

TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

To: Council Members

AGENDA ITEM 9

From: Staff

Date: May 19, 2017 Council Meeting

Subject: Regional Full-Scale Exercise After-Action Presentation

Introduction

The State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) was initiated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security through the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The program was developed to support implementation of risk-driven, capabilities-based planning, training and exercise activities to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to and recover from acts of terrorism and other catastrophic events in local and regional communities. The program emphasizes updating and maintaining county, municipal and regional emergency operation plans. The Region 5 Regional Domestic Security Task Force (RDSTF) is comprised of nine counties including Indian River, Martin, and St. Lucie. Funding was provided to Region 5 RDSTF to conduct exercises that support operational readiness of first-responder disciplines such as law enforcement, fire rescue, emergency management, and departments of health. The 2017 SHSGP funding provided the opportunity to conduct a full-scale exercise in a regional atmosphere where response agencies could practice multi-jurisdictional public safety coordination and response operations.

Background

Council staff facilitated and supported the full-scale exercise “Operation Troubled Waters” on April 12, 2017 conducted in Indian River, Martin and St. Lucie counties. The exercise was comprised of thirty-four emergency first-responder agencies participating and responding to 10 geographically diverse locations. Incident sites included FAU Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute; Tradition Irrigation Water Plant; Witham Field; Emergency Operations Centers (Indian River, Martin and St. Lucie counties); Lawnwood Regional Medical Center; and Martin Health Systems North, South, and Tradition hospitals.

The purpose of the exercise was to identify strengths and areas to improve in operational readiness and to strengthen preparedness in response to regional terrorism/mass casualty incidents. The forty-five member exercise committee met over a period of 7 months to build a scenario with defined goals and objectives that supported the local, regional, State, and Federal

mission of public safety through multi-jurisdictional communication and coordination, responder mutual aid, and resource management.

The exercise scenario developed around a violent agricultural activist group that had stolen toxic chemicals attempting to poison an irrigation water supply. The terrorist plot was foiled by a vigilant citizen, however the terrorists destroyed the evidence in three locations thereby causing large populations to be affected by chemicals through inhalation and skin exposure. In addition, improvised explosives were used to threaten first-responders and the Indian River Lagoon Intra-coastal Waterway was contaminated through chemical dumping.

Post-exercise, Council staff has compiled site specific evaluations and will conduct a regional committee after-action conference to discuss exercise outcomes to further develop a matrix of tasks to help agencies focus on areas where readiness and preparedness may be improved and to capitalize on strengths of current capabilities. The after-action report will also allow agencies to address future operational plan updates and specific training needs.

Council would like to thank the exercise committee for their time and effort in planning, logistical support and dedication of staff and resources. The exercise would not have been successful without the Indian River, Martin and St. Lucie County emergency management and local first-responder agencies that provided real play and resources to exercise operational tasks and plans. In addition, State and Federal agencies - Florida National Guard 48<sup>th</sup> Civil Support Team, the U.S. Coast Guard – Fort Pierce, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the Department of Environmental Protection were all integral to the success of this exercise. Several volunteer agencies and schools provided “incident victims” to role play symptoms so that hospitals, law enforcement and fire rescue could practice realistically. Finally, a special thank you to the Department of Health which supported the exercise through injury moulage for volunteer victims at multiple locations.

### Recommendation

For information only.