Registration is now LIVE!

THE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & BUSINESS CONTINUITY CONFERENCE 2014

The Emergency Preparedness and Business Continuity Conference is a program that brings together topics of importance to the emergency management and the business communities.

Two organizations joined together in 2013 to co-host the Annual Conference. The Pacific Northwest Preparedness Society (host of the annual EPConference) and E.P.I.C.C (host of the annual EPICC Forum) have combined efforts to bring a new and exciting forum to the Pacific Northwest region.

The Conference will run from November 18-20 2014, with pre-conference workshops on the 17th.

Venue: The Sheraton Wall Centre

Early Bird Registration: $615.00

Visit www.epbcconference.ca for more information.

Good Article!

Lessons Learned from the Response to the Oso, Wash., Mudslide

Urban search and rescue task force leader Thomas Richardson discusses challenges during the response and how volunteers were incorporated.

As an urban search and rescue task force leader on many previous recovery missions, Thomas Richardson knew what to expect when he arrived at the site of a horrific mudslide in March. Photo by Rick Dahms

Thomas Richardson is a battalion chief for the Seattle Fire Department, and Washington Task Force 1 Urban Search and Rescue Task Force leader. He was recently deployed to the site of the massive mudslide near Oso, Wash., on a recovery mission where at least 42 people were killed. He has previously been deployed to missions during Hurricane Katrina, 9/11 and the Oklahoma City bombings. He took time to discuss lessons learned from the
mudslide. This interview has been edited for clarity and length.

**Emergency Management: What did you see when you got to the scene?**

Thomas Richardson: Eight hundred acres of landslide. The mountain had come down and had taken out a good chunk of [State Route] 530 and with the flooding had spread out more than a couple of miles because it had blocked the river and backed things up — a little bit of housing debris on the outskirts of it but really just a mountain, dirt, water and broken trees was what was visible.

**EM: Did anything surprise you about what you saw?**

TR: Honestly there were no surprises. We knew we were on a recovery mission. We were not deployed until Monday night and Tuesday morning [the mudslide occurred Saturday, March 22] and given the conditions — freezing rain and pretty bad conditions — we expected we were just going to be there for a recovery. I’ve been deployed to Oklahoma City, the World Trade Center and Hurricane Katrina, so it’s not a big surprise.

**EM: What were the difficulties in this effort compared to others?**

TR: The main challenge was the scale of the site. Think about 9/11: That was around 16 acres and it took them more than six months to get to native soil, down to the foundation of the World Trade Center. They were dealing with a couple of 110-by-110-story, 10 million-square-foot buildings; we were dealing with 800 acres. A vastly larger scale with a small number of people we were looking for. It turned out that we were able to recover a little more than 95 percent of the remains — not too bad considering the problem.

**EM: What do you take away from this effort?**

TR: If you’re ever going to search a landslide or an avalanche, search the leading edge. People were not found where they live. They were found half a mile-plus away from where their houses used to be. Apparently landslides tend to push people toward the leading edge. The second thing would be to do really good documentations of your finds because you can put together a picture; once you’ve found enough, you can start creating trajectories. We ended up creating trajectories based on where people used to be and where they were found. That allowed us to focus our efforts on our search so that we weren’t having to search the entire site and were being successful within a couple of weeks, where my original projection was, “We’re going to be here for months to years if you really want us to dig out all the bodies, and it’s going to cost a billion dollars.” It didn’t cost quite that much and didn’t take that much time. GPS is critical. Using devices where you can connect data points and put that
together with bodies so that you have an understanding of where you’re looking, where you need to look and you can plan your future searches. We incorporated volunteers as a base instruction from the local incident management team. That was, in part, because they couldn’t keep them away, but in the end it was a really good thing. The volunteers were critical in the success of the mission. There were hundreds of volunteers out there and many of them worked for CERTs [Community Emergency Response Teams]. They found and helped recover a significant number of the remains, and it was volunteers who brought in dump trucks and heavy equipment. Usually our task forces come in with relatively small hand tools to do a rescue of a structural collapse. We’re not really set up to do a large 800-acre site search. We really needed the heavy equipment and that was provided by volunteers.

