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Wisconsin Homeland Security Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2009

Troops Called Up, Head Out

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In February, I had the great honor to attend the send-off ceremony for the Wisconsin National Guard 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. The 3,200 soldiers were mobilized as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom and are expected to be deployed overseas for about 10 months of their one-year mobilization.

This is the Wisconsin National Guard's largest operational deployment since World War II. Over the course of history, and especially since the September 11 attacks, our National Guard has been asked to make enormous contributions and sacrifices. Each time they respond with the same professionalism and courage that makes our state and our country proud.

Even after mobilization of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team and other units identified for mobilization in the coming year, the Wisconsin National Guard will still have more than 60 percent of its forces available in Wisconsin for any state emergency response that may be required. With a total force of nearly 10,000, having well over half the force available — about 6,000 soldiers and airmen — represents a significant emergency response capability.

The upcoming mobilizations do not involve either of the Guard's helicopter units or the state's 54th Civil Support Team. Most of the Wisconsin National Guard's engineer units are also unaffected, and a 500-member Rapid Reaction Force remaining in Wisconsin maintains the



Governor Doyle addresses service members of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team before they were deployed. Gov. Doyle told the troops that "the people of Wisconsin are forever humbled and grateful for your service."

Guard's capability to provide a speedy security response anywhere in the state.

With the threat of flooding, tornadoes and other storms, our Wisconsin National Guard is ready and able to respond to any emergency in the state. We hope that this spring and summer will be a quiet storm season, and we hope and pray our soldiers return home soon. ■


Governor Jim Doyle



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Homeland Security Council

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From the Chair

Brig. Gen. Don Dunbar

It's that time of year again, to start getting prepared for Wisconsin's storm season. Our state has battled two major flood events, both federally declared disasters, in the last year. These events, coupled with heavy snow have left us with above normal water tables for southern Wisconsin. The potential is there for another round of major flooding.

That's why it is important that our state and local emergency agencies are ready. Plans are in place, sandbags have been purchased, and the message has been issued to encourage citizens to purchase flood insurance.

Planning and looking toward the future is an important component of homeland security and emergency management. That's why the Governor's Homeland Security Council has spent the last year developing a new strategy. The document outlines Wisconsin's direction for the next three years in planning, preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery to a variety of man-caused and natural disasters and emergencies.

The comprehensive strategy was developed specifically for hazards in Wisconsin and incorporates established federal guidelines including the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the National Response Framework. The strategy encourages coordination,



Brig. Gen. Donald P. Dunbar
 Homeland Security Advisor

cooperation, and focused effort from federal, state, local, tribal, non-profit and private-sector entities. It also encourages citizen participation in preparedness efforts.

As we move forward, our homeland security program priorities will be based on our risks and threats, our federal requirements and funding. As Wisconsin's share of federal homeland security dollars continues to drop we will need to make difficult decisions to prioritize which programs we will continue to support.

We all have to be ready – whether it is a flood event, chemical spill or terrorist event. I encourage everyone to review the strategy and I look forward to hearing your thoughts on how best we move forward as a state.

The Wisconsin Homeland Security Strategy is located at <http://homelandsecurity.wi.gov>. ■

Governor Doyle adds new members to Homeland Security Council

In September, Governor Doyle added new members to the Wisconsin Homeland Security Council, broadening the council's membership to include local law enforcement, fire service and cyber terrorism. The Council also welcomed two members who took the place of their predecessors on the Council.

"The Wisconsin Homeland Security Council is a valuable source of expertise that I rely on for security policy and preparations," said Gov. Doyle. "Adding new members to the Council will help Wisconsin confront

new threats, including cyber terrorism, to keep our families and communities safe."

