

UASI Update



A quarterly newsletter of the Metro Boston Homeland Security Region.

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The mission of the Metro Boston Homeland Security Region (MBHSR) is to build and sustain region-wide enhanced capabilities in order to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the Region from all hazards, including acts of terrorism, natural and manmade disasters.

A MESSAGE FROM OEM DIRECTOR, DON MCGOUGH

A Decade In Review



One decade ago, we experienced our nation's most devastating terrorist attack. On September 11, 2001, Al Qaida's attack on US soil forever changed our nation, jobs and lives. Most of us were not fully aware of the type of capabilities we would need in order to face the challenges of the past decade.

We did not fully appreciate the need for a standardized incident management system and had not yet seen the potential for interoperable communications across agencies and communities. Nor did we understand the value of sharing intelligence and information across jurisdictions and with the private sector.

9/11 led to a new set of priorities for Federal, State and Local government, as well as the private sector. It changed the way we view terrorism, including a new focus on prevention and detection, interagency response, and weapons of mass destruction.

Since 9/11 the MBHSR has invested close to \$100 Million in federal grants towards building the capabilities of our first responders and other

partners in preparedness.

Homeland Security has come to encompass more than fighting terrorism, with some events causing us to refocus our attention. Most notably, Hurricane Katrina reminded us that we should always adopt an "all-hazards" approach to emergency planning, preparedness and management.

In the past decade we have achieved many milestones, including: training 5,000 first responders in NIMS and ICS, upgrading our communications infrastructure and deploying a public safety camera system across the region. These are a few examples of the commitment this region has made to public safety and security.

We are undoubtedly better prepared today, than ever before. While UASI grant funding has played a crucial role, we could not have reached this level of preparedness without committed regional stakeholders. While we have a lot to be proud of, we know there is more work to do and new challenges that we will encounter.

Ten years ago, we did not imagine how things could change. No one knows what the next decade will hold. We will certainly face new risks but with the partnerships we have formed, we are in a great position to handle whatever comes our way.

CONTACT US

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Chief, David Butler (Everett Fire)

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Chief, Eugene Doherty (Revere Fire)

Thomas Graney (Somerville Fire, retired)

Chief, Paul Flanagan (Winthrop Fire)



Boston • Brookline • Cambridge • Chelsea • Everett • Quincy • Revere • Somerville • Winthrop

Hurricane Irene



John Harrington/ Boston Globe

On August 28th, Hurricane Irene made landfall in New England. While many were able to seek refuge indoors, public safety personnel, from across the MBHSR, worked tirelessly throughout the

weekend to ensure the safety of residents and continuity of operations. For instance, the City of Boston received over 600 calls about fallen trees and power lines. The Boston EOC played a crucial role in helping city public safety agencies and utility providers coordinate response efforts. With the assistance of the City of Boston GIS team and Mayor's 24-hour Hotline, emergency management personnel were able to coordinate response efforts using the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. As a result, Boston Fire was able to quickly dispatch personnel to handle downed power lines and cut fallen trees. The Region has invested in management technology programs to provide real-time information to personnel and responders. The ability for jurisdictions to use GIS, HURREVAC, and WebEOC to anticipate and track the storm surge, as well as report data in real-time, was invaluable. HURREVAC is a free emergency management program designed to anticipate storm impacts, which helps emergency managers plan for the worst-case scenario. Using these programs, jurisdictions were able to determine how to best prepare for and handle the most severe outcome of this storm.

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Geographic Information System

Geographic Information System (GIS) is mapping interface that allows users to display data through maps. GIS is able to collect, map, analyze and integrate information sources related to location and resource distribution. It can be used to analyze census and population densities, allowing us to look at specific areas that may need resources deployed during an emergency.

When the lives and well-being of citizens is on the line, strategic resource allocation is one of our greatest uses of GIS.

