

Secure Commonwealth Panel  
Business and Industry Sub-panel Meeting  
March 8, 2007

Leigh Middleditch - Chair

A meeting of the Secure Commonwealth Panel's Business and Industry Subpanel was held on March 8, 2007 at the Charlottesville offices of McGuire Woods LLP. Attendees included: Don Butts, Tom Wilcox, Gerard Dabney, David Smith, Jeff Rezin, Marc Follmer, Dan Jenkins, Jim Neal and Leigh Middleditch. Participating via telephone were: Bob Griffin, Tony Caputo, Jeremy Greenfeld; Tom Bechtell, Craig Martin, Laurie Peterson Aldrich, Tom Gosse and George Molaski.

Following a call to order and introductions, the Chair reviewed the stated objectives of the subpanel:

1. Information Sharing
2. Credentialing
3. Relief from liability

Mr. Follmer stated the overall desire of the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness to better integrate the business community into the Commonwealth's preparedness planning. Thereupon a discussion ensued as to the level of government outreach to business with respect to preparedness planning. Some localities such as Arlington reported a good deal of planning and coordination with local business partners and have signed memorandums of understanding with many critical partners.

Mr. Follmer remarked that the State is trying to increase its outreach to business and in coordination through the Regional Preparedness Advisory Committees (RPAC). RPACs are organized according to the 7 state police divisions and are primarily staffed by 1<sup>st</sup> responders (police, fire, EMT's etc.) but that local business participation was critical to the success of the RPAC mission. By having an ongoing dialog of local issues with 1<sup>st</sup> responders, business and citizens, the State can better prepare for, on an all hazards basis, and respond to local needs following natural and man-made disasters. It was suggested that subpanel participants, local chambers of commerce and trade associations could help in suggesting businesses for participation in the RPACs.

The Chair commented that military base realignment will significantly increase the population in the area of Ft. Belvoir. In the event of an emergency, the military personnel and their dependents will not likely evacuate the area in an emergency. Ft. Belvoir would not be available to shelter members of the surrounding community and this will increase the demand for community sheltering in the areas surrounding around Ft. Belvoir.

Dan Jenkins, Senior Manager for Dominion Resources made a presentation to the subpanel concerning Dominion's experiences following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Mr. Jenkins focused on the issues of credentialing and health and safety issues faced by Dominion and its employees following the storms.

New Orleans did not have a preplanned credentialing program and credentials to admit personnel into affected and closed areas had to be constructed by local government. Companies contacted the city of New Orleans for access credentials. Mr. Jenkins reported that the city issued one set of credentials to business – however those credentials were not honored by Jefferson Parrish and Dominion found it could not access affected areas without additional credentials obtained from the local government. The lesson for Virginia is to try to obtain consensus from local governments on one or more forms of credentials issued by the state that would be acceptable. This issue will be tabled before the RPACs at following meetings.

Mr. Jenkins continued that, once entry was gained to an affected area, Dominion faced difficulties in obtaining safety hazard information about various sites and work areas. Specifically, Dominion had to gather information on safety hazards that would only be known to locals – such as “do not wade” areas where dangerous wildlife would be present.

Mr. Jenkins advised that business continuity planning must include the ability to account for employee whereabouts following a disaster. Dominion's experience in New Orleans was that it took over one week to determine the safety of its employees. He suggested establishing toll-free telephone numbers to which employees could call in the event of an emergency to report their whereabouts and other safety concerns and to obtain information from the employer. This information should be distributed as a matter of course and reminders sent to employees to be able to access the telephone number in the event of an emergency.

Mr. Jenkins advised to take special precautions to ensure employee safety after entry into affected areas. Mr. Jenkins commented that affected areas will likely not have 911 emergency services available to it – such as police, fire or ambulance – and companies must have plans to anticipate emergencies with employees who are working within affected areas.

Following the presentation there was a brief discussion on the importance of education to the business community on where to seek information and more importantly about the State setting reasonable expectations about the time necessary to restore services following an emergency.

Mr. Follmer requested all attendees to treat the subpanel as an interactive forum in which to share and receive information on best practices and experiences learned from other events or in dealing with other states emergency management departments. Attendees were also encouraged to suggest guest speakers and topics for consideration by the

subpanel at future meetings. Until a more formal information sharing element is established, subpanel members should use Mr. Follmer's email as a central clearinghouse. His email is [marc.follmer@governor.virginia.gov](mailto:marc.follmer@governor.virginia.gov).

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.