The new members of the Council are Milwaukee Police Chief Ed Flynn, Dane County Sheriff Dave Mahoney, Administrator of the Wisconsin Division of Enterprise Technology Oskar Anderson and Milwaukee Fire Chief Doug Holton. Capitol Police Chief Charles Tubbs and Dr. Seth Foldy, Emergency Services Coordinator for the Department of Health Services, also joined the Council last fall. ■



Sheriff Dave Mahoney
Dane County



Chief Ed Flynn
Milwaukee Police Department



Chief Charles Tubbs
Capitol Police



Administrator Oskar Anderson
Division of Enterprise
Technology



Chief Doug Holton
Milwaukee Fire Department

Wisconsin receives high marks for pandemic prep

Wisconsin ranks among the top states in the nation for pandemic flu preparedness, according to a recent U.S. Department of Health and Human Services assessment.

"I am pleased with the positive evaluation of our pandemic preparations and commend state and local officials for their hard work and dedication," said Governor Doyle. "This strong showing is a result of close, cooperative efforts, yet our work continues. We must always remain focused on improving our plans and preparations for the health and safety of Wisconsin residents."

Governor Doyle noted some key strengths highlighted in the report:

- The Dept. of Health Services' ability to distribute medications and protective equipment to health care workers.
- The Dept. of Public Instruction's work with school districts to better prepare staff, students and parents for a pandemic.
- The Dept. of Transportation's efforts were highlighted as a model for pandemic planning.
- The Dept. of Military Affairs received high marks for its ability to share critical information with partners.

To view the report, visit www.pandemic.wi.gov. ■

Wisconsin's 511 Traveler Information System now available

Motorists can now get up-to-the-minute travel information by either dialing 511 or going to a new website offered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

The 511 Traveler Information System uses voice recognition software to prompt callers through a list of options that provide information on traffic incidents and road conditions; transit services, including bus, rail, ferry, and taxi providers; roadside services, including rest areas; as well as links to the Division of Motor Vehicles, State Patrol, sheriff's departments and commercial airports. In addition to using voice recognition software, callers can use the keypad on their phones to input information.

The new website, www.511wi.gov, features a map that graphically displays winter road conditions, traffic speeds, travel times, incidents, traffic camera images, road closures due to

maintenance or construction and potential future road closures. It also allows users to see the messages displayed on variable message boards throughout the state.

The 511 Traveler Information System provides far more information than ever before, including AMBER alerts and can provide targeted messages to specific counties. The website also provides links for mobile devices.

The 511 Traveler Information System replaced the state's toll free 1-800 ROAD WIS number in December, providing more than five times the number of lines and reducing the possibility that a caller would get a busy signal when seeking important traveler information.

Encourage citizens in your community to call 511 before traveling during severe weather or to check road conditions. ■

Ready Wisconsin program kicks off

ReadyWisconsin is an initiative of Wisconsin Emergency Management and the Wisconsin Citizen Corps Council that promotes a culture of emergency preparedness. The campaign aims to encourage citizens to anticipate emergencies and:

1. Get a Kit
2. Make a Plan
3. Be Informed
4. Get Involved

The ReadyWisconsin website has been prepared to offer citizens ready-made checklists for making a kit and plan and how to get critical information in the case of an emergency. Visitors will be pointed to the new WeVolunteer Initiative to get involved and volunteer in their communities.

Local response agencies, volunteer centers and other community groups will also benefit from ReadyWisconsin. Posters, public service announcements and other resources are already available for emergency managers, volunteer coordinators and others to raise awareness and preparedness in communities throughout the state. Visit <http://ReadyWisconsin.wi.gov> for more information. ■



A sample of an emergency preparedness kit includes bottled water, a weather radio, medicine, pet supplies, food and a flashlight, among other things.



Report: Statewide communications system feasible, within budget

An independent engineering study has confirmed that a proposed statewide communications system can be built using existing infrastructure within the budget of available federal funds.

Kimball and Associates released an interim report that confirmed a statewide trunking backbone could be built on existing communications infrastructure. Mobile coverage over 95% of the state would be achieved through the construction of the trunking backbone, Kimball found, for an estimated cost of approximately \$18 million, a sum that could be covered with available federal funds.

The report was commissioned by the Statewide System Management Group, an ad hoc committee with representatives from local communications groups, the emergency response community and state agencies. The SSMG has authorized Kimball and Associates to continue

with the second and third phases of the system analysis. Kimball will study and report on the specific equipment purchases and technical upgrades required of the new system and will also calculate the potential cost-savings for local systems joining the statewide trunking backbone.

