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**WAYNE COUNTY USES \$4 MILLION HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT TO ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY,
UPGRADE COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPROVE FIRST RESPONDER COLLABORATION**
10 First Responder Agencies to Conduct Mock Exercise Aug. 12 to Test Emergency Preparedness

DETROIT – Wayne County’s Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (DHSEM) together with first responders from Detroit, Canada and other agencies will conduct a mock exercise on August 12, 2015 to test the effectiveness of communications across the U.S. and Canadian borders, using equipment and training acquired from a \$4 million grant awarded to Wayne County.

The federal funds granted to Wayne County’s DHSEM as part of the Border Interoperability Demonstration Project (BIDP) have been used to enhance the collaboration between 10 partner agencies, purchase new communications equipment and upgrade existing communications infrastructure that is vital to emergency response activities.

In addition to Wayne County’s DHSEM, the other partners are:

- City of Detroit’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
- Wayne County Airport Authority
- Chippewa County Emergency Management
- Macomb County Emergency Management
- Monroe County Emergency Management
- City of Windsor Police and Fire (Canada)
- City of Sault Ste. Marie (Canada)
- Essex County (Canada)
- Town of LaSalle Police and Fire Services (Canada)

“Our communities’ safety and sense of security is of high importance to my Administration,” said Wayne County Executive Warren C. Evans. “The tools we provided to this network of emergency response teams positions them better to protect not only Wayne County’s families, but also those in our region and across the border. It is this level of financial resourcefulness and collaboration that keep our communities strong.”

The Emergency Management team in Essex County, Ontario, Canada, had this to say about the collaboration:

“Although our respective emergency response agencies on both sides of the international border at all government levels have developed, over many years, very effective partnerships and working relationships to protect our respective residents and businesses from a large number of hazards and threats, we have always had to work around the vast disparity of communications systems and procedures that exist between our border communities,” said Phil Berthiaume, Emergency Management Coordinator for Essex County, Ontario, Canada. “The Wayne County sponsored Border Interoperability Demonstration Project has now provided all of us with the necessary communications tools and technology to have immediate and effective interoperable communications at all levels. I congratulate Wayne County Executive Evans and his staff for taking such an outstanding initiative that has resulted in an exceptional, effective interoperable communications solution for our cross-border communities.”

Another partner agency, the City of Detroit office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management also noted how the grant funding is helping to improve its operation:

"The technology upgrades that we acquired as a result of this project, enables us to have cross border communications in case of an emergency or disaster along the US/Canadian border," said Bernard Alexander, Business Systems Support Specialist , Detroit Homeland Security & Emergency Management

Wayne County’s office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management allocated the grant funds to purchase equipment and make upgrades, which included the following:

- The Detroit-Windsor Tunnel received an upgrade. Equipment was installed to extend coverage within the tunnel. Previously, there was no radio coverage at the point of entry and throughout the tunnel. Now, there is full coverage for police, fire, EMS and other emergency services on both the United States and Canadian sides of the tunnel.
- The Downriver Communications Consortium’s Ecorse tower received upgrades to broaden communications reach. The upgrades filled gaps in portable coverage in Michigan and extended portable and mobile coverage into parts of Canada.
- Additional Gateway equipment was purchased and installed to allow the 10 partners to simultaneously share sensitive information over the internet quickly and securely. This information may include audio, video, radio, text, and computer files needed to coordinate an emergency.
- Handheld radios with enhanced security transmission frequency and two dedicated channels for first responders were purchased for the 10 partner entities.

The exercise will involve four drills, each designed to test the increased communications capabilities and operational efficiency of the equipment provided to the agencies.

After the mock exercise is complete, officials from each agency will meet to evaluate the drills and determine if the communications preparedness requires refinement.

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