

# REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

A Quarterly Publication of the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council

Spring 2005



## Focus on Increasing Public Safety from Chemical Releases

The North Central Florida Regional Planning Council's Emergency Planning staff assists three separate organizations.

### 1. Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)

With accidental and deliberate chemical releases presenting new dangers to first responders and the public, the LEPC helps provide increased chemical safety in our communities. This is accomplished through increasing response capability and accident preventions. The LEPC provides a range of training for emergency responders—from those that might discover a release to those who will stop the leak.

### 2. Regional Hazmat Team

The North Central Florida Regional Hazardous Materials Response team was formed in early 2001 through an interlocal agreement. With 6 counties and 3 municipalities currently members, the group hopes to have all 11 of North Central Florida Regional Planning Council counties as members. The Team was recently awarded the state's top ranked grant for emergency management and offers Hazmat Boot Camp Training (see story on page 3).

### 3. Regional Domestic Security Task Force

One goal of this regional domestic security task force is to enable local municipalities to respond to terrorism threats effectively. The task force focuses on providing regional response from many different agencies (see Protect Freedom story on page 2).



Terrorism Response Exercise held in early 2004, Newberry Water Treatment Plant, Newberry Florida

## Regional Hazmat Team Awarded Top-Ranked Grant

Awarded \$160,300 for the 2004-2005 fiscal year, the North Central Florida Regional Hazmat Team received the top-ranked grant this year from 208 applications for emergency management competitive grants. This grant added to the \$515,940 received in previous grants.

“A regional solution to a regional need helped make this grant application successful,” said Dwayne Mundy, Public Safety and Regulatory Compliance Program Director for the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council. Most other grant applications were more localized. “The program provides a model that other governments in similar situations can use,” said Mundy.

This year’s money will go to filling in the gaps. Additional equipment is needed for the Regional Hazmat Team’s five response trailers in service and its one training trailer.

The Hazmat Team consists of six member counties -Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Gilchrist, Union, and Dixie and the three municipalities of Gainesville, Lake City, and Starke.

## Protect Freedom II Exercise

In order to enable local communities to respond to homeland security threats more effectively, the Regional Domestic Security Task Force recently conducted exercises to train responders to achieve a unified response.

Two of the 41 locations during the two day exercise included the City of Newberry’s water treatment plant and the fictitious Acme Feed Store in High Springs. “Explosives” were found at these locations to simulate activities to train responders on security threats pertaining to a deliberate hazardous materials release.

In Newberry, a joint command post was established to help coordinate the various agencies responding, such as Emergency Management Services, the fire department, and sheriff’s department. “A unified command is important to coordinating the overall response to a terrorist situation,”

said Dwayne Mundy, Public Safety and Regulatory Compliance Program Director for the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council.

About 200 people participated in the exercises which were planned months ahead of time. However, rescue workers from the various agencies had limited knowledge of the events that were to take place. The bomb squad donned their suits and self-contained breathing apparatus before investigating the situations. Rescue officials stood by as back-up. A decontamination section was set up to clean those rescue workers whose suits could have been contaminated.

This is the second year that North Central Florida Regional Planning Council’s staff have assisted the Regional Domestic Security Task Force put on this type of homeland security training exercise. Next year’s exercises will include tabletop discussions and computer simulations.



### Web Pages of Interest

North Central Florida Regional Planning Council—  
<http://ncfrpc.org>

The Original Florida—<http://originalfloridabusines.org>

North Central Florida Local Emergency Planning  
Committee—<http://ncflepc.org>

The Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organiza-  
tion— <Http://ncfrpc.org/mpto/index.html>

## HazMat Boot Camp

While they may not be donning camouflage and boots nor practicing with rifles, area responders nevertheless have the chance to go to “Boot Camp.” North Central Florida’s Regional Hazmat (Hazardous Materials) Team have ongoing boot camps to provide refresher training program for responders. In these boot camps the responders get a chance to use equipment and to practice in preparation of a hazardous materials incident.

The boot camps are held on the Planning Council’s premises. Each camp focuses on a different area of training and the training lasts one day. Hazmat technicians need 40 hours of refresher training a year and these boot camps help with that.

Some of the sessions include air monitoring, decontamination, stopping chlorine leaks, transportation incidents and suit testing.

A regional hazmat response team should have a minimum of 7 people—two people to go in, two people outside as back-up, an incident commander, a safety officer, and someone for decontamination.

Typical hazmat incidents for this area involve transportation hazards and the stealing of anhydrous ammonia from farmers for use in methamphetamine labs.

Other training is offered for law enforcement, EMS, public works employees and fire-fighters who will take only defensive actions. The Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) offers free training to all eleven counties of the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council’s area.

For more information contact Dwayne Mundy at 352- 955-2200 x108 or email [mundy@ncfrpc.org](mailto:mundy@ncfrpc.org).



Area responders participate in “boot camp” activities.



Local firefighter gears up for domestic security response training

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