



Cumberland County
Department of Public Safety

The Communiqué

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Department of
Public Safety**

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Exercise, Exercise, Exercise– Severe Weather Awareness Week Exercise

Cumberland County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) personnel were hard at work during the annual statewide weather exercise on March 29th. The morning started in typical fashion with staff at work at



their desks. The scenario began to unfold as an alert was sent out that severe thunderstorms were expected to impact the area. The action quickly progressed as the exercise scenario involved the storm entering the western end of the county and blowing the roof off of 3 buildings, in the Shippensburg area. One of these buildings was a large residential complex and while injuries were unknown, they were anticipated. As the EOC activated in light of this event, the situation further expanded as the strong fast mov-

ing storm wreaked havoc as it moved through the county producing possible tornadic activity.

The scenario presented a great training opportunity for our school services officer and health and medical staff. The staff in these two areas began to discuss coordination of early school dismissals, so that school facilities could be used as mass care sites.

A Cumberland County Geographical Information Services (GIS) Department staff member was also on hand for the exercise utilizing new mapping technology. GIS was able to map damages and provide information on



population and number of structures in areas reporting damage. This type of information is useful during the response and recovery efforts, but

also during damage assessment.

This exercise was also an excellent opportunity for DPS staff and EOC volunteers to become more familiar with the new technology



available and layout of the new EOC. A total of 19 individuals staffed the EOC for the exercise along with representatives from the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. School districts, daycares, municipalities, and several other organizations also participated in the exercise of varying levels. The following day DPS staff conducted an after action review in an effort to discuss lessons learned and highlight best practices.

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Commissioners Proclaim Severe Weather Awareness Week

Cumberland County Board of Commissioners proclaimed March 26th - March 30st Severe Weather Awareness Week in Cumberland County during their meeting held in Shippensburg on March 21st. Severe Weather Awareness Week is an annual initiative that encourages citizens to prepare for forecasted and unexpected severe weather that

can occur in Cumberland County. Unexpected weather certainly describes 2011, with historical flooding, fall snow storms and even an earthquake occurring! Forecasters expect 2012 to be just as active when it comes to severe weather, which means no one can afford to let their guard down when it comes to preparing! With this in mind, DPS spent the week

promoting preparedness at home and at the workplace and took a look at the historical impact of severe weather in Pennsylvania. The culmination of the week was the statewide weather exercise.

Dispatcher Joins Stork Club

Cumberland County Dispatcher Jon Anschutz was recognized by the Board of Commissioners during their regular workshop meeting on February 23rd. In December, Anschutz took a 9-1-1 call from an individual in North Newton Township reporting a woman in labor. Anschutz provided pre-arrival instructions to the caller which re-

sulted in the delivery of a healthy baby boy prior to the arrival of an ambulance.

It is required of all Cumberland County Dispatchers to achieve and maintain Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) certification. EMD provides dispatchers with a specialized skill set that allows them to provide lifesaving pre-arrival medical instructions and acti-

vate the appropriate emergency responses. Initial EMD certification is achieved through a twenty four hour course. To maintain their certification dispatchers must sustain CPR certification, pass quality assurance reviews, complete twenty four hours of continue education and pass a test every two years.

Anschutz was presented with

a blue stork pin during his recognition and he has been added to the Stork Club plaque. The Stork Club identifies those dispatchers that have assisted in the delivery of a baby by providing pre-arrival instructions. To date 17 Cumberland County dispatchers have joined the ranks of the Stork Club, delivering 19 babies, since its creation nearly 20 years ago.

A 9-1-1 Call...From Afghanistan?

The average day for Cumberland County dispatchers is anything but average! Each call has the potential for presenting a unique set of circumstances that will challenge the dispatcher to think outside of the box. Most of these situations go unknown to the public, but we want to highlight one of those recent unique calls!

