

Progress Report: March 2007

River Public Safety Coordination Task Force

The task force held its first meeting on February 22, 2007 and currently meets every two weeks. As of the completion of the first quarter of 2007, three meetings of the full task force have been held. While this is a later start than originally anticipated, we have begun the work with the assumption that it remains important to make every effort to meet all other date-milestones called for in the Task Force's charge. While it seems likely that at least some time adjustments will be necessary, we are doing our best to mitigate the need for significant changes.

MEMBERSHIP

The task force members include:

Brad Howton, *Task Force Chair*, General Manager, Columbia Crossing
Jane Ames, Senior Policy Director, Office of City Commissioner Sam Adams
Chuck Atkins, Commander, Clark County Sheriff's Office
Frank Bocarde, Citizen,
Chris Bryant, Captain, Water Resource Coordinator, Port of Portland
Mitch Cline, United States Coast Guard
Jim Drew, Lead Marine Patrol Deputy, Clark County Sheriff's Office
Jeff Johnson, Captain, Marine Program Coordinator, Vancouver Fire Department
Patrick Jones, Partner Agency Coordinator, Bureau of Emergency Communications
Jim Klum, Deputy Chief, Gresham Fire Department
Mark Maunder, Battalion Chief, Gresham Fire Department
John Nohr, Deputy Chief, Portland Fire & Rescue
Monte Reiser, Captain, Multnomah County Sheriff's Office
Rich Rodgers, Liaison to Portland Fire & Rescue, Office of City Commissioner Erik Sten
Maria Rubio, Public Safety & Security Director, Office of Mayor Tom Potter
Bill Rydblom, Law Enforcement Coordinator, Marine Board of Oregon
Mike Shults, Lieutenant, Multnomah County Sheriff's Office

SUMMARY:

While work is in progress on each of the four tasks, none of the tasks have reached implementation phases. It is our expectation that our next quarterly report will be able to describe elements that have reached implementation. Key progress to date includes the following:

OVERALL TASK FORCE PERSPECTIVES:

Initial Task Force consensus building has included:

Discussion of the type of core outcome indicators and dispatch values that would be fulfilled if all four tasks are successfully implemented. (We expect the definition of these elements to continue evolving and improving as we complete our work.)

Discussions regarding the degree to which coordination of resources and interagency communication on the river is has improved since the river public safety efforts that were a forerunner to this Task Force began. (Coupled with these observations are the recognition that an important part of the steps necessary for implementation of specific communications

challenges rest in taking steps to ensure that currently-improved levels of coordination continues as personnel at various agencies change over time.)

STATUS OF PROGRESS BY ASSIGNED TASK:

Task 1: Reporting system. *Establish an effective and reliable reporting system that defines and collects data needed to effectively manage a coordinated river safety services system. To be implemented by the river safety service providers by May 25, 2007.*

Status: With our later-than-desired start, our primary focus on this task for this quarter is ensuring implementation of improvements in dispatched-incident reporting information before the start of the Summer 2007 boating season. Task Force discussions on how to improve disposition reporting, incident type, and location data for all dispatched incidents has begun with initial steps being taken to develop improved methodologies. Other data collection tools – that may measure other indicators of river safety than those available through analysis of dispatched calls – will likely be taken up after the urgent matter of improving dispatched incident data by the end of May have been addressed.

Task 2: Improved Radio Communication & Dispatch Methods. *Develop improved radio communication and standardized emergency dispatch methods for all public agencies providing public safety on waterways in Multnomah County. To be implemented by May 25, 2007.*

Status: Without committing the Task Force to a settled opinion at this early date, it is fair to say that a reasonable consensus is developing around clarifying the dispatch methodology associated with assigning incident radio channels, and establishing shared terminology, for multi-agency responses on the river. In a sense, much of what is being discussed is not the invention of entirely new methods but, rather, better ways to ensure that practices already in place that often already work well, are used more consistently. Representatives from MSCO, PF&R, Gresham Fire and BOEC are each involved in subcommittee work on this issue.

Task 3: Operating Protocols. *Develop comprehensive operating protocols for all agencies in the Multnomah County area providing river public safety services. To be completed by September 2007 and adopted by November 30, 2007.*

Status: Initial discussion have been held regarding operating protocols – a subject that certainly includes radio communication and dispatch methods but also includes developing a stronger consensus regarding methods to clarify Incident Command issues, including the likelihood of making more common use of Unified Command approaches for river incidents involving a multi-disciplinary (e.g. both fire and law enforcement) response. At this point, only initial discussions have been held and it is too early to define likely results of those discussions.

Task 4: Towing Service RFP. *Develop a Request for Proposals to establish towing service from private tow assistance businesses for non-distress river calls. Recommend the RFP to the appropriate governmental jurisdiction for implementation. To be completed by June 2007.*

Status: A subcommittee is currently developing an initial set of recommendations for criteria that private river tow services would be required to meet in order to participate as a referral tow service in those situations where it is not practical for towing to be conducted by emergency response agencies.