

CAPCOG CONNECTIONS



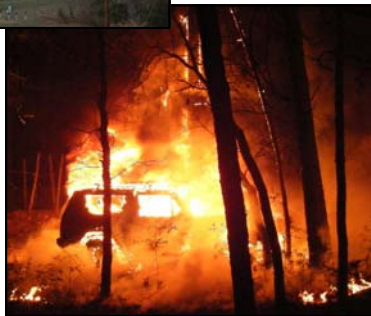
A PUBLICATION OF THE CAPITAL AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Regionalism Demonstrated During Bastrop Fire

The Wilderness Ridge fire in Bastrop County on Feb. 28th escalated from 2.5 to 1,500 acres in about two



hours forcing evacuations of homes, businesses, and livestock and triggering mutual aid from neighboring counties along with the Texas Fire Service when local fire and law enforcement resources were exceeded.



The value of regional connections made since the 2002 inception of this ten-county area's homeland security planning efforts was demonstrated as Fayette and Williamson Counties provided assistance while other CAPCOG counties and cities remained in close contact, according to Mike Fisher, Bastrop County's Emergency Management Coordinator. Fisher, who managed the incident, said emergency personnel and equipment were deployed quickly to the site by assisting jurisdictions.

Fisher and Bastrop County Judge Ronnie McDonald were very appreciative of the assistance received and pleased on how the "regional partnerships paid off" through the various networking that occurs in the region. Judge McDonald said "Lives were saved in Bastrop County because of the partnerships that have been formed with the other CAPCOG counties. Our responders were successful due largely to the relationship of our Office of Emergency Management with other area professionals dedicated to helping their neighbors. It is clear to me that the training and preparing in the region under the leadership of the

2009 Construction and Demolition Waste Management Summit Set

CAPCOG is working in partnership with the City of Austin, Austin Energy, and the Texas Department of Transportation to host a Construction and Demolition Waste Management Summit on Wed., May 6th, 8:30 am - 5 pm, at the Austin Convention Center.

This Summit is an educational and networking event focusing on reduction and proper management of construction and demolition (C&D) materials and waste. The summit will include a general session, followed by two concurrent sessions with presentations by experts in the field, case studies, regulatory guidance and project management tools. Participants will also choose between two processing and materials management facility tours.

The target audience for this Summit is local government elected officials and staff, construction contractors and builders, material processors and haulers, school districts, and anyone else with an interest in recycling, reuse, and proper management of C&D materials. Registration cost is \$60 and will include breakfast, lunch, light refreshments, and the afternoon tour. To register, visit the CAPCOG website, or for more information contact Kelly Freeman at 512-916-6040 or kfreeman@capcog.org.

CAPCOG Homeland Security Task Force has proven the value of CAPCOG's overall efforts."
(See *FIRE* p. 4)

Inside this issue:

Attainment or Bust	2
CJAC Elects New Chair & Vice Chair	2
Environmental Law Training Draws Large Group from CAPCOG Region	2
Annual Event to Recognize 9-1-1 Call Takers	3
Rep. Rose Addresses Falls Prevention Coalition	3
Law Enforcement Training Covers the Region	3
Telecommunicator Training Class Graduates	3

Attainment or Bust

The Capital Region has embarked on an ambitious plan to lower ground-level ozone for attainment of EPA's new federal standard rather than risk designation as Nonattainment in 2010.

Following successful completion of the region's last air quality improvement plan, the Early Action Compact, the area's regulatory air quality monitor showed that ground-level ozone levels had diminished enough for the area to be classified by EPA as in attainment of the 1997 standard. EPA then revised the standard downward in 2008 such that the area is again facing a nonattainment classification. On Mar. 10th the Governor sent a letter to EPA recommending that Travis County be classified as nonattainment for the new standard, based on the average of 2006 – 2008 monitoring data. EPA will have the final say by Mar. 12, 2010 on which counties are included in a nonattainment designation, which is expected to be based on the 2007 – 2009 monitoring data. EPA has the option of including additional counties in the MSA if they decide others are contributing to monitored high regional ozone levels.

True to the resolve of local officials in meeting air quality goals, this new challenge was met with a resounding commitment to pull out all the stops in formulating a plan to maximize ozone-forming emission reductions this year. This plan has been dubbed "the big push," and if successful, could bring ozone levels down enough that the three-year average will show attainment. Besides ensuring healthier air for citizens to breathe, an attainment classification will mean fewer restrictions on business development, as well as lessening possible delays in planning regionally-significant transportation projects.

Implementation of big push measures began with the April 1st start of ozone season, which ends Oct. 31st. The season includes the months when sunlight and higher temperatures are more conducive to formation of ozone.

