



The Insider

*Yakima Valley Office of Emergency Management
February 2010 Newsletter*

Hwy 410 Chinook Pass Landslide A Memory of Not So Long Ago

Nile Valley – How quickly a major event becomes a memory? The ability of local, state, and federal agencies/ officials to work together, doing what was possible, as well as trying for more was a great thing to see. Even when the local newspaper tried to stir controversy; there was nothing there and it ended quickly. This event from the 30,000 foot perspective was a huge success. There will always be some who believe it should have been done another way but in this case there is little room for criticism.

The people with the responsibility who did their part were: Nile and Chinook Pass Citizens, the construction contractor Sea land Construction Inc., WSDOT, Yakima County Public Services, the multitude of other local/ state agencies, County Commissioners, our legislative and congressional delegations, the Governor, as well as many federal agency representatives. These people from many perspectives met the overarching goal of this disaster. They returned life to normal as soon as possible. These people need to be remembered for what they did. It really was outstanding.

Operation Eagle Eye Part #1 An Incident Command Post Exercise

Operation Eagle Eye: Part #1 was held January 28, 2010 at the Yakima Police Departments training room across from the Police Station. The scenario based exercise was a discussion on the actions that would take place in an Incident Command Post established to manage the incident. There were many lessons learned but the exercise was not a training course. The exercise was a discussion of how the City of Yakima's Emergency Responders would act given the presented scenario. Representatives from the City of Yakima's Emergency Response community made decisions on how to deal with problems and use available resources. Participants from police, fire, and public works did a very good job talking through the issues and coming up with solutions.

Operation Eagle Eye is a four part program where the exercises get increasingly more challenging and difficult at each stage.

Interoperability Communications Grant Application

The Yakima Valley Office of Emergency Management applied for a Homeland Security Grant to complete a three phase Interoperable Communications project. The project:

Phase 1 - Identify current wireless radio and data systems including governance and equipment being used in the Yakima Valley and by our contiguous neighbors.

Phase 2 - Establish a formal interoperable emergency communications governance structure to include common planning and operational protocols.

Phase 3 - Facilitate the delivery of multi-discipline multi-jurisdictional training and exercises to communication center and responders

We have been notified that our application has been accepted as one of the state projects. The state project list has now been sent to Homeland Security and we should hear in the next couple of months if we will receive the grant.

Emergency Planning, Training, and Exercises for Valley Schools

In partnership with ESD 105 and the nine various school districts the Yakima Valley Office of Emergency Management is developing a grant application. The project will be to assist local school facilities in updating as well as standardizing their emergency plans and procedures. The grant is a two year project that will provide an overarching strategic plan for each school facility wishing to participate. The project will also standardize procedures and protocols. The grant project as we have identified it will follow the same methodology as our Comprehensive Emergency Management Program (CEMP)

The application is very detailed and is due to the US Department of Education by the end of February.

Community Preparedness Campaign Completed “Three Days, Three Ways”

Utilizing a Homeland Security Grant Emergency Management completed a radio advertizing campaign on ways to prepare for a major emergency or disaster. The campaign was modeled after a King County Developed program called *Three Days, Three Ways*. The campaign utilized the voice of local radio announcer Dave Ettl to present several ways to prepare for a major emergency or disaster. The funding paid for 196 radio spots on several valley radio stations.

Local Hospital Evacuation Drill February 19, 2010

Friday this week Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital will host a Table Top Exercise on the evacuation of their Campus on Tieton Drive. The Exercise developed and facilitated by Emergency Management will be scenario based requiring the total evacuation of the area. Hospital executives and planners will utilize current plans and protocols to respond to the scenario working on the problem as it is presented. An exercise “Hot wash” immediately following the exercise will identify what worked well and what may need improvement. From the information gathered an After Action Review and Improvement Plan will be developed

The Yakima Valley Joint Information System

Our system of managing information provided to the public through the media is under review and update. KR Catlin recently back from Public Information Officer’s (PIO) training is developing a program to bring together other PIO’s from the various departments and agencies. These agencies include fire, law enforcement, Corrections, schools, etc.

During the last couple of events here in the valley, in particular the Nile Landslide and the Skydiver airplane crash, the importance of a broad public or Joint Information System (JIS) has been recognized. Emergency Management has developed a project to identifying PIO’s from throughout the valley willing to participate in a JIS. The group has met once and has training scheduled in the near future. If you are (or your agency has) a PIO and is willing to be part of the system contact KR Catlin at 574-1908.

Yakima Health District Planning

The Yakima Valley Office of Emergency Management once again is in partnership with the Yakima Health District. For the last five years OEM has participated with the health district in their response planning, preparedness exercises, and other grant deliverables. The partnership is unique in the state. We are the only county where, as in a real health emergency, we would be working together as we are on a day to day basis. It is a good thing for the community.

Yakima Valley Incident Management Team Ready to Help

Five years ago after the Wilber Ellis chemical fire in Grandview a group of leaders in the emergency response community got together and after long discussions decided a local Incident Management Team (IMT) would be helpful in managing larger events. The group decided a Type IV IMT would be our first goal. Emergency Management took the lead and facilitated the initial training and team development. The team has been used twice; once on a chemical spill outside of Toppenish, and again for the first three days of the Nile Valley Landslide.

One time Washington State Emergency Preparedness grant funding was used for the initial training and equipment. Homeland Security grants funding has been used to provide additional equipment.

The IMT Executive Group is currently reorganizing to better support team operations. WSP Lt Jim Keightley was recently elected the new team Coordinator (taking over for Emergency Management Director Jim Hall). LT. Keightley has vision, and will guide the team as it grows in the future.

Your Emergency Management Staff



OEM Staff from Left to Right

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KR Catlin

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