

For Immediate Release:

Tuesday, April 18, 2006

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***New Report Provides Blueprint for Regional Readiness
in a Post-Katrina World***

Rockville, MD - A new report on all hazards and emergency planning released today will serve as a blueprint for regional readiness in a post-Katrina world. The second annual *Mid-Atlantic All Hazards Forum (AHF) 2005 Report* is the only document of its kind produced for the benefit of public and private stakeholders, and industry, and state and local government emergency management and homeland security professionals.

The All Hazards Forum was created in 2004 to bring together public and private stakeholders in all hazard preparedness, response and recovery to exchange ideas, develop lasting relationships and foster an ongoing dialogue that would benefit the mid-Atlantic region. The forum provides an opportunity for individuals from government, industry and universities to meet face-to-face and become better informed about best practices, lessons learned and next steps relating to interoperability, evacuation planning, critical infrastructure resilience and various other subject matters.

The AHF 2005 Annual Report summarizes the activities and lessons learned during the conference. It is a practical document that clearly communicates the issues and strategies in homeland security and emergency management as well as lessons learned from real disasters.

The 2005 forum was held in Baltimore, Maryland, on October 25-28, 2005 and drew a record audience of 1,702 with more than 670 conference attendees, representing 31 states and 4 foreign countries.

Common themes that emerged from the conference (and highlighted at length in the report include):

Cooperation and coordination are required at all levels. Conference participants expressed a great deal of interest in finding ways to help agencies at the local, state, regional and federal levels to work together in a robust, unified manner when faced with a disaster. A clear call for standards practices also became evident.

Interoperability, planning and practice between agencies are of critical concern. Interoperability from leadership roles, to credentialing standards, to communications

technology and access to information, generated wide interest among participants. Many at the conference expressed the need for a concise plan allowing multiple agencies to work together in the event of a major disaster as a pivotal concern.

Simulations and live exercises validate planning activity. Many of the panelists highlighted the value of simulations and live exercises as a way to validate planning activity, expose weaknesses and develop best practices such as the repositioning of assets and relief supplies, or the development of effective evacuation plans.

Major topics that generated both participant and attendee interest at the 2005 conference included procurements, interoperability, evacuation planning, port and maritime security, critical infrastructure protection, media's role in crisis communications, and using technology for public alerts. All these sessions are summarized in detail in the report.

According to Tom Moran, AHF industry/government liaison, the implications of a forum of this nature extend beyond the mid-Atlantic region. "One of the annual goals of the AHF is to help collect information shared and distribute it across the U.S. to all states in order to help improve overall knowledge and coordination at the regional level," he said.

"The AHF truly plays a collaborative role in that it provides industry with the level of content that allows them to direct money, research and resources to developing the solutions that are needed by Forum participants," said Patrick Wheeler, Partner, Smart and Associates LLP.

The AHF 2005 report was sponsored and facilitated by IBM and involves the states of MD, VA, PA, WV, DE, NJ, NC and the District of Columbia. The full text of the report is available online at www.allhazardsforum.com. For additional information please contact Addy Kennedy at 301-493-5500, ext 3324 or kennedy@ejkrause.com

This year's Forum will be held Tuesday, October 10 through Thursday, October 12, 2006 at the Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, Maryland. Additional details and latest updates are available on the AHF web site.

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About the All Hazards Forum (AHF): The AHF is the only homeland security and emergency management conference dedicated to ensuring the continued safety, readiness and growth of the Mid-Atlantic region. The AHF fills a regional void by providing valuable insights on available technologies and solutions and by helping homeland security and emergency management planners and practitioners outline procurement steps that lead to new or accelerated project funding. The Forum also connects public and private sector stakeholders and enables coordinated planning and response among agencies and states within the region.