Big push actions aimed at reducing ozone forming pollutants during the 2009 ozone season can be categorized into three primary areas of emphasis: (1) increased outreach efforts to engage the public in recognizing actions they can do to reduce their contribution to emissions; (2) challenging local governments and members of the Clean Air Partners Program (CAPP) to step up emission

reduction efforts committed to in the 8-hour ozone flex program; (3) evaluate and implement, where appropriate, emission reductions at industrial facilities when high ozone levels are predicted. (See *ATTAINMENT*, P. 4)

Annual Event to Recognize 9-1-1 Call Takers

Each year one week is proclaimed National Telecommunicator Week to provide an opportunity to recognize telecommunicators across the nation. This year April 12 – April 19, 2009 is the week being set aside to show appreciation for the hard work and dedication of those 9-1-1 call takers. In conjunction with other activities by local agencies, CAPCOG will host an event to celebrate National Telecommunicator Week on Wed., April 15th at the Round Rock Express game.

Telecommunicators are provided with a ticket for reserved seats behind first base and a pre-game ceremony will bring telecommunicators onto the field in a parade around the bases with an introduction to Express fans. The names of the telecommunicators will be displayed on the Jumbo Tron during this time as well as throughout the night and Red E. Fox, the official mascot for 9-1-1, will throw out the first pitch at the game. Over 200 telecommunicators are expected to attend the event. CAPCOG will also use the event for public education with a table set up to distribute booklets, stickers, and other items to children and answer questions.

Topics included enforcement of solid waste (illegal dumping) laws, outdoor burning, execution of search warrants, and water code violations.

Twenty-five of the CAPCOG Region's law enforcement, code enforcement, prosecutors, and health inspectors attended the (See *LAW*, p. 4)

CAPCOG's Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC) Elects New Chair and Vice - Chair

The Criminal Justice Advisory Committee, appointed by CAPCOG's Executive Committee to review and recommend all funding applications to the Governor's Office of Criminal Justice, elected new officers at their Feb. meeting for the 2010-2011 plan years. Debbie M. Carter, Burnet County, was elected chair and Abraham Minjarez, Travis County, was elected vice chair.

Carter has served on the CJAC since Jan. 2003 and is the Grants Administrator for Burnet County, responsible for working with all the departments to help them identify their needs and then search and apply for relevant funding opportunities. Minjarez was appointed to the CJAC in Aug. 2005 and is the Criminal Justice Administrator for Austin/Travis County Mental Health/Mental Retardation and is responsible for issues, services, planning, and initiatives related to consumers who are served by the agency and who have criminal justice involvement.

A special thanks goes to Major Phyllis Clair who served as Chair for Plan Years 2008-2009. Major Clair's leadership and guidance were vital in helping to develop new policies for the application review process including this year's new two-tier process for reviewing the Victims of Crime (VOCA) applications.

Environmental Law Training Draws Large Group from CAPCOG Region

Information is one of the most valuable tools when combating illegal dumping and other environmental crimes. Billboards, flyers, road signs, and a reporting hotline are all ways in which the Capital Area Regional Environmental Task Force (RETF) educates and promotes the responsible disposal of waste. The RETF also oversees training in Environmental Law for which continuing education credits are provided to law enforcement, code enforcement, sanitarians, and on-site sewer inspectors.

The RETF hosted an Intermediate Environmental Law training course in Feb. at LCRA's Buchanan Dam Complex.

Representative Rose Addresses Falls Prevention Coalition

The state's Area Agencies on Aging formed the Texas Falls Prevention Coalition (TFPC) in 2007 to prove that a systematic statewide effort in providing an evidence-based program could be successful; continued success would be dependent on expanding the membership of the coalition beyond just Area Agencies on Aging.

To address this issue, the TFPC core planning team planned and held the first statewide falls prevention coalition meeting Fri., March 20, 2009 hosted and held at the Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG)/ Area Agency on Aging of the Capital Area. Individuals from a myriad of agencies: health insurance plans, home health, hospitals, colleges, state agencies, Texas associations, and others were in attendance. This is the first of two meetings focused on laying the groundwork for identifying and developing workgroups, goals, strategies, and action steps to develop a comprehensive statewide falls action plan addressing issues around home safety, environmental safety, medication management, and physical mobility.

Also in attendance was State Representative Patrick Rose who filed the very important House Bill 703 regarding falls

prevention awareness week. With an introduction from Glenda Rogers, CAPCOG's Director of Aging Services, Representative Rose opened the meeting by speaking on the importance of the work



that the coalition is doing. He shared facts about the growing healthcare costs associated with falls, and the number of deaths that will occur

because of falls in Texas. He explained that HB 703 is a tool to get Texans aware of the impact that falls have on older adults, as well as family members. His presence brought to light that the work being done in falls prevention is not going unnoticed. Representative Rose offered to help the coalition in any way possible.



State Representative, Patrick Rose.

Law Enforcement Training Covers the Region

CAPCOG Regional Training Academy (RTA) continues to conduct classes at its Austin facility and training in other communities. The RTA held a Basic Jailer's Academy in Burnet in which 36 new corrections officers graduated in time for Burnet County to open its new jail facility. The school was three weeks of course study in such subjects as Texas Jail Standards, Civil and Criminal Law, as well as defensive tactics.

