



NCR HOMELAND SECURITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

For more information, contact:

Jo'Ellen Countee, Emergency Management Agency, District of Columbia, 202-727-2985

Jim Pettit, Maryland Governor's Office of Homeland Security, 410-974-2353

Bob Spieldenner, Virginia Department of Emergency Management, 804-897-6510

Merni Fitzgerald, Fairfax County Office of Public Affairs, 703-324-3189

- **Enhanced Interoperable Communications**

The National Capital Region (NCR) is building an integrated, interoperable system for communications and information sharing — that is both wireless and fiber-optic. The region, for example, has installed a secure, wireless network. This network allows local, state and federal public safety personnel to exchange data, including video. The region's emergency operations centers also are being connected by a high-speed fiber-optic network. First responders have expanded radio communications capabilities, including underground in subway tunnels.

- **Offered Emergency Alerts and Notifications to the Public**

Residents in every NCR jurisdiction can sign up for a free, text-alert system that provides emergency alerts and notifications. This system delivers real-time information to cell phones, pagers, e-mail accounts and PDAs, such as Blackberrys. NCR governments also can deliver warnings through Reverse 9-1-1, an automated, non-subscription system that calls cellular and landline telephones with alerts and warnings.

- **Provided Public Education on Disaster Preparedness**

The "Be Ready. Make a Plan." Campaign educated NCR residents on the basic actions they can take to prepare for an emergency. This regional campaign significantly increased public awareness, with more than 50 percent of residents seeing or hearing the preparedness message. The campaign distributed more than 1.25 million wallet-sized, personal preparedness plans and trained more than 48,000 residents on how to prepare. The region is also educating children to prepare for disasters, using the American Red Cross' "Masters of Disaster" curriculum. More than 23,000 teachers have been trained to teach this curriculum, and it has been distributed to more than 1,059 schools, grades K-12.

- **Assisted Special Needs Populations to Prepare**
 NCR jurisdictions are assisting people with special needs prepare for disasters. For example, the District of Columbia has distributed 4,000 free emergency preparedness kits to residents with special needs, and the district is partnering with a local hospital to give kits to homebound elderly. Virginia offers emergency planning and preparedness classes across the commonwealth to those who care for people with special needs. In Maryland, the local Citizen Corps Councils and the emergency management community have integrated people who are disabled or have special needs into their planning. Using a federal grant, the region also established the NCR's Disability Preparedness Initiative to incorporate people with special needs into emergency plans. This initiative followed up a landmark conference with more than 400 representatives from disability and special needs organizations, businesses and nonprofits, and local, state and federal government agencies. This conference was a forum to share information on best practices and resources.
- **Increased Medical Readiness**
 The region can quickly detect and track a potential bioterrorist attack using its electronic syndromic surveillance system. This regional system connects pharmacists, hospital emergency rooms, schools, veterinarians, laboratories and emergency medical services. Because hospital beds in the region's 34 accredited, licensed hospitals are filled every day, the NCR purchased an additional 900 hospital beds. These beds will allow hospitals to treat a surge of patients resulting from a terrorist attack or Pandemic Flu.
- **Equipped First Responders to Respond to All Hazards**
 Police officers and fire fighters have been equipped, trained and exercised in responding to any threat — chemical, biological or radiological. For example, fire fighters and police officers have the protective gear they need to deal with a chemical, biological or radiological disaster, and they have received training in dealing with WMD incidences.
- **Partnered with the Nonprofit and Private Sectors**
 The region's private sector organizations have developed an inventory of equipment, materials and services they can provide during an emergency. For example, a private company provided air conditioners to the D.C. Armory for Hurricane Katrina evacuees staying there. The nonprofit community has created a plan to coordinate the delivery of services during a disaster.
- **Protected Drinking Water Supplies from Chemical or Biological Agents**
 Working with the more than two dozen water utilities in the metropolitan area, the region has created the Early Warning Water Security Monitoring system. This regional network of biological and chemical monitoring stations can detect low levels of contamination in both untreated and treated drinking water.

#