Message from Holly Crawford

Director, County of San Diego Office of Emergency Services

As we move further and further away from September 11, 2001 and the political will to support homeland security and emergency management grant programs wanes at the federal level, you may hear the latest buzz words: “sustaining and maintaining current capabilities.” While the future of federal homeland security grants is somewhat uncertain, the San Diego region fares well in the area of disaster readiness. Our region has invested wisely in communication redundancy, alert and notification systems, situational awareness software, valuable training and equipment for our first responders and civil preparedness projects.

It is often said that, “all disasters are local.” And now, more than ever, it will be critical for us to continue forging ahead with local partnerships that extend beyond our traditional partners. That means we will focus on inclusive emergency management by creating additional links with volunteer organizations; not-for-profit organizations; faith-based groups; Access and Functional Needs populations; colleges and universities; our military personnel and others. Public/private relationships are critical to successful emergency management. The safety and security of our communities depends not just on the capacity of local emergency management agencies, but on nongovernmental resources.

Maintaining an open dialogue and partnering with local businesses is vital in all stages of emergency management: preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery. And your involvement in this public-private partnership creates a cohesive and interactive network of local businesses that can help you and your employees be better prepared when disaster strikes; can assist the community in responding to a disaster by having plans, processes and resources already in place; and can help ensure a more efficient and timely recovery effort in the wake of a disaster.

As highlighted by the recent Banner Fire and the many other brush fires scattered around the County, we find ourselves heading into what may be a challenging fire season. Coupled with the shutdown of San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station and the potential drain on power as we head into the summer months, our region must prepare for all eventualities, including fires and power outages. To assist you with your summer planning and preparedness activities, the Business Alliance is hosting a summer power meeting with SDG&E on July 10. You are invited to attend and additional information can be found in this newsletter.

Your involvement and participation is an important component in strengthening our region’s ability to prepare for and lessen the economic impacts of a natural or man-made disaster in our community. With your help, we look forward to growing and strengthening our Business Alliance contacts.

- Holly Crawford
Golden Guardian 2012 Exercise

Earthquakes, power outages, chemical spills, and arsonists were just a few of the challenges faced by emergency managers throughout San Diego County during the Statewide Golden Guardian 2012 disaster exercise May 15th through 17th.

Every year since 2004, First Responders, Emergency Managers, officials from local, state, federal government, the military, utilities, volunteer organizations, and the private sector take part in one of the largest exercises of its kind. Golden Guardian 2012 continued this tradition of bringing together regional stakeholders from throughout the community and presenting them with a scenario that tested their emergency plans, policies, and procedures.

One of the new procedures tested at the County’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was how emergency managers would handle information coming in from the business community. Role-players representing fictional companies called the EOC offering food, water, and other goods, while others requested assistance with evacuees, and still others called seeking to provide or request information.

These exercise components helped the Office of Emergency Services (OES) test its procedures in managing these offers and requests for assistance, and helped to identify areas for improvement.

As we move into summer and a fire season predicted to be above average, the communications and collaboration of the ReadySanDiego Business Alliance, along with the lessons learned from exercises like Golden Guardian, are essential in building a more prepared OES and a safer San Diego County.
San Onofre remains down, the heat of the summer is already making its presence felt, and fires are flaring up around the county on an almost daily basis. The strain on our power resources this summer will be significant, and there are concerns about what type of impact this will have on our residents and businesses. To help keep our partners informed, the ReadySanDiegoBusiness Alliance has scheduled a meeting on July 10th from 8AM to 10AM at SDG&E’s Innovation Center in Kearny Mesa to reconnect and provide a few updates regarding the Alliance and the tools we use to communicate with you during fire season. In addition, SDG&E will be providing a presentation on the power outlook for the Summer, including the possibilities of upcoming Rolling Blackouts and what you can do now to prepare. SDG&E will provide some insight on how the power situation might impact your operations and what information you can provide to your employees.

New Emergency Website Incorporates Latest Technology

Where do you go for information when disaster strikes? The County of San Diego recently launched a new website that offers current emergency information as well as instructions for preparing your family, home and business for the multitude of hazards we face in San Diego County. The state-of-the-art site was recently donated by Microsoft and utilizes cloud technology, enabling expanded capacity when website traffic increases during a crisis. Visit and bookmark www.sdcountyemergency.com today for important information about disaster response, preparedness and recovery.

*Bookmark the site www.sdcountyemergency.com so you have it at your fingertips this fire season*

5 Things You Should Know

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), 40 percent of businesses do not reopen after a disaster, while another 25 percent fail within one year. The Small Business Administration (SBA) states that over 90 percent of businesses fail within two years in the wake of a disaster. Following are 5 things you should know about putting together a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) that could help your business survive if a disaster strikes:

1. Emergency Contact Information — Your plan should include up-to-date contact information for both your employees and any other relevant entities you may need to contact in the event of a disaster.

2. Alternative Communications Strategy — If the emergency disrupts phone lines and Internet connections, how will you keep in touch with your staff? Your COOP should also include email addresses, Blackberry PINs, etc.

3. Areas of Responsibility — In the moments after a disaster strikes, it is crucial to not only know your chain of command, but what business functions are vital and who is assigned to do what.

4. Alternative Site of Operations — If your current location is destroyed, rendered useless or left without power, where will you locate your operations?