It is not uncommon for dispatchers to receive calls from individuals in other states. Individuals may call about a loved one they cannot get a hold of in the area and or may have been on the phone when someone experienced a medical emergency in this area. What is uncommon is a dispatcher taking a call involving someone in Afghanistan reporting an emergency! In January a Cumberland

County Dispatcher 15 took a call from an individual that stated a friend currently deployed to Afghanistan had contacted her via Skype reporting that his wife in South Carolina was in distress. The deployed individual was utilizing a web camera to contact his wife and through the web camera found his wife lying unresponsive on the floor of their home in Richland County, South Carolina. Upon seeing this, he immediately contacted a friend in Cumberland County on Skype and asked them to get help. Not knowing who to call, the individual here in Cumberland County dialed 9-1-1. Dispatcher 15 answered and the caller explained the situation. The dispatcher was able to get an address for the unresponsive person and utilized the technology available to him

and did an internet search for a number for Richland County, South Carolina 9-1-1. The dispatcher made numerous attempts to contact the number found, but each time a recording stated that the line had been disconnected. Persistence prevailed, as Dispatcher 15 continued his search for a number to report the medical emergency and he was able to locate the number for the Richland County Sheriff's Department. Upon contacting the number, the Sheriff's Department was able to transfer Dispatcher 15 to the Richland County 9-1-1 center and he then requested an ambulance to the location. The dispatcher was then able to get in touch with the original caller to get a message to Afghanistan via Skype that an ambulance was in route. Like with so many calls, Dispatcher 15 does

not know the ultimate outcome for the patient in South Carolina. They often never know the result, but at the end of the day, someone needed help and the dispatcher got them the help they needed!

Morale of this story... Technology is constantly changing the methods in which emergencies are reported to our dispatchers. This means Cumberland County dispatchers must constantly change as well. It isn't enough to keep up their long list of certifications, but they must be very aware of the changing world around them and how it is going to impact their ability to help someone in an emergency situation.

Cumberland County is StormReady

The Cumberland County Department of Public Safety (DPS) recently received notification that the National Weather Service (NWS) has renewed our StormReady designation. Cumberland County DPS has proudly held this preparedness designation since March of 2001.

Communities seeking the StormReady designation must meet criteria set forth by the

National Weather Service in order to achieve the designation. Communities are expected to maintain a 24 hour public safety answering point, emergency operations center, multiple methods for weather monitoring, and tone alert receivers in all school district buildings. Providing community weather preparedness talks, trained weather spotters and a hazardous weather oper-

ations plan is also required to be considered StormReady!

Over 1,700 communities in the United States have worked to achieve the StormReady designation. The goal of this program is to ensure that communities across the nation have the tools to save lives and property in the event of severe weather.



TROT Team Conducts Confined Space/Rope Rescue Training

On Saturday, November 5th, 2011, fourteen members of the Cumberland County Technical Rescue Operations Team (Team 500—Comprised of Company 20, 27, 28, 30, 45, 54, 80 and DPS) assembled at the Land O’Lakes Purina Feed plant on St. Johns Church Road in Hampden Township to conduct a confined space and rope rescue drill in conjunction with plant personnel. The scenario simulated an individual who became entrapped at the bottom of a 120 foot high silo located at the plant. The drill required team members to: conduct a size-up of the situation, implement the Incident Command System (ICS), work with plant personnel to transport equipment and supplies to the top of the silo, set up rope rigging for rescuer entry into the silo, immobilize and package the simulated patient (mannequin) for removal, retrieve the mannequin from the base of the silo and then lower the mannequin from the top of the silo to the ground.

The scenario replicated a potential real life emergency that rescuers may be faced with and it involved a significant amount of complexity. Just getting the appropriate equipment and rescuers to the top of the silo proved challenging due to the lack of freight elevators within the plant. While the rescuers made the ardu-

ous climb up the stairs with lightweight equipment, the heavier equipment required hoisting in a basket stretcher using an electric cable winch on the outside of one of the buildings. Once at the top of the silo, rescuers then needed to locate the patient and come up with the necessary strategies and tactics to accomplish the goal. The rescuers were required to conduct air monitoring and establish ventilation within the silo, construct anchor points for lowering, raising and retrieval rope systems, erect and secure a tripod over the entry point, and assemble the other appropriate equipment for an “on air” entry of two rescuers using supplied air breathing apparatus (SABA). Once in the silo rescuers packaged the simulated victim/mannequin using a vest type immobilization/extrication device and retrieved it to the top of the silo using

a mechanical advantage rope system with belay. Upon reaching the top of the silo the mannequin was transferred to a basket stretcher and eventually lowered to the ground using a 300 foot dual ½” highline system with a litter attendant. The drill provided an excellent opportunity for Team 500 personnel to review Standard Operating Procedures (SOP’s) for confined space and rope rescue incidents, hone team and individual