The need for a statewide communications system capable of managing substantial and lengthy workloads during disasters has long been recognized in Wisconsin. The state's Interoperability Council's initiatives have focused on improving two-way radio communication, which serves as an important interim solution to a long-term statewide need. Over \$27 million has been awarded to local response agencies to improve mobile radio communications.

For more information on the proposed system or to read the Kimball and Associates report, visit www.IC.wi.gov. ■

Med Sleds help Jefferson County medical responders

In its continuing effort to be prepared for emergency situations, Jefferson County recently purchased 25 Med Sleds for area first responders. Jefferson County Emergency Management and the Jefferson Health Department coordinated the purchase of the reusable and decontamination-capable devices. Med Sleds are lightweight and portable products that can be used to quickly and easily to evacuate victims without lifting. The sled has a braking mechanism which deploys easily to lower someone down stairs.



Scout credits training for quick response during rare winter tornado

In January 2008, a rare winter tornado destroyed 27 homes in Kenosha County and damaged another 78. As the tornado ripped through the townships of Wheatland and Brighton, one young man directed his brother and brother's friend to safety and then shielded them from falling debris.

For his heroic actions, Alex Rupp was recognized with the Heroism Award by the Boy Scouts of America. The Heroism Award is given to a youth member or adult leader who has demonstrated heroism and skill in saving or attempting to save life at minimum risk to self.

When he was awarded this medal, Alex recalled a mock emergency drill held in 2002 at Camp Oh-Da-Ko-Ta. He recalled the scenario when a "tornado" hit the camp but he never thought he would experience "the real thing" himself. In a Kenosha News article, Alex credited the disaster drill and the training he received with helping him react to the tornado warning that afternoon in January 2008.

The mock emergency drill held at Camp Oh-Da-Ko-Ta was one part of a weekend "Disaster Camporee" sponsored by the Southeast Wisconsin Council's Lighthouse District (Boy Scouts) and coordinated by the Racine County Office of Emergency Management, along with assistance from fire and

law enforcement agencies from Racine and Kenosha Counties.

During the 2002 exercise, 25 different agencies participated, but the size and scope of the incident were intended to quickly overwhelm their manpower and resources. In response, many leaders and scouts mobilized with first aid kits to begin searching for the missing. At the triage area, scouts and leaders worked beside trained EMTs, helping to splint broken limbs and to bandage the wounded.

As emergency managers, we know that public education and training are two components of the preparedness phase, but it is not always easy for us to quantify their effectiveness. Initial feedback is often positive but most people never put their training directly into practice. It was encouraging to hear that a training program conducted in 2002 for 250 Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts was credited six years later by a young man who remembered what he was taught, took charge in a time of crisis and put the welfare of his brother and brother's friend before his own.

For more information on the Boy Scout Disaster Camporee conducted in 2002, visit www.racineco.com/emergencymanagement/e_camporee.aspx. ■

Public, private partners make CodeRed a reality in Portage county

Portage County will increase its ability to notify residents in an emergency with the purchase of the CodeRED system.



In January, Canadian National presented Portage County officials with a check for \$5,000 to help with the purchase of the CodeRED emergency notification system. From the left: Stevens Point Mayor Andrew Halverson, Stevens Point Police Chief Kevin Ruder, Canadian National representative Kevin Soucie, Portage County Emergency Management Director Sandra Curtis, Canadian National representative Jackie Moder and Portage County Executive Mark Maslowski.

CodeRED is a web-based application that allows agencies to craft a message and send it to residents almost instantly on their home phones, work phones, cell phones or e-mail. CodeRED is capable of sending up to 1,000 calls per minute.

"Portage County again is being very proactive in our efforts to keep everyone safe," said Stevens Point Police Chief Kevin Ruder.