Really a success story of this evolution was that we not only incorporated the civilians into our response but of the hundreds of civilians there was just one problem with one person who was posting stuff online and that was quickly resolved. There are independent activities going on where firefighters prepare for disasters and civilians prepare for disasters, but rarely do we actually tie the civilians in with the training of the firefighters. We have CERTs in Seattle and around the state, but very frequently you’ll find that firefighters are not expecting them to be a participant. Even in my department there’s no master plan in our policy and operating guideline on how we’re going to use CERTs. We need a better incorporation of them, officially, into our plans and so that we can, among other things, take the civilians and trust them not only with doing the work but with the intelligence.

We ultimately got trajectory maps, but people were really possessive of those maps and concerned that if they got released to the public what would be the political ramifications of a map showing body parts. We need to let go of that and recognize that there’s a grim reality to a disaster and either people are going to face those realities and be a part of the recovery or we’re going to exclude them. But I don’t think it’s appropriate to exclude them and therefore we need to incorporate them in our intelligence.

**EM: Did it slow the response down to try to coordinate all the volunteers?**

**TR:** Not at all. Mostly we ended up the recipient of volunteers and were told to use them, but they didn’t really report to us. We need to do a better job of putting them officially in our briefings and including them in our overall plans so they understand. As it was, I had to go tell people out in the field what they could have gotten in a briefing. You get a lot more buy-in if somebody understands: “We’re finding all the bodies here. I know
that Steelhead Drive used to be over there, but that’s not where the people are and here’s why we believe we’re searching in the right place.”

We were actually not supposed to release that information, but in the end you’re either a responder or you’re not, so we treated all responders the same. Just because you’re a civilian doesn’t mean you don’t have the capability of dealing with exposure to traumatic events. Responders are just people who happen to have a job, and yes, we have some training but we’re really not any more equipped to deal with that stuff than Joe Civilian. We’ve dealt with it before, but we need to realize that if people are stepping up to the plate and they understand the difficulties of the mission, we have to just trust that they can be a part of it. We also need to do a better job of incorporating modern technology into our responses. Specifically we need to start to see official applications coming out where a person can report needs and impacts of the disasters so it can be tabulated automatically whether the person is in need of power, food or water, or their house is destroyed. We can help people report that stuff, and with an app we could incorporate volunteers more efficiently by allowing people to volunteer their resources by saying, “I have an excavator or a shovel and a strong back or a house where I can provide shelter.” Then as emergency managers we can connect the dots between the needs and the capabilities. But right now we kind of exclude them and frequently, not in this case, but the government response is promising to take care of everything without the capabilities.

There were also many things that needed to be addressed by the incident management team. There was a road that needed to be addressed; upstream flooding; hazardous materials; debris and personal belongings; people were displaced. There were many things that needed to be addressed other than the missing victims, but they were never incorporated in the incident action plan. We need to do a better job of looking at the big picture and beyond just the first few victims. We relied on the volunteers. If we had waited on the incident command system to supply us all the resources, we would have been waiting a much longer time.

By Jim McKay – Editor of Emergency Management Magazine


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Interesting News!

App Turns Bystanders Into First Responders

Santa Clara County, Calif., agencies use the PulsePoint app with the goal of mobilizing CPR-trained citizens if someone in their immediate area is experiencing cardiac arrest.

Matt Wilson, McClatchy News
When it comes to helping a victim of cardiac arrest, it's all about speed. PulsePoint, a life-saving mobile app, may not necessarily increase the speed at which first responders arrive, but it adds more legs to the race. Santa Clara County, Calif., agencies began using the PulsePoint app earlier this year with the goal of mobilizing CPR-trained residents and bystanders into becoming first responders.

The free app uses location-based technology to alert CPR-trained citizens if someone in their immediate area is experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. The alerted citizen can then choose to spring into action, find the victim and begin resuscitation until official emergency responders arrive.

"I can do an important job that the fire department cannot do," says PulsePoint Foundation president and app inventor Richard Price, adding that first responders "can't get there in two minutes. I can sustain life until they arrive."

Price, the former chief of the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, conceived the idea in 2009 after there was a cardiac arrest incident near him that he was unaware of and could not respond to. The idea came just as the smart phone revolution was gaining serious momentum.

"This idea to push a message to a phone is fairly new, and the ability for the phone to know where it's at is still fairly new," Price says. Price adds that there are associated time costs that people forget about between the initial 911 call and paramedics arriving to assist. Call dispatchers have to take information, firefighters and paramedics need to scramble to their vehicles, and responders still need to get to the precise location of the victim. All of this needs to happen in nine minutes, after which Price says there is a 92 percent chance of death.

