
A vocal and loud minority
Lack of aggressive support from some major communities in the region
Members may see CREPC as a threat to their own resources or grant funding
Global events preempt our activities

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- Freedom of information laws
- Personalities of members
- Complacency
- CREPC will eventually need staff to administer the programs
- Loss of autonomy
- CRCOG status as a municipal entity
- Sustainability
- Apathy
- Lack of leadership
- Fund management
- Promised resources not delivered
- Change of priorities
- Competing agendas of all agencies
- Failure of the RED Plan

The process of the SWOT analysis led the committee to determine what our goals should be for the next twelve months. The five dot voting process revealed a consensus on the following goals.

Goals and Objectives

The committee determined that nine (9) major goals should be our focus for the next twelve months. Responsible individuals or committees have been established, objectives determined for accomplishing each goal, and due dates recorded to allow for progress and accountability reports.

Goal	Responsible Individual	Due Date
1. RED Plan completion	Chairperson and R-ESF Chairs	Dec. 1, 2003
Objectives:	Complete the Energy Annex (R-ESF 12) – June 1, 2003	
	Complete the Media Annex (R-ESF 14) – June 1, 2003	
	Update basic plan – August 26, 2003	
	Develop the technical rescue concept for the RED Plan (R-ESF 9) – Dec. 2, 2003	
	Update the R-ESF 7 Resources Annex – Jan. 1, 2004	
	Complete the Volunteer Annex (R-ESF 15) – Jan. 1, 2004	
	Complete the Animal Protection Annex (R-ESF 17) - Jan. 1, 2004	

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6. CREPC/MMRS and RED Plan advocacy All chairs and MMRS Project Manager April 1, 2004

Objectives: Increase the number of communities using CREPC as there local emergency planning committee (LEPC) by two – Dec. 31, 2003
 Seek out speaking engagements with various groups to explain our program – continuous

7. Utilize CRCOG status for regional purchasing and grants Chairperson Continuous

Objectives: Develop additional purchasing initiatives – April 1, 2004
 Seek out additional grant opportunities based on the legal status of CRCOG – continuous

8. Improve local infrastructure by integrating RED Plan with local emergency operation plans Chairperson and Planning Grant Project Administrator Dec. 31, 2003

Objectives: Hire a consultant to administer the Office of Emergency Management Planning Grant – June 15, 2003
 Organize and implement the Citizen Corps Council – June 15, 2003
 Establish Citizen Emergency Response Teams (CERT) in selected ESF areas and support existing programs on the local level – Dec. 1, 2003
 Complete and implement the regional hazardous materials analysis – October 1, 2003

9. Increase the comprehensive response of public health and area hospitals ESF – 8 Chairperson, public health subcommittee chair, and MMRS Project Manager Dec. 1, 2003

Objectives: Establish a co-chair in R-ESF 8 Health and Medical Services for Public Health - July 1, 2003
 Establish a co-chair for Emergency Medical Services - July 1, 2003
 Establish a co-chair for Emergency Communications - July 1, 2003

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Final note

The work of the strategic planning committee and this report represents a focused work program for the next twelve months. Many dedicated and hard working professionals continue to be involved in the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee. The energy and diverse efforts required to accomplish our vision will give the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee (CREPC) its synergy.

A new level of confidence exists in the Hartford Capitol Region. We understand the risk better, we understand our capabilities better, and most of all, we have developed a higher level of trust in each other than ever before.

Thank you to the dedicated individuals that participate in CREPC.

Strategic Planning Committee Members

Robert Bycholski – Manchester Fire Department
Paul Benyeda – Manchester Office of Emergency Management
William Parker – Manchester Eight Utilities District Fire Department
Katherine McCormick – Public Health Director for the City of Hartford
Robert Cosgrove – Public Health Director for the Town of Newington
Gary Santoro – Fire Marshal for the Town of Wethersfield
Liz McDonald – American Red Cross
Robert Falaquerra – Vice President of Saint Francis Hospital
Kent Sargent – Saint Francis Hospital
Chris Schroeder – Fire Marshal for the Town of Newington
Betty Morris – Executive Director of North Central CT EMS
Charles Hurley – Assistant Chief of Operations for the West Hartford Fire Department
Gary S. Allyn – Assistant Chief of Planning for the West Hartford Fire Department
Thomas Weber – Fire Chief for the Manchester Fire Department
Chris Siwy – Fire Marshal for the Town of Glastonbury
Karin Foley – Manchester Hospital
Kenneth Jeffers – Fire Chief of the Windsor Locks Fire Department
Edward Richards – Fire Chief of the Enfield Fire Department
Jeffrey Kontner – Deputy Director of Emergency Management for the City of Hartford
William H. Austin – Chairperson for CREPC- Fire Chief for West Hartford
Carmine Centrella – Fire Chief for the UCONN Health Center Fire Department
Richard T. Winn – Captain of Training for the West Hartford Fire Department
Keith Victor – Communications Manager for Town of West Hartford
James Strillacci – Police Chief for the Town of West Hartford
Jamie DiPace – Fire Chief for the Town of Avon
Jonathan Greene – American Medical Response, Inc.
Stephen Chapman – North Central CT EMS
Donald Moore – Director of Emergency Management for the Town of Bloomfield

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Edward Lesco – Assistant Chief for the Blue Hills Fire Department
Hugo Costa, Jr. – North Central CT EMS
Chuck Beck – Connecticut Office of Emergency Management
Dr. John Shaw – Project Manager for the Capitol Region Metropolitan Medical System
Cheryl Assis – Public Safety Analyst for the Capitol Region Council of Governments
Bruce Lockwood – Fire Marshal for the Town of Canton
Ronald Hirschthal – Town of Bloomfield EMS
Michael Emond – Town of Manchester
Robert DiPietro – Captain in the New Britain Fire Department
Margus Laan – Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency
Normand Menard – Director of Emergency Disaster Services for the Salvation Army
Maryann C. Lexius – Manchester Health Department
Michael Whalen – Police Chief for the Town of Farmington
Ken Loock – Coordinator of Emergency Management for the Town of East Hartford
Harry H. Abery, Jr. – Co-chair of R-ESF 2 and ARES

Publication

This report was written and produced by William H. Austin, Chairperson, Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee. Questions, comments, and copies can be obtained by contacting email address: whaustin@westhartford.org.