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Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium teams up with CDP for training week



Responders in the Incident Command: Capabilities, Planning and Response Actions for All Hazards (IC) course review an area map as they plan the response to an incident.

For the first time, the Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium (RDPC) teamed up with the CDP to offer training specifically to responders from rural communities. Nov. 2-5

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Sixty-seven responders from rural communities across the country converged on the CDP. For their first three days, the responders took one of two CDP courses, either Incident Command: Capabilities, Planning and Response Actions for All Hazards (IC) or Field Force Command and Planning (FFC) course. Then, on the fourth training day, the responders all took the RDPC course, Emergency Operations Planning for Rural Jurisdictions (EOP).

The idea of an RDPC/CDP joint training was sparked by discussions between CDP Superintendent Mike King and Lonnie Lawson, the President and CEO of the Center for Rural Development, based in Somerset, Ky.

"Mike King and I had discussed this concept for some time, and once we were able to discuss it with the leadership at [Department of Homeland Security], we started the planning," Lawson said. "Since CDP has students in on a weekly basis, we wanted to see how it would be to include an outside trainer. We hoped to be able to take advantage of CDP having students on site already and to provide other classes than what the CDP offers."

A rural city or town is one that has a population of less than 50,000 residents, according to Kent Latimer, chief of the CDP's Training Management Branch.

"The benefit of a joint CDP/RDPC training opportunity is that we are better able to maximize the funds appropriated for response training while at the same time impacting the readiness of smaller, rural communities," Latimer explained.

Jason Moran, the Director of the Tallapoosa County (Ala.) Emergency Management Agency, took the IC course that week. This was Moran's first time training at the CDP.

Incident Command is a three-day course that provides management-level responders with knowledge of how decisions made by responders from various disciplines can impact the handling of a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or explosive (CBRNE) incident. The course incorporates preparedness planning considerations and incident management concepts to train participants to serve as members of an incident management team.

"I wanted to gain any information that will make my county and its citizens safer during an incident," he said. Moran, who lives in Dadeville, about 60 miles from the CDP's campus, learned about the training from colleagues in the emergency management field and from the Alabama Emergency Management Agency.

The advantages are endless when it comes to training with and sharing experiences with emergency managers in other rural communities, Moran said.

"The larger counties in our state normally have more resources than the smaller ones, but the effects on the citizens are the same," he said.

"Having someone who has been through a certain situation and then sharing best practices from their situation are priceless."

Moran said that continued training is so important because "training opportunities provide use with education that could possibly save lives in the long run. We will never know everything, but as first responders of any type, we should always be diligent and willing to learn new things."

Todd Brown, the Director of the Madison County (Iowa) Emergency Management Agency, took the FFC course. Unlike Moran, Brown has taken other CDP courses. He learned about this particular training opportunity from his state training officer.

Field Force Command is a three-day course that prepares management-level responders to serve as a member of an incident management team during a civil action or disorder. The course provides instruction on incident management, incorporating preplanning considerations and other responsibilities of management level responders. Brown said he took the course in order to gain a better understanding of field force deployments.

According to Brown, learning from peers from other parts of the country was a big advantage to training with other responders from rural communities. "Great diversity brings great knowledge," he said. "[I learned] ways to get things done with less investment and I learned from others' mistakes and successes.

"Continued learning gives you more tools for your toolbox," Brown said.

"There are many different ways to accomplish a particular job. The more

ways you know helps when you are in a complicated situation."

All of the responders took EOP the fourth day of their training. The Emergency Operations Planning course is an eight-hour planning and management-level course designed to provide rural first responders with the knowledge and skills to develop an emergency operations plan for their local jurisdiction or region.

"The feedback has been positive with one exception," Lawson said. "A few class members were there for the CDP class and the RDPC class was not the best fit. We can remedy that by making sure that we recruit for the specific classes."

Lawson said that he could see this type of collaboration being very effective if held three or four times a year at the CDP.

"The initiative was very successful," he said. "We just need to make a few tweaks before we do this again."

Moran was very happy with his first CDP training experience.

"Overall, it was great! The training facilities themselves are great! The food was excellent!" said Moran. "We are fortunate to have a facility of this magnitude right here in Alabama... and just 60 miles from Dadeville. I will attend training at the CDP again!"

This is the second such joint training venture the CDP has embarked on in 2015. In July, the CDP teamed up with the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center for a joint training venture.

"The CDP staff knows we can offer training that is more valuable to the responders by partnering with other agencies. This is a win-win situation. We have the opportunity to support students we may not normally reach and the RDPC has another venue in which to teach their courses," said Chuck Medley, the CDP Assistant Director for Training Delivery.

"The real winners are the communities that are better prepared for a disaster. If this training saves just one life, it's worth it," he said.

Training for state, local, tribal and territorial responders is fully funded by Department of Homeland Security, including travel, lodging and meals. For more information or to sign up for CDP training on line, click on <http://cdp.dhs.gov>.

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