

Pilot program aids emergency responders

The Departments of Energy (DOE) and Justice are partners in a cooperative pilot project, called the Homeland Defense Equipment Reuse (HDER) Program, to provide surplus radiological detection instrumentation and other equipment to state and local emergency first responder agencies nationwide to enhance their domestic preparedness capabilities. Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham formally transferred the first shipment of surplus equipment to Fire Engine Company No. 3 in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 5.

"We are proud to help ensure that our law enforcement and emergency personnel have the necessary equipment and training to prepare them to respond effectively and thoroughly to any emergency," Secretary Abraham said. "And, we are pleased to provide DOE resources to help ensure America's homeland defense."

A variety of equipment from DOE sites will be made available through

the program. Specialists in the Department's Office of Assets Utilization, National Center of Excellence for Materials Recycle, in Oak Ridge, Tenn., will evaluate and refurbish the equipment. The Department of Justice Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) will work with established state contacts to identify appropriate local emergency responders, and DOE will deliver the equipment to those jurisdictions at no cost.

Training will be available to the emergency responders through ODP's Domestic Preparedness Equipment Technical Assistance Program. Local support for the equipment, including calibration, maintenance, and refresher training, will be available through a partnership with the Health Physics Society, a 6,000-member national organization of radiation safety professionals.

The pilot phase of the HDER Program, which began July 1, 2002,



Secretary Abraham with the display of surplus Department of Energy radiation detection equipment donated to Fire Engine Company No. 3, Washington, D.C.

targets the nation's 10 largest metropolitan areas—Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, New York City, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. Additional information on the program is available at <http://www.oakridge.doe.gov> or <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/>. ❖



INSIDE OAK RIDGE

Department of Energy Oak Ridge

A NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED FOR DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY OAK RIDGE EMPLOYEES

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Assets Utilization Supports Homeland Security

After the events of September 11, 2001, many agencies began working on ways to help improve homeland security. Now, ORO is playing a major role in supporting Homeland Security by helping to develop a new pilot program to do just that.

The Homeland Defense Equipment Reuse (HDER) Program was developed by DOE and the U.S. Department of Justice to make older-generation radiological detection equipment available to emergency response and security agencies in major U.S. cities.

Richard Meehan and Vince Adams, both of Assets Utilization, have been working on this program.

"After the events of September 11, we were busy thinking about things that we could do to try to help out and make a difference with regard to national readiness and domestic preparedness," Meehan said. "Once we understood what we might want to do with regard to radiation safety equipment, our next question was to try to understand how we could get this equipment into the right hands."

"It's one thing to be able to put your hands on the equipment," Meehan added. "It's quite a different and more complicated thing to find out how you can get people the equipment as well as the training necessary to operate it correctly. So, we did quite a lot of cold calling around to different Federal agencies and we stumbled onto the Department of Justice's Office of Domestic Preparedness, who indicated they were interested in partnering with us," Meehan said. "That relationship is important because DOE is bringing equipment to the table and Justice is bringing training and long-term stewardship of the equipment and their client agencies to the table. We are conferring a capability, rather than just a property."

Work with the Justice Department



At presentation of equipment in Washington, D.C., are (left to right) Rich Meehan, Michael Gesalfi of ORNL, Secretary Spencer Abraham and Kerry Thomas, Department of Justice's Office of Domestic Preparedness.

started in February 2002. An inter-agency agreement was then developed, staffed and available and executed in May 2002 by the Chief Financial Officer. "You may ask why the CFO and why not emergency operations?" Meehan asked. "Well, what this really is doing when you get right down to it, is managing personal property. So rather than auctioning it off or selling it or disposing it as waste, we are transferring it or redeploying it for use for its intended purpose."

"One of the reasons why it occurred as fast as it did is because it had the support of people who were working it at the staff level," Meehan said. "So we had more people finding ways to say yes than finding ways to say no."

Adams explained that this program is an important contribution to Homeland Security at a very cheap or minimal cost to the government. "We are using used equipment that was sitting there in warehouses, stuff that we were going to get rid of anyway," he said. "It costs to maintain it or even store it. And, of course we were going to have to dispose of it which was going to cost us

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Inside OR: Can you share what may be the possible short-term and long-term impacts?

Howse-Smith: As we progress, FM will be finished in 2004, HR in 2004 and IT in 2006. Until all the reviews are received and compiled by Headquarters, we will not have a clear picture of what the long-term impacts will be.

