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Cumberland County Successfully Completes Federally Evaluated Exercise in Emergency Planning for the Three Mile Island Area

Cumberland County, PA- Cumberland County Department of Public Safety (DPS) participated in the Three Mile Island (TMI) Emergency Planning Exercise on April 11, 2017 and received notification from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of having successfully demonstrated all requirements of the exercise with no deficiencies found. The federally evaluated exercise occurs every two years and involves municipalities and counties surrounding the TMI facility, several state agencies, FEMA and Exelon Nuclear which owns and operates the plant. Over 100 participants consisting of DPS staff, County elected officials and employees, and community volunteers took part in this year's exercise at the Emergency Operations Center, Emergency Worker Decon Station and Mass Care/Reception Center.

Since the TMI nuclear accident on March 28, 1979, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission along with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Exelon Nuclear have implemented many training and security enhancements to protect the public. There is an extensive TMI emergency response plan that focuses on safeguarding the people who live, work or visit within 50 miles of the nuclear power plant. Procedures have been established to protect the health and safety of citizens in the event of a nuclear emergency.

The full-scale biennial TMI exercise is designed to collectively engage stakeholder agencies to simulate utilizing emergency plans should there be a malfunction or nuclear emergency at the facility. Coordination among stakeholders including municipalities, counties, school districts, emergency responders, and community volunteers is a key component of the exercise. Measures include the Emergency Alert System, shelter in-place or evacuation, evacuation routes, emergency shelter activations, transportation assistance, and other essential needs.

Cumberland County is classified as a 'risk' County, with portions of Lower Allen Township and New Cumberland Borough within the 10 mile Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ) for the plant. This requires additional training, exercise and evaluation of an Emergency Worker

Decontamination capability which was demonstrated on April 12, 2017 in Lemoyne Borough. In addition, the county is a 'host' county for the purpose of sheltering evacuees. This was also demonstrated on April 12 at Shippensburg University.

This year's TMI exercise involved 112 locations that underwent a comprehensive evaluation conducted by 83 Federal evaluators. The drill reviewed 463 criteria as part of the assessment process. Cumberland County's evaluation report included the following remarks for demonstrated strengths:

- "Emergency Operations Center (EOC) position books have a section that explains each Emergency Alert Level (EAL) completely and very understandable for a non-technical person. In some cases there is a diagram to go along with it."
- "Cross training was very evident at several positions and when queried the sentiment of EOC staff is that they should be able to fill in at any position if required."
- "Three County Commissioners and the County Chief Clerk attended the Federal Graded Exercise at the Cumberland County Department of Public Safety (DPS), Emergency Operation Center (EOC). They were present for the majority of the exercise and gave positive feedback and supportive praise to the EOC staff."
- "Cumberland County's Department of Public Safety (DPS) volunteers are great. They are highly enthusiastic about their jobs. Many of them have been volunteering for several years and so they are confident and very knowledgeable in their assignments. They don't conduct themselves as volunteers; instead they come across as paid permanent staff of the EOC."

Cumberland County thanks all of the participants for their time and commitment to this exercise. Their efforts are invaluable to emergency response planning for Cumberland County and the South Central Pennsylvania region. Training and exercises are important to ensure preparedness for ALL hazards that threaten our communities. For more information on the Department of Public Safety visit www.ccpa.net/publicsafety.

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