rescue skills, and train with new equipment that was recently purchased through the South Central (PA) Regional Task Force using DHS/FEMA grant funds. Additionally, team personnel had the opportunity to interface with plant personnel during the drill and practice rescue skills in a facility that posed unique challenges, closely replicating those situations that would actually be encountered in responding to confined space incidents in a similar industrial and/or mill facility. Many valuable lessons learned from this drill will be incorporated into future training sessions and will ultimately make the team more prepared if there is a need to respond to a real life situation such as this in the future.

The officers and members of Team 500 would like to thank Mike Wilbur, Maintenance Supervisor for the Land O’Lakes Purina plant and his staff with allowing us the opportunity to conduct the drill at the facility. His willingness to provide access to the facility and guidance to rescue personnel throughout the day was greatly appreciated. It provided an excellent opportunity for team members to collaborate with plant personnel and practice rescue techniques using scenario based training that is as close as possible to a real life situation.



Board of Commissioners Recognizes Wills for Heroes Efforts

On March 5th, the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners presented a certificate to the Penn State Dickinson School of Law in recognition of their efforts and their role in making the Cumberland County Wills for Heroes program a huge success in Cumberland County. This program offers free wills to first responders and their significant others.

Kate Lawrence, director of public inter-

est programming and Eunice Yang, a former Dickinson law student were on hand to accept the certificate. This program is coordinated with the Cumberland County Department of Public Safety and to date has provided over 150 first responders and their significant others with wills. This program has been made possible by the Penn State Dickinson School of Law (staff and students), The PA Bar Association, and numerous area attorneys volunteering their time.



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Cumberland County Telecommunicator Week

The Cumberland County Board of Commissioners proclaimed April 9th-13th as Cumberland County Telecommunicator week in the county. The purpose of this week was to recognize the efforts of the 38 Department of Public Safety 9-1-1 dispatchers who answer the calls for help from residents and visitors in Cumberland County.

Telecommunicator Week, a nationwide initia-

tive, was first established in 1991, with the intent of bringing to light the hard work and accomplishments of our nation's public safety dispatchers. In 2011, Cumberland County 9-1-1 dispatchers answered 346,536 incoming calls. Dispatchers are not only a life line for those calling the center for help, but also for the emergency services personnel who respond. Whether investigating a crime, fighting

a fire, caring for a patient, 9-1-1 dispatchers are there for the first responders who need more resources or may find themselves in danger and in need of help themselves.

DPS utilized the week as an opportunity to highlight accomplishments of 9-1-1 center staff, discuss the history of the Cumberland County 9-1-1 Communications Center, and the technology used by dispatchers

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www.cumberlandcountydps.blogspot.com

PUBLIC SAFETY SPECIAL FEATURE Cumberland County Safe Schools Association

Collaboration is key when it comes to keeping schools safe and that is the goal of the Cumberland County Safe Schools Association (CCSSA). This association was created by Eric Hoerner (DPS) and Mike Hurley (Carlisle School District) with the vision of creating a unified effort in school emergency planning and response. CCSSA is comprised of representatives from various agencies and organizations within the county including; the 9 school districts, colleges, the Vo-Tech School, DPS, various law enforcement, fire and EMS officials.

CCSSA meets every other month in a forum that allows for information and idea sharing as well as training. The association holds various training pro-

grams separate from their meetings in an effort to better prepare teachers, administrators and staff. Last year the association provided an interactive program for school officials. This workshop placed participants in classrooms as an active shooter situation was simulated. While the workshop helped participants understand the actions they should take in an active shooter situation, it also helped participants understand the emotions and reactions they may experience during and after an actual event. Workshop planners simulated the sounds, sights and smells in hopes of better preparing participants. Afterwards, mental health experts were on hand to discuss some of the emotions participants felt and offered information on

how they could assist staff and children after such an event.

The CCSSA has made great strides in its efforts to keep Cumberland County's schools safe. In recent years the association has successfully implemented a door numbering system in schools across Cumberland County and assisted with the creation of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency's Safe Schools Kit. We are fortunate to be part of and have an association that has become a recognized leader statewide in safe schools collaboration and planning!