

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

Event: Mark L. Penn, Fire/EMS Captain, Deputy Coordinator of Emergency Services, Arlington County Fire Department

Type of event: Interview

Date: October 20, 2003

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared by: Mark Bittinger

Team Number: 8

Location: ACFD HQ, Arlington, VA

Participants - Non-Commission: Mark Penn

Participants - Commission: Kevin Shaeffer; Mark Bittinger

U N C L A S

1. Mark Penn's Background: 30 years with the ACFD.

2. Preparedness: Arlington County was a pre-disaster community and as a result many county officials had a broad, rather than a detailed knowledge of the CEMP and county assets. He had a detailed knowledge of the fire department and the community.

- GOPHER 6, a C-130, was less than 5 minutes behind AA77.
- "Y2K preparations for emergency management were a big bonus for 9/11."

3. EOC: 9/11 was the first real world event for Arlington County's EOC, with the exception of Y2K. Y2K preparations were overseen by Kevin Fannin, (Penn's predecessor and now with ODP at 202-514-7972). Back-up site on 9/11 is Fire Station 4, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor (has not been tested and will be abandoned because they did not like it; too small). The county is working to set up a new backup in another building. Plus, they can now go mobile with new technology.

3 EOC Models: an ESF model; a departmental model; or a hybrid model. Arlington County currently uses a hybrid model, but they are in the process of aligning with the Federal Government's FRP ESFs with one modification. The county will have a group per ESF, rather than a person.

The Olympic model is also an exemplary model – a regional EOC.

"I've advocated a northern Virginia EOC, but the political realities won't let that happen." May eventually establish a regional coordinating center (for intel sharing) but not an EOC. Bottom line is that a county manager or executive is not going to leave their county to manage an event in their county.

Los Angeles County has 96 jurisdictions under one EOC/ECC.

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Communications: On 9/11 there was limited interface between the EOC and the field because there were no radios in the EOC, only phones, cell phones, plus some computers.

The county may not get always get promised support due to concern for secondary attacks in surrounding communities. Communication links between Arlington County EOC and surrounding jurisdictions is not automatic or pre-designated.

Intelligence: Capt. Rich Alt, ACPD was the POC at the EOC working information sharing and intel fusion.

Training: Still need a lot of training for operations personnel to maximize IC and EOC interface. Philosophical differences:

- West Coast – “Area Command”
- East Coast – “incidents”

4. Arlington County Management: The County Manager Ron Carlee was the most important person; he helped to set the tone early on. The focus was on the fire and rescue event. “Our job is to support the ACFD.” The focus of support was on the fire desk. All county departments as well as other counties, made ACFD support their first priority. Community desks are pre-established, similar to ESF’s. George Burach was an outstanding resource person. IAFC established vendors for EOC/Logistics onsite and EOC/Logistics off-site.

“What has always driven Arlington County (fire and police) is the Pentagon. We’ve always known it was a target.” Chief Plaughter constantly pushing the envelope in terms of response planning, preparedness and operations.

Civil Defense: an evolution; 30 years ago retired military were in charge in Arlington County calibrating Geiger counters. The CEMP has been in existence for 50 years.

Ron Carlee speaks before the International County Managers Association (ICMA) regularly. Plaughter and Carlee are in agreement that to resource an OEM you need to transition from the fire department to county government.

Baltimore is an example of preparedness. It has day-to-day risks of a port. It’s better prepared than Arlington County or many communities as a result of its exposure to hazmat.

5. AAR: Around Sept. 14 or 15, Carlee and Plaughter discussed the need for an AAR. They considered that they “owed it to the nation.” Mark Penn was designated as the project lead.

Recommendation: If a jurisdiction receives any Federal or FEMA funding that it must produce a publicly disseminated AAR. In the case of Nunn-Lugar-Domineci WMD training and TOPOFF there does not seem to be a requirement for information sharing. The MIPT has been a model for information sharing.

6. Disaster Declaration: Penn had to be educated by Cindy Causey, regional coordinator for VDEM. She happened to be in the area and reported to the EOC within 30 minutes and whispered into Penn's ear "You might want to declare an emergency." Penn recommended it to Carlee. Carlee's response was "What does that get us?" Causey helped to overcome Arlington County's learning curve on 9/11. She understood the process and was "invaluable." She works out of VDEM's Woodbridge, VA office and is VDEM liaison between northern Virginia and Richmond. Her cell is [REDACTED]

7. FEMA: US&R coordination and advanced teams arrived before DFO arrived. Teams were local and that was important. Fairfax County, Montgomery County and Virginia Beach.

DFO "frankly not much help, almost a hindrance," but Arlington County was able to manage them. "DFO never made a noticeable impact." May have been different 10-12 days into recovery phase.

8. EPA: Wanted to make operational decisions. Chief Schwartz told them that they could advise but not have operational control.

9. DiLorenzo MOU: Personnel tempo was constant. Now have an ACFD Capt. (hazmat team member) serving as liaison with DTHC.

Have done a lot of work with local public health providers. We are on MMS.

10. JIC: The county was fortunate in having as its public affairs officer a retire Pentagon official who was a professional at media relations. A JIC would have been much better. The FBI always planned for 1 incident site with 1 JIC, not 2 or 3 incident sites with 1 JIC. They needed 2 separate JICs (NYC and DC), but since they had planned to have it at HQ to service 1 incident, they possibly could not have staffed it or organized it.