5. Off-site Backup of Important Data — An earthquake, fire or flood could wipe out access to your computers, servers and onsite storage facilities. It is crucial that you have backup data stored at a different physical location and/or on a remote server, and that key personnel know the location and have the tools necessary for access.
Q&A with SDG&E on Summer Outlook

- How will SDG&E communicate about planned outages with the public?
  
  There are a number of ways we inform the public. For the general residential customers we rely on the media through our press releases to keep them informed. Also we direct them to our website that has the circuits of be curtailed or they can call our call center which would have recording on load curtailments circuits.

  For life support/medical base line customers they are called using our outbound dialer system with field calls (in person visits) for those not contacted during call campaign.

  Commercial customers receive phone calls and emails. Customers with elevators receive e-mails.

- Will the communication include the anticipated length of the outage? (Will it always be one hour?)

  For rotating outages they are always for an hour, but we would also communicate how many hours we anticipate to be implementing the hourly outage rotations. Given the rotation model, there is the potential for more than a single one-hour outage if the rotation goes through all the circuits and starts back at the beginning of the list.

- How much advance warning of an outage will be given?

  Clearly if there is an extended heat wave there could be 24-hour awareness of possible problems, but the true warning would be the day of the outage.

- Is there a certain time of day when planned outages are done?

  Typically the curtailments would occur around the peak of the demand on our system, which during the summer is around 4:00pm. However, if we had a significant loss of resources it could happen much earlier.

- Who has access to the list of “skipped over” (exempted) facilities and who makes the decision about which facilities are “skipped over” for the planned outage?

  The CPUC makes the decision and we have access to the list of facilities (customers) exempted. Commercial customers can contact their SDG&E account rep to see their exempt status and residential customers can contact our call center or check the website to see if their circuit is on the curtailment list. The circuit number is on their bill.

- What are the implications of a strain on gas supplies?

  The implications are that with the gas system required to serve all of the power plants serving San Diego County, there is very little excess capacity on the system. So if there is a loss of capacity during high electric demand, having to implement electric curtailments are likely.

- SDG&E mentioned the Sunrise Powerlink may be completed in June. What will be the impact of this on power supply?

  With the completion of Sunrise we will be able to increase our imports which will allow us to be less vulnerable to some loss of gas capacity, but not eliminate a loss of gas capacity leading to electric curtailments. If we get SONGS units back online and the Sunrise Powerlink in service we will be in much stronger position to serve high electric demand throughout the summer.

Editor’s note: SDG&E activated the Sunrise Powerlink on Sunday, June 17
Nearly the entire state experienced far less wintertime precipitation than normal last winter. In addition, the winter precipitation deficit was most acute during the December through early February period, which is usually the wettest time of the year. This lack of rain occurred during the critical maturation time for many plant species, and thus, plants were deprived of moisture during their period of highest water uptake. Although some rains did occur in March and April, they were too late in the season for maximum plant moisture replenishment.

Subsoil moisture is very low due to the lack of winter rain as well. Even during the wettest period of March, subsoil moisture was only present in the first few inches of topsoil and did not penetrate to the deeper roots of larger plants and trees. Due to the dry weather and lack of soil moisture, much of the state is in a D2 and D3 drought at the current time. The lack of summer rainfall will only exacerbate this problem.

Unlike the past two years, snow pack in the high country is very sparse. Snowfall was only 50-70% of normal across most of the Sierras and once meltout occurs (likely early in July), fires will readily spread into the high country above 8,000-9,000 feet where fuels are continuous. Large Diameter alpine timber will be available for fire consumption this season.

Therefore, due to the very dry antecedent conditions and the poor prospect for meaningful precipitation, we can expect an **above normal large fire potential this year for most of the high country, foothill and interior valley areas of southern and central California**. Expect active fire behavior with high rates of consumption during peak heating hours and very active fire behavior where fuels and topography permit. Fires will also be more difficult to contain and will be more resistant to suppressive actions.

**Precipitation deficit since Oct. 1, 2011**
The ReadySanDiego 2011-2012 Advisory Council

The ReadySanDiego Business Alliance Advisory Council is comprised of business leaders from throughout San Diego that act as corporate spokespersons, tapping business relationships to help promote program initiatives throughout the County. The Advisory Council will work in conjunction with County staff to identify strategic goals of the Business Alliance partnership program and help oversee its path forward. During times of crisis, Advisory Council members will work with the County to lead the Business Alliance’s response and recovery activities, including the coordination of needed resources from its members.

Vince Hundley
Safety Director
Association of General Contractors

Jay Bart
Director of Risk Management
Barona Casino

Matthew Dodson
Director of Local Government Relations
California Grocers Association

Dennis Morgigno
Director of Original Programming
COX Communications

Dave Dalton
Sector Chief Coordinator
InfraGard San Diego Members Alliance

Cliff Albert
Program Director
KOGO/Clear Channel

Kipp Kaiser
District Manager
Lowe’s

Sherry Bird
Regional Director
Manpower

Tom Zoll
Chief of Transit Enforcement
North County Transit

Namara Mercer
Executive Director
San Diego County Hotel-Motel Association

Steve Hawkesworth
Chief Finance and Operations Officer
San Diego Public Library Foundation

Patty Skoglund
Administrative Director of Disaster Preparedness
Scripps Health

Julie Davenport
Chair
SoCalFirst

Grady Gopez
Assets Protection Business Partner
Target

Jeff Segall
Director of Public Affairs
Tri-City Medical Center

Katie Wiest
Senior Manager, Operations
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AJ Balkiz
Regional Emergency Manager
Wells Fargo