

Mid-Atlantic All Hazards Consortium (AHC) Releases its 2006 Post-Conference Report
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In September the All Hazards Consortium (AHC) <http://www.ahcusa.org/> released its Mid-Atlantic All Hazards Forum 2006 Post-Conference Report http://www.allhazardsforum.com/downloads/All_Hazards_Forum_2006_Report.pdf. This latest AHF Annual Report summarizes the activities and lessons learned during last year's conference, held in Baltimore, MD, on October 10-12. The Mid-Atlantic AHF is a cross-disciplinary regional meeting to build relationships and improve communication. The annual AHF is noteworthy for bringing together the region's eight homeland security directors with a focus on relationship building and communication.

The purpose of the AHC is to come together in meetings like the annual AHF to share best practices, break down cultural and organizational barriers within the emergency response community and develop regional initiatives. In line with the objectives of the AHC, the 2006 document details the Consortium's current efforts to help clarify and prioritize state/local government preparedness and response requirements and stimulate regionally coordinated planning, programs and procurements.

The report summarizes the opening plenary session with its homeland security directors' roundtable. Many of the panelists emphasized their states' development of information and integration and data fusion, despite the uncertain funding stream coming from Washington. The rest of the conference and the content of the report correspond to the AHC's eight program pillars which provide a framework for ongoing Consortium activities. The report groups its summaries in line with the conference's eight session categories: border and transportation security, critical infrastructure protection, emergency management, grants and procurement, health and medical readiness, information sharing and intelligence, law enforcement and public safety communication and interoperability. An additional section of the report summarizes content from the August 23-24, 2006, West Virginia Urban-Rural Task Force's evacuation conference held in Davis, WV, whose aim was to foster new regional evacuation strategies and solutions.

Among the many operationally important preparedness and response topics and insights gleaned from the conference and report were presentations and discussions on: the requirement for alternate energy sources; the need to strengthen the relationships between private sector and local government organizations, particularly with respect to supply chain support for disaster relief; regional Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) distribution readiness; fusion approaches like WebEOC; tools for risk analysis and for managing critical asset information; approaches to identity management; professional certification of grant managers; and the recent priority to develop better community-based planning.

The AHC is a non-profit, funded by National Capital Region (NCR) Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grants. The consortium is guided by the regional states of North Carolina, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and the newest member New York. The AHC mission is to help create new resources and funding opportunities for the states to support regional multi-state collaboration efforts among all the stakeholders from government, private sector, higher education and non-profit/volunteer organizations.

The AHC hosted the first annual All Hazards Forum (AHF) in Baltimore, MD, in 2004.

The 2006 AHF report was put together and made available thanks to sponsorship from IBM, one of the founding corporate sponsors of the AHC. The 2007 AHF will be held in Baltimore on November 7-8 <http://www.allhazardsforum.com/index.html>.