Public and private entities in Portage County partnered to make the purchase of CodeRED a reality. Portage County, the city of Stevens Point and the village of Plover will participate in the program. The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, all public school districts in Portage County, Stevens Point Catholic Schools and St. Paul Lutheran School will contribute 50 cents per student to participate. Canadian National donated \$5,000 for CodeRED, as well.

Portage County plans on using the program not only for emergencies and important community alerts, but as an internal notification system for local government employees. Some of the possible uses of CodeRED include: hazardous materials emergencies, severe weather, school closings and snow emergencies. ■

Polka and preparedness in La Crosse

Community members attending the annual Oktoberfest celebration in La Crosse were met with a variety of family preparedness information.

The La Crosse Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Citizen Corps volunteers and Wisconsin Emergency Management staff passed out literature and family preparedness packets at the fall bash on September 26-27, 2008. More than 50,000 people attend the Oktoberfest Maple Leaf Parade each year and the citizen preparedness booth was located just inside the Oktoberfest grounds entrance to give it maximum exposure.

La Crosse County Emergency Management Director Keith Butler says the booth was a success. Booth volunteers were busy all day handing out information and answering questions about personal preparedness. ■



Marathon simulation tests state lab

How could a deadly chemical exposure in Texas, 1,000 miles away from Wisconsin, affect the Badger State? After working around-the-clock for more than 100 hours, staff at the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene certainly learned how.

As one of just ten Level One Chemical Terrorism Response Laboratories in the country, the Wisconsin State Lab will be expected to act as a 'surge capacity' laboratory in the case of a deadly mass chemical exposure in the United States. Should another state lab identify a deadly chemical exposure, as a recent terrorism exercise simulated, the federal government will rely on the Wisconsin State Lab to verify the results.

In January, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) held a functional exercise simulating the release of the chemical agent ricin in Texas. As part of the exercise the CDC sent 500 urine samples to the Wisconsin State Laboratory for testing.

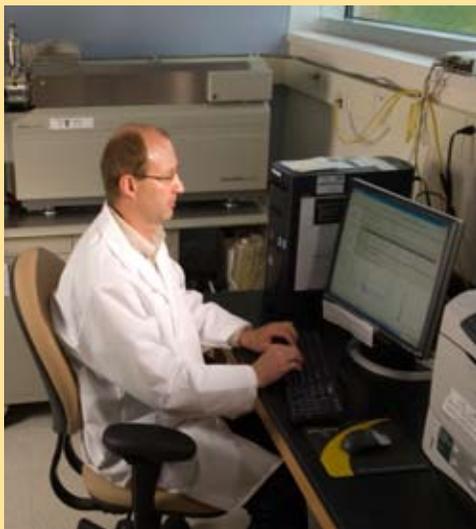
Because of the immediate risk a verified chemical exposure would pose the U.S., the CDC requires laboratories to work around the clock until all samples have been tested. Wisconsin State Lab staff worked nine-hour shifts, 24 hours a day, throughout the course of

the exercise until testing was complete. Samples arrived at the State Lab at 10:00 a.m. on January 13 and final results were reported at 11:40 p.m. on January 17, a full 12 hours ahead of the CDC's goal.

"In general, we think our participation in the exercise went quite well with only a few minor hitches," said Dave Degenhardt, Wisconsin State Lab Chemical Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. "These types of exercises with the CDC and the other Level One labs provide invaluable opportunities for us to assess our procedures and find out where we can make improvements."

The State Lab participates in one to two chemical terrorism response exercises with the CDC annually. In March, the State Lab tested 500 urine samples for nerve agent metabolites as part of another exercise.

While all state public health laboratories are part of the LRN for biological terrorism response, only 10 are designated by CDC as Level One chemical terrorism response laboratories. These laboratories, including Wisconsin's, serve as surge capacity labs for the CDC. ■



Advanced Chemist Bill Krick performs analyses on an HPLC-Tandem Mass Spectrometer, the instrument used in the January 2009 CDC chemical terrorism response exercise.

Community Groups Participate in CERT Training



Students participating in the Milwaukee County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training at the Brentwood Church of Christ take a break during their disaster response class held in August 2008.

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