Fitchpatrick: It's important to note that there will be change whether or not we win our bids. Since federal organizations must adhere to their "most efficient" bid, it's likely to cause changes. For instance, if in the federal bid the organization says it will perform its function in 10 locations instead of the current 28, then certain slots will have to be moved around.

Inside OR: Are there ways to be exempt from this review process, and justify slots that can come off the table?

Howse-Smith: As we study the functions and we see some that are inherently federal and have to be performed by a federal employee, we can justify that they be taken off the table. However, if some positions are determined to be exempt, an equal number of slots must be put back on the table from some other source or organization to be reviewed. The final identification of which slots will be studied during the five years is still up in the air.

Inside OR: If positions were moved to the private sector, how would that transition be handled?

Howse-Smith: It's definitely too soon to discuss that since we are really still in the early planning stages at this point.

Inside OR: Are there any other insights or thoughts you would like to share with employees regarding the reviews?

Howse-Smith: I think most people are concerned about job security, potential RIFs, or having to change over to a contractor position. It really is premature at this time for employees to be overly worried. I would advise people to take a wait-and-see posture on this and see what develops. We would like to avoid having people leave the federal sector now and thereby weaken our ability to provide

the services we need to effectively compete in a bidding process against private sector companies. □

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money. So here we are finding a very positive application and a very important application at a very cheap cost."

Recently, equipment was delivered to Washington, D.C., as part of the pilot program, which includes the 10 major metropolitan areas in the United States, based on census data. Meehan delivered 52 pieces of equipment to Washington, D.C., and 110 pieces to Philadelphia, Penn. Larry Clark went with Meehan to Washington, D.C., to also represent Robert Brown, Assistant Manager for Assets Utilization.

Secretary Spencer Abraham presented the equipment and said, "We are proud to ensure that our law enforcement and emergency personnel have the necessary equipment and training to prepare them to respond effectively and thoroughly to any emergency."

When asked what the Secretary said to him about this program, Meehan said, "It was pretty simple. He said thanks for coming up with the idea and bringing it through to completion. And he appreciated the aggressiveness with which Oak Ridge dealt with the issue. It was something that he asked us back after September 11 to think of ways we could contribute to domestic preparedness and domestic security. He challenged all Department employees to do that and we responded to that challenge."

Meehan added that the men and women who will be using the equipment were also appreciative of the work Oak Ridge has been involved in. "I think you could say universally that the guys that are down in the trenches, who are the first responders, were just glad to receive the equipment and the capabilities that it conferred," he said. "I heard at least one individual handle a piece of equipment and say this is exactly what they need. So it really was giving them something that they wanted rather than what we thought they needed. It was received well and both departments that we presented the equipment to were very complimentary of it."

When asked what feedback they have received from DOE Headquarters, Adams said, "It's been very, very positive. Here we are finding a very positive application and a very important application at a very cheap cost. So that's what I think has caught the attention right up to the Secretary of Energy and down and has been very positive and very complimentary."

Both Adams and Meehan said that this project was a great team effort. Adams said, "I think that everybody should be complemented. Also, the Department of Justice folks. It's been a pleasure working with them. And we have also worked with the sites who have supplied us with the equipment. They have been very cooperative across the complex in helping us identify the equipment and moving it here in a timely manner. And nothing could have been done without the National Electronics Recycling Center at ETRP. And ORISE (Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education) has helped us tremendously with Health Physics expertise that we don't have in doing the basic calibration and making sure the equipment is usable after refurbishment."

Adams also said, "It's one of the most positive things that I have ever worked on. It's one of the more beneficial things I have ever worked on in terms of the value that it's providing to the nation as a whole. And not only that, it's the minimal cost, if any, or the resources that it is taking. It's a sound initiative and well worth the effort. It's a lesson in how agencies and sites can work together to make these types of initiatives successful. It's a lesson in cooperation."

Meehan added, "I know that Oak Ridge has gotten a lot of attention with regard to this. But without the people sending us the equipment, we wouldn't be this successful. Without the cooperation of the Justice Department and their willingness to fund the shipping and handling of the equipment, we wouldn't have been able to do it. And our contractor ORISE has been a big help from the technical side in making sure the equipment is indeed operable and providing some invaluable advice to the National Electronics Recycling Center out at ETRP to more accurately triage and prepare the equipment for redeployment. So it really is a larger team than a lot of people may have been aware of." □