"In these first few minutes, you can really make a difference," Price says. "You just think about these minutes as a [baseball] score, and you don't want to start in a deep hole. You don't win many games when it's 9-0 in the first inning." While the app is available to all CPR-trained individuals, the real target audience is off-duty firefighters, nurses and other life-saving professionals.

However, Price adds that all CPR-trained individuals are valuable, and simply being aware of the app can stimulate awareness of CPR and trigger more discussion, especially for younger more tech-savvy residents. "It helps the whole system, even if you never get activated. It reinvigorates an old technique," Price says. "It's not your dad's CPR; it's more modern and it's a new way to be a member of this community."

"When PulsePoint comes to a jurisdiction, it is tied to the 911 dispatch of supporting cities. Users who download the app will state that they are CPR trained and would be willing to assist in the event of an emergency."
The app also gives a quick refresher on proper CPR. PulsePoint first came to Santa Clara County in 2012 in the city of San Jose. Financial support for the program's full rollout in the county came from El Camino Hospital. Earlier this month, El Camino Hospital and the PulsePoint Foundation also announced the launch of a second PulsePoint mobile app, PulsePoint AED, which aims to have comprehensive registry of public automated external defibrillators.

To date, hundreds of cities have signed on with PulsePoint, and plenty of lives have been saved. Recent media reports tell the story of the early May rescue of a 57-year-old truck driver in Clackamas, Ore., who was given CPR by an off-duty firefighter who just happened to be near the same fitness center as the victim. In 2011, the PulsePoint Foundation was formed. The foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and all engineers working on the project are volunteers from Workday Inc. in Pleasanton.

"Creating this was a heavy lift with a lot of people," Price says. "They are a part of a tremendous opportunity that we thought, if we could pull it off, could save a lot of lives."

For more information, visit pulsepoint.org or elcaminohospital.org/CPRHelpNow. ©2014 The Cupertino Courier (San Jose, Calif.)
Although the ICS is predominately used by first responders, McCarson said it can be adapted to business continuity programs at most enterprises. He said ICS helps create common principals and structure for incident action plans. Because it is a universal system, ICS can also be tailored to fit the needs during each individual crisis.

Michelle Heckle, Emergency Management Coordinator at Oakland Children’s Hospital and Research Center, spoke about working with children during a disaster. She said crisis managers must prepare to deal with issues they otherwise wouldn’t have to if adults were involved and focus on keeping children calm and re-uniting them with parents or guardians.

Heckle also said it was important to train staff how to deal with children specifically. She offered tips like using simple language, using distractions and getting down to eye level when speaking.

The San Francisco Bay Area Chapter’s next meeting will be held Tuesday, Aug. 12 at Bridge Bank in San Jose. The featured topic will be cyber security.

For more information about the ACP or any of its individual chapters, visit www.acp-international.com/


MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

The 10th Annual EPICC Victoria Seminar

Date: Friday October 3, 2014
Location: The Legion, Branch #292, 411 Gorge Road East, Victoria
Don’t miss this 1 day event
“Unloading the Value of Business Continuity”

This seminar will allow different speakers from various organizations to showcase their Business Continuity Plans. It will be very interesting and Information so mark your calendars now.

More information to come and will be uploaded on www.epicc.org by the end of the month.

Contact info@epicc.org if you have an inquiries.
Can Lightning Strike Twice?

**Know lightning safety**

### Myth

You are safe from lightning if the sky above is clear.

You are completely safe from lightning inside a house.

People struck by lightning carry an electrical charge and should not be touched.

### Fact

Lightning can strike 10 to 15 miles away from the storm so if there is a storm in your area and the sky above is clear, you are not necessarily safe from lightning.

Lightning can flow into your home through various conductors. Avoid using the telephone or electrical appliances and do not take showers or baths. Stay away from doors and windows. Telephone lines, cords, plumbing, even metal window and door frames are lightning conductors.

People struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge. Check the scene for safety and then check the victim.

Download the Preparedness Apps
www.redcross.org/mobileapps

__Published by the American Red Cross__

Please submit and questions or comments about the newsletter to Executive Administrator,  
Lesley Carew – info@epicc.org

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