The RTA is currently holding three Basic Peace Officer Courses with a total of 95 cadets attending. The day academy is being held at the RTA facility; two night academies are being held at Pflugerville Police Department and Williamson County Sheriff's Department. The day academy is set to graduate April 24, 2009. CAPCOG in-service training has included Firearms Instructor, Spanish, New Supervisor, Special Investigative Topics, Cultural Diversity, and Law Enforcement Instructor. In the upcoming months the RTA will be offering more TCLEOSE-mandated courses to meet the training cycle deadline.

Several other speakers, representing the Department of State Health Services, Texas A&M School of Rural Public Health and WellMed Medical Management, presented Texas falls data and how to access it, the history of evidence-based programming and the TFPC work, and the results of disseminating the evidence-based program "A Matter of Balance" statewide. Feedback regarding the meeting was very positive, and attendees seemed eager to continue their participation.

The next meeting of the Coalition is tentatively scheduled for May 29th at CAPCOG.

Telecommunicator Training Class Graduates

The 2nd Basic Telecommunicator Training Class graduated March 6, 2009. Participants in the Academy took six weeks of fast-paced classes focusing on basic telecommunicator skills. Some of the courses completed were Basic Telecommunicator, Spanish for Telecommunicators, Emergency Police, Fire, and Medical Dispatch, Ethics, and Cultural Diversity. The graduates were Mike Felcyn, Burnet County Sheriff's Office; Matthew Cole, Georgetown PD; Robin Williams, Bastrop County Sheriff's Office; Valerie Ybarra, Bastrop County Sheriff's Office; and Debrah Park, Capital Idea.



Capital Idea is an Austin area agency whose goal is connecting underemployed participants to Austin area employers. Capital Idea assisted Ms. Park in identifying the Telecommunicator Academy as a career training opportunity resulting in her becoming a 9-1-1 Call Taker for the Austin Police Department. Capital Idea is currently processing candidates for the next academy, set to begin in early summer.

FIRE (*cont'd from p. 1*) The fire ultimately consumed 1,491 acres and approximately 20 businesses, 26 houses, 225 outbuildings, and 50 vehicles. The damage, when added to the suppression, evacuation, and sheltering costs, is estimated to be in the millions of dollars. Bastrop County continues, through the recovery phase, to clean up the land, dispose of burned property, and provide assistance to the fire victims.

In an ongoing effort begun in July 2008, CAPCOG has an Urban Wildland Interface (UWI) workgroup to identify regional opportunities for UWI projects and programs that would not only reduce wildfire risk but address restoration of natural eco-systems, wildlife biology, and quality of life issues in the rapidly developing communities of the CAPCOG region. One of the goals of the workgroup is the development of a "Fireplain Map" which identifies areas of the county that are at risk to UWI wildfire issues and rates each of those areas on a comparative basis. The Fireplain Map is modeled after a floodplain map but would take into consideration a number of different factors such as the topography, soil types, distance from

existing fire protection resources, water supply, historical occurrences, fuel models and fuel conditions. Mike Fisher is the chair for the CAPCOG UWI work group.

For more information about regional planning efforts, contact Ed Schaefer at 512-916-6026 or eschaefer@capcog.org.

ATTAINMENT (*cont'd from p. 2*) Although there is no single "magic bullet" that will ensure ozone levels are reduced, many small actions can combine to have impact. Individuals can help by driving and idling their vehicles less and fueling vehicles or operating gasoline powered equipment late in the day when diminished sunlight has reduced ozone formation. Area business and government employers can help by encouraging the same actions and by assisting employees in reducing the impact of their commutes to work and lunch through teleworking policies, carpooling connections, support of external meetings by conference call, and providing incentives for employees to lunch at work or walk to nearby locations. The third area of emphasis is to focus efforts on significant industrial facilities, such as power plants or cement plants, to

voluntarily reduce emissions on predicted high ozone days when air quality modeling indicates that the subject facility is likely to have an impact on the area's regulatory monitors. While this is an innovative and complex strategy, the benefits may prove to be significant.

Ultimately the goal is for this region to reduce emissions to avoid an EPA designation; failing will mean the region must function as a Nonattainment Area for years to come resulting in significant barriers for economic development efforts and future mobility.

LAW (*cont'd from p. 2*) course and worked closely with experienced trainers to expand their abilities through a scenario-based approach to enforcing environmental crimes. These officials are now in the region's cities and counties equipped with the knowledge to properly address the growing problem of illegal dumping. Training events through the RETF are offered on a quarterly basis, and the next training event will be held in May, 2009. For more information on these courses or any other services offered through the RETF, please contact Mickey Roberts, RETF Coordinator, at mroberts@capcog.org or by calling 512-916-6185.

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