

Final Report: Operation Burning Bridges

Background: The Government of Ontario mandates that each municipality meet certain requirements every year with regards to Emergency Preparedness. One of these mandatory items is to have an exercise, either tabletop or live, every year. The exercise held June 20th will meet Horton Townships mandate for the year 2013.

Preparation: The planning of exercise Burning Bridges started in February by meeting with other CEMC's from around the County of Renfrew. Following this meeting there were 6 other meetings, some hosted at the Horton Community Center, to design, plan and coordinate the success we enjoyed on June 20th. Many inputs and plans needed to be created before the event. This represents close to 40 hours of work.

Story: The base of the lead up story was that the Township was experiencing drought like conditions similar to last summer. The temperature was near 34C with humidity in the mid 40's. The night before our exercise there was a large lighting storm that came down the Ottawa Valley and started numerous forest fires, one being a significant one near Petawawa. Smoke from this fire and the high temps created very poor air quality and a large power outage throughout the County. This would be the precipitating factor to open our evacuation center at the Horton Community Center.

Objectives:

- 1) Practice opening and running the evacuation center
- 2) Introduce new staff to the Emergency Response Plan and the EOC procedures.
- 3) Practice using the call-out lists.
- 4) Practice communication in and out of the EOC with our partners ie County of Renfrew, Other municipal CEMC's, EMO, and internal staff.

Summary: The event started at approx. 08:40 when Amber Hultink attended the Office to meet with Mackie. Her report was about the events of the previous 12 hours in the County with regards to the storm, forest fire in Petawawa and the weather conditions and the decision was made to call the CCG together at the EOC for a briefing and discussion. Amber then called Mayor Don Eady and the other members of the CCG. All members were present by 09:00. Members included Mayor Don Eady, Margaret White, Amber Hultink, Steve Osipenko, Mackie Maclaren, Rod Eady, Jenn Barr, Rose Curley, Kathleen Rogers. The first business cycle meeting was held and the outcome was for Kathleen to open the evacuation center and be ready to accept visitors. She called her volunteers, open and set up the evacuation center, registered and sheltered residents and they arrived. She was very organized and prepared. The residents were all signed in and accounted for, even after a simulated fire and subsequent evacuation of the community center. The job was well done by all that participated at the community center. Some procedural changes and new forms will be created or modified based on Kathleen's recommendations. Back at the EOC the member of the CCG worked well together. They coordinated as expected to solve challenges as they were presented. All members

brainstormed and followed the procedures as laid out in the Emergency Response Plan. The call out list was correct, but we agreed that more copies need to be placed in multiple locations so it is readily available. This will be completed in the near future. Phone and fax numbers needed were available and correct, except a list of County of Renfrew Council members. This will be completed in the near future. The group contacted all appropriate partners both internal and external as required. The exercise concluded at approx. 11:30 and was followed up with a learning lunch and debrief. This was a very productive conclusion to a great exercise. Everyone involved should be proud of the progress we made as a group.

Conclusions: With respect to the EMO requirement to have an exercise, we have met this for the 2013 year. We met all the goals set out for the exercise. This exercise ensures that The Township of Horton is prepared for any event which could impact the municipality. Members of the CCG are committed to the safety of Horton Township and proved this by their professionalism during the evolution of this exercise. Thank you for your commitment to the Emergency Management Program.

Steve Osipenko

CEMC Horton Township