

BELLINGHAM

Local Emergency Planning Committee

Inaugural Meeting

June 10, 2008

Roll Call

Barney Yorkston (Yorkston Oil), Robert Muzzy (WTA), Frances Burkhart (WCSO DEM), Chris Regis (Red Cross), Loni Rahm (Tourism Bureau), Debra Jones (BTC), Gayle Shipley (WWU), Sheryl Hershey and Karen Hollingsworth (Cold Storage), Rick Kelln (Cascade Natural Gas), Randy Scott (St. Joseph Hospital), Brian Keeley (WCC), Don Woolridge (Praxair), Joni Hensley, Beth Melius, Dawnette Chadwick, and Greg Stern (Health Department), Neil Clement (Port), Andy Day, Rick Sucee, Don Davis and Holly Salkeld (OEM).

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Andy Day from the Bellingham Office of Emergency Management.

Welcome and Introductions

- Introductions of participants
- Moment of Silence to acknowledge anniversary of Olympic Pipeline Incident (6/10/99).

Purpose and History

Andy Day provided a brief review of the purpose and history of Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC).

- LEPCs are required by Federal government under the 1986 Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA). This legislation, specific to hazardous materials, required LEPCs to develop hazardous materials response plans and to act as clearinghouse of hazardous materials information for the public.
- The City of Bellingham participated in the Whatcom County LEPC but, when Bellingham became its own emergency management entity, the County asked Bellingham officials to form its own LEPC.
- A working group of community agencies with a stake in emergency preparation and response embraced the idea of forming a LEPC to encompass not only hazardous materials but a broader, all-risk view.
- In late April, 2008, the State Emergency Response Commission approved the Mayor's request to establish a LEPC for Bellingham.

Objectives

Consideration was given to the framework of objectives, strategies, and tactics developed by the former working group of community agencies with a stake in emergency preparation and response. Questions about the underlying approach (all-risk v. specific risk) were discussed. A proposed framework of objectives will be distributed for consideration at the next meeting.

Organization

Intent is to develop a set of by-laws that essentially mirror those of the County to reduce confusion on the part of those participating in both groups. Key elements include:

- Officers: select at next meeting
- Meeting schedule: consensus was to meet every other month.

A draft set of by-laws will be distributed for consideration at the next meeting.

Community Training and Exercises

One of the major benefits anticipated of the LEPC is increased coordination and cooperation in meeting emergency training and exercise needs. A schedule of past and planned training and exercises was presented. Highlights included:

- Pipeline symposium in April, 2008
- National Level exercise in May, 2008. Event was a full-scale exercise involving mass casualties and hazardous materials issues. Randy Scott showed St Joseph's DVD report of the exercise that tested the hospital's surge capacity and highlighted the hospital's role in interagency cooperation and integrated community response.
- Major fire emergency exercise last week. The practice benefited the Command Team that supported the Delft Square, Lynden 4 alarm fire. It was noted that no one was hurt at the Lynden fire.
- Integrated Emergency Management Course (IEMC) at the Emergency Management Institute in Emmitsburg, MD in Aug 08.
- Airport exercise in September, 2008
- Active shooter exercise: Multiple agencies interested in completing active shooter exercises. BTC had live shooter table top exercise yesterday that could perhaps be built upon.

Public Education

Andy Day issued an invitation to all LEPC members to partner with Bellingham Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to plan a fall community preparedness campaign. Abby Vincent, an intern from WWU, is on-board on OEM to support this effort.

Alert and Warning

Discussion of the status of the old CAN (Community Alert Network, now called Rapid Notify) system in providing emergency alert and warning of hazards to community

members. Andy Day explained that the City had migrated to a different platform called MyStateUSA.

Planning

Activities are underway to develop a hazardous materials response plan and a database of hazardous materials within the community. Holly Salkeld, an intern from WWU, is assisting with these projects.

Emergency Public Information

Interest was expressed in coordinating content and delivery of messages to the public during emergencies including messages from the PIER system. Discussion of the existence of a newly formed network of local information officers (Communicators of Whatcom [COW]) and their efforts.

Entity Reports

- WWU: Gayle Shipley showed the new WWU Emergency Response Guide for employees.
- OEM: in the process of setting up off-site Incident Command Post at the Bellingham Public Works as well as providing the training for participants.

Action Items

- OEM: Form a working group on training & exercise (schedule & coordinating)
- OEM: Form a working group on public education to develop a fall preparedness campaign.
- Cold Storage, Port, OEM: Meet to discuss MyStateUSA and public alerting.
- OEM: send out minutes, draft by-laws, draft objectives

Calendar

- July 1: Fall preparedness campaign meeting, 1-3, Broadway Fire Station.
- July 22, 1-3, LEPC meeting at the Health Education Center
- September 23, 1-3, LEPC meeting at the Health Education Center
- November 11, 1-3, LEPC meeting at the Health Education Center