

CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT

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DATE: April 26, 2013
TO: Isabell Hadford, Interim Chief Administrative Officer
FROM: Cheryl Waugh
SUBJECT: Emergency Planning Symposium Report

Recommendation: That the Emergency Planning Symposium Report dated April 26, 2013 be received

On April 24th I attended the 5th annual emergency planning spring readiness symposium organized by the Cariboo Regional District. The CCRD's Emergency Program Coordinator and Deputy EPCs have participated in past events and this year we took advantage of the opportunity to attend the free one-day symposium by again sending a CCRD representative.

Before the sessions began I was reacquainted with no fewer than a dozen individuals who have assisted us during past emergency events from such agencies as EMBC, MOTI, MFLNRO (Forestry) and CRD personnel. It was a full house at the Pioneer Complex in Williams Lake with 150 attendees coming from areas as far as Prince George and Kamloops, representing multiple agencies and ministries.

Presentation topics included flood hazard/spring freshet and weather forecasts as relates to their accurate/inaccurate capabilities and the impact this has on various agencies when predicting environmental trends and risks.

Forestry's Wildfire Management Branch presented on wildfires and strategic wildfire prevention initiatives and a related presentation by FireSmart Canada outlined steps towards becoming a FireSmart Community, which is a new community recognition program.

A large component of the day's agenda centred on hazardous materials (Hazmat) and the importance of proper response processes and consequences. The CRD focussed on their recent experience when a truck carrying explosive material rolled over on the highway causing a lengthy closure, traffic rerouting and neighbourhood evacuation. The subsequent community debrief was an important component to the incident management as residents had underestimated the immediate danger. Risk comparisons were made to the Oklahoma City bombing and the recent explosion in West, Texas where similar hazardous materials were involved in the devastation.

Another presentation explained Shelter in Place tactics and tools and the importance of understanding the hazard and appreciation of an immediate situation. Advice is to not only have a plan but to exercise that plan and have one for both home and work and for various emergency scenarios.

All in all the reconnections and new connections made were most valuable. All attendees exhibited a great level of enthusiasm and being so regional we could all relate in some way to each other's communities.

Valuable bridges are built by participating in such events and most of us have worked in tandem in the past and it is inevitable we will do so again in the future. Bonds built now will allow emergency events to flow smoothly and bring continued successes and better assist all of us to work as a team in planning, operations and recovery during emergency situations. Emergency Planning is a Team Sport!

A reminder: Emergency Preparedness Week this year is May 5th to 11th.

Cheryl Waugh