~Stacey Schwartz, OEM GIS Analyst

When leveraged for planning and operations in emergency management, this program brings critical information to a single platform. By streamlining real-time information, emergency managers have the ability to make efficient strategic and time-sensitive decisions during major incidents and events. Stacey Schwartz, GIS Analyst, oversees the

GIS-related initiatives for OEM.

As clients of the City of Boston DoIT GIS Enterprise system OEM uses GIS to support many programs, such as WebEOC. Over the coming year, OEM will be working to better coordinate use of GIS across the MBHSR. Regional deployment will further support planning and operations.

GIS provides a great service in public safety and emergency management planning. This program is a powerful tool that will help enhance the Region's ongoing efforts to provide the best public safety and service possible.

Regional Snapshots



Capt. Jose Archilla (Boston EMS), Mike Colanti (BPHC) and Lt. Harry Cataldo (Boston Police) work in the Boston EOC to coordinate public safety response during Hurricane Irene.

Mutual Aid

On July 12, Revere Police Special Operations Unit was engaged in a five-hour standoff. Officers were serving an arrest warrant on a man suspected of numerous bank robberies in the area, when the suspect barricaded himself in his house.

When the suspect indicated he would not leave and was armed, other units were called in for assistance. During the incident, many supporting agencies came to provide mutual support— including Boston Police SWAT and Everett Police units. With these units providing secondary support to their efforts, Revere Police were able to ensure the safety of personnel and by-

The assistance from Boston and Everett police provided great support in securing the scene and apprehending the suspect.

~Captain James Guido, Revere Police

standers. Collectively the responding teams tried to coax the suspect out of the home for a number of hours to no avail. Realizing the suspect had no intention of leaving the house willfully, Revere police used the armored command vehicle, the Bear Cat, as cover and began firing pepper spray into the home in an effort to force the suspect out.

Ultimately officers breached the home and found the suspect hiding in the attic and promptly arrested him without further incident. This incident is another great example of mutual aid within the Region.

The Bear Cat



A large and commanding structure, the Bear Cat is one of the safest vehicles on the road. Procured through UASI funding, this vehicle is used by Boston Police Special Operations when responding to incidents throughout the Region. The Bear Cat was useful in July 2011 when an armed suspect barricaded himself in a Revere home. SWAT officers were able to find cover behind the vehicle as they prepared to breach the house.

While purchased with the primary purpose to protect law enforcement personnel during an incident, there are times when officers have found strategic uses for the Bear Cat.

In August 2011, during an incident at an apartment complex, while responding to a call for a homicide victim. Officers were forced to take cover when the suspect began shooting inside the building. Realizing civilian lives were at stake, officers loaded residents into the armored vehicle for transportation to a safe-zone.

This vehicle is a valuable regional asset in protecting the lives of law enforcement personnel and civilians.

Enhanced Capability



The Medical Surge sub-committee recently allocated funds to procure Powered Air Purifying Respirators (PAPRs) which will be distributed to fourteen acute-care hospitals throughout the

MBHSR.

This equipment will give these regional area hospitals the baseline ability to operate in any decontamination scenario, including CBRNE environments, minimizing their past over-reliance on Fire or HAZMAT responders.

This investment is a great addition to the UASI equipment cache in preparing our public health partners.

Community Engagement

On Sept 15th, Brookline held its 3rd Annual Meeting to recognize members of the CERT and MRC teams. With over 80 volunteers in attendance, many volunteers were recognized for exemplary work in helping the Brookline community



and deploying to sites across the state to assist in disaster recovery.

The Brookline CERT program has trained over one hundred members to assist first responders in case of an emergency. Over the last several years, CERT and MRC members have supported Brookline and Massachusetts in responding to power outages, heat emergencies, and oil spills. This year members assisted in shelter operations following a devastating house fire in Chelsea and the tornadoes in Western MA.

Additionally, many volunteers were on stand-by in the event of an emergency during Hurricane Irene. They have also provided flu clinics and teaching of CPR/First Aid to the community. Recently recognized by Citizen Corps for Outstanding Achievement in Public Health, these teams are a model for community emergency preparedness.