



The Insider

*Yakima Valley Office of Emergency Management
October 2011 Newsletter*

Courthouse Security Update

County Courthouse Well the new Courthouse Security System has been fully operational for over a week now and folks seem to be adjusting to the changes quite well. The system will make it safer for all of us that work and visit here. The challenges for Emergency Management seem to working their way through the system as well.

The afterhours and weekend access for volunteer and those that support the office is close to being resolved. The plan as it is now will see the backdoor get a proximity card reader on the outside where those with programmed cards will have access afterhours. The inside will receive a crash bar for emergency exit. This will be similar as before for those that had cards. The interior courthouse door will be locked from the inside so there will no longer be access to the rest of the courthouse afterhours from emergency management without escort by a staff member. During normal business hours unfortunately volunteers and visitors will need to go through courthouse security like everyone else visiting the courthouse.

Operation “That’s Gotta Hurt” Yakima Air Terminal Table Top Exercise



Yakima Fire Station #95
September 14, 2011 50 plus responders came together to test the response systems in place at the Yakima Airport. The responders were presented with a crash of a commercial aircraft with a number of survivors needing assistance. Those present came from many different agencies and departments including: Yakima Air Terminal,

Horizon Air, City of Yakima Government, Yakima Fire Department, Yakima Police Department, Yakima Valley

Office of Emergency Management, American Red Cross. Yakima County Fire Protection District #12 West Valley, Yakima County Sheriff’s Office, Yakima County EMS, Central Washington Comprehensive Mental Health, Yakima Training Center, American Medical Response, and Advanced Life Systems.

The exercise included the use of the agencies communications systems with the crash site in one room, the Incident Command Post in another, and the other agencies in another. Injects, or simulated information, was provided at various times to simulate what would really be happening.

The responders developed a command structure and made assignments. The problems were worked as they were injected. The responders did a very good job. Evaluators monitoring the exercise as it unfolded found a small number of minor issues write about in their After Action Report.

The Exercise Planning Team commented this was a good exercise to prepare the community for a real event and the Full Scale Exercise in September of 2012.

Notification Guidelines Stackholders Group Working

The winter of 2010 – 2011 the Yakima Valley suffered three flood events each of which presented potential damage greater than what occurred. In other words we dodged the bullet in several areas. It was identified by several agencies and departments there was a lack of information sharing and notification of potential problem areas.

To help and hopefully mitigate this situation in the future a stakeholders group came together to discuss the issues and seek a solution. The group met in September and identified several areas where a better job could be done. The group agreed when a threat was identified to notify each other of the threat and collectively maintain situational awareness once an event began. A standard set of guidelines would be developed to follow identifying what an event is and when to notify others.

They agreed a system would not be used very often so a system of training and exercises was needed to keep

people aware and proficient with the system. The first exercise is scheduled for November

The Guidelines are now in Draft form and available for review. Contact Jim Hall jim.hall@co.yakima.wa.us if you want a copy.

Public Information Joint Information System Table Top Exercise

The purpose of this exercise was to provide an opportunity for Public Information Officers to gain knowledge and hone their skills to prepare for the use of a Joint Information Center in a valley wide emergency.

The exercise was designed to establish a learning environment for players to exercise their role as a Public Information Officer in response to a valley wide public safety event that became a public/ media information issue for their office.

The primary areas for improvement are

Provide training opportunities in the use of WEB EOC as a means of sharing secure/vetted information.

Sharing of information between Public Information Officer's sooner.

Develop working relationships with 211/ People for People so area agencies/departments can utilize their call-in services.

Establishing and maintain public information officer relationships to ensure a source of mutual assistance if help is needed.

Participate in social media training with PIOs currently using blogs, Facebook, Twitter.

Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) Completes State Wide Ex.

Operational Area Emergency Operations Center (OAEOC) Saturday October 1, 2011 The local ARES Group participated in a state wide communication exercise where the State EOC and many county EOC's sent messages to one another and back again with evaluators looking on. The exercise started at 0900 hrs. and ended at 1500 hrs.

The team exercised nearly every capability available including digital communications via radio in both High Frequency and 2 Meter, voice message traffic in again both High Frequency and 2 Meter. Messages were sent

via the Winlink system which is a digital e-mail system over a radio link to a downlink into the network and on to a mailbox.

Overall the exercise was a success with many more positive or things done well that issues identified needing improvement.

Amateur radio is a redundant communications system when data and phone services become unavailable. We experienced a phone and data system failure in the lower valley a month or so ago. The efforts of these volunteers helps make the Yakima Valley better prepared to respond to a major emergency or disaster. Thank you ARES for what you do!!!!

Exercises and Training Completed

Yakima Valley Joint Information System

September 9, 2011

Bringing together the Public Information Officer from throughout the valley to work together in a Joint Information Center (JIC) to keep the public informed.

Yakima Airport Table Top Exercise

Operation That's Gotta Hurt September 14, 2011

A required exercise to maintain FAA Certification.

Future Exercises and Training

Operational Area EOC Functional Ex December 2011

Tentative, to be developed

City of Yakima Advanced Emergency Operations Center

January - 2012

Tentative, To be developed. Advanced Table Top Exercise

City of Union Gap Active Shooter Full Scale Exercise

February - 2012

Tentative, To be developed. Advanced Table Top Exercise

Your Dedicated Emergency Management Staff



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