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THESIS

**ENHANCING REGIONAL COLLABORATION –
TAKING THE NEXT STEP**

by

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March 2007

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ENHANCING REGIONAL COLLABORATION – TAKING THE NEXT STEP

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ABSTRACT

Enhancing regional collaboration has been identified as one of the eight National Priorities for Homeland Security by the president of the United States. While South Carolina has made significant efforts in expanding regional collaboration, such as the creation of regional Counter Terrorism Coordinating Councils (CTCCs), there is still much work to be done. There are several teams and capabilities in place throughout the state, but they are uncoordinated, lack structure, and have no plan or strategy by which to guide them. State agencies have different regional operational structures, adding to the redundancy and uncoordinated homeland security planning efforts. This thesis examines why collaboration is difficult to achieve, and based on an examination of the literature as well as the benefits of regional collaboration as observable in other states, will make specific recommendations for South Carolina to expand regional collaboration. The recommendations are applicable to states throughout the nation to ensure that homeland security planning efforts are coordinated, and regional collaboration is expanded at the sub-state level.

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I. INTRODUCTION

There is no greater necessity than to collaborate on a regional basis to leverage expertise, share specialized assets, enhance capacity, and interoperate cohesively and effectively.¹

A. BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Enhancing regional collaboration has been identified as one of the eight National Priorities for Homeland Security by the president of the United States. It has been mandated in the National Preparedness Guidance and again in the State Homeland Security Program and Capability Review Guidebook, Volume 1: “The Goal does not mandate that State and local governments adopt a regional governmental structure, but it does require that all levels of government embrace a regional approach to building capabilities.”^{2,3} In order to build capabilities via regional collaboration, states throughout the nation including South Carolina have developed regional councils and advisory committees. Specialized response teams have been built out and equipment has been strategically placed throughout the regions. The Department of Homeland Security has required states to assess current regional structures in an effort to support the implementation of the tiered structure of the Target Capabilities List.⁴ While South Carolina has made significant efforts in expanding regional collaboration such as the creation of regional Counter Terrorism Coordinating Councils (CTCCs), there is still much work to be done. There are several teams and capabilities in place throughout the state, but they are uncoordinated, lack structure, and have no plan or strategy by which to guide them.

One of the key means to determine how prepared a county, region, or state should be are three questions: “How prepared do we need to be?,” “How prepared are we?,” and

¹ Department of Homeland Security, *National Preparedness Guidance* (Washington D.C: Department of Homeland Security, April 27, 2005), 19.

² *Ibid.*, 20.

³ Department of Homeland Security, *State Homeland Security Program and Capability Review Guidebook*, Volume 1 (Washington D.C: Department of Homeland Security, October 2005), 64.

⁴ *National Preparedness Guidance*, 21.

“How do we prioritize efforts to close the gap?”⁵ These questions allow planning teams to assess the threat, determine current capabilities, and recommend how to most effectively and efficiently close the gap between threat and capability. They can also aid state and local governments in determining the structure of the regions, what capabilities to enhance, and how to effectively guide planning efforts. These aspects will be revisited in the recommendations provided in Chapter V.

Enhancing regional collaboration is a key component of answering the above questions to address target levels of capability and conduct capability-based planning. As stated in the National Preparedness Guidance, “expanded regional collaboration supports the development of a seamless, national network of mutually-supporting capabilities to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from the full spectrum of threats and hazards.”⁶ Regional collaboration is important because not every county can comprehensively prepare for a natural or man-made event. Communities cannot achieve or sustain the same amount of preparedness, nor do they need to. Therefore, enhancing regional collaboration is the key to ensuring that adequate levels of preparedness and response for all disciplines within homeland security are distributed throughout regions within the state. By enhancing regional collaboration, smaller counties can create mutual aid agreements or memoranda of understanding, with other counties to offer or receive aid in the event of a disaster. Also, enhancing regional collaboration will support planning, equipping, training, and exercising for all homeland security issues.

Although regional collaboration may occur between states, for the purpose of the present research it will refer to counties or regions within a state. This thesis will detail specific recommendations for South Carolina to enhance regional collaboration that may be utilized across the nation. The recommendations will be drawn from the literature on the importance of regional collaboration, the impediments to collaboration, and how other states have addressed these impediments.

Section A, provided background information on enhancing regional collaboration, why it is worth examining, and how it will be discussed throughout this thesis. Section B, National Priority, provides an analysis of enhancing regional collaboration as a national

⁵ *National Preparedness Guidance*, 3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

priority and its definition, or lack thereof, at a national level. Section C, State Priority, briefly describes how regional collaboration has been implemented in South Carolina. Section D, Benefits of Regional Collaboration, discusses the benefits of regional collaboration and why it is an important National Priority. Section E, Literature Review, examines the literature on enhancing regional collaboration, including not only federal mandates, but also documentation available from other states on the benefits of regional collaboration, how it has been implemented, and a brief overview of the impediments to enhancing it. Section F, Expanding Regional Collaboration, provides a general overview of the remainder of the thesis, including why collaboration is important and how three states (Iowa, Arizona, and Michigan) are overcoming identified impediments to enhance collaboration.

B. NATIONAL PRIORITY

“Expand Regional Collaboration” is one of the eight priorities in the Department of Homeland Security’s National Preparedness Goal.⁷ Due to an overall decrease in federal funding to support homeland security initiatives and thus the need for more effective utilization of that funding, regional collaboration has been encouraged and continues to be a priority within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). In an effort to promote sharing of resources and regional planning, DHS included “regionalization and effective collaboration” as part of the scoring criteria for the 2006 Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) funds.⁸ Although DHS has widely promoted regional collaboration, the agency has offered little guidance as to how states and local governments should accomplish this task.

As a national priority, regional collaboration is meant to “tactically locate capabilities in order to maximize coverage of the U.S. population and the Nation’s high priority critical infrastructure and key resources.”⁹ Other than Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) projects, regional collaboration was not initially funded directly by DHS. Only in Fiscal Year 2005 did DHS mandate that regional collaboration take place

⁷ Department of Homeland Security, *National Preparedness Goal* (Washington D.C: Department of Homeland Security, December 2005), 15.

⁸ Department of Homeland Security, *FY2006 Homeland Security Grant Program: Investment Justification User’s Manual* (Washington D.C: Department of Homeland Security, December 2005), 4.

⁹ Department of Homeland Security, *FY2006 Homeland Security Grant Program: Program Guidance and Application Kit* (Washington D.C: Department of Homeland Security, December 2005), 4.

to create Tactical Interoperable Communication Plans in all states, including those states that do not have UASI projects. Until Fiscal Year 2006, the HSGP did not fully support DHS's goal to expand regional collaboration. Pork barrel spending did not mandate that regional initiatives be created, supported, or funded. States were given a set amount of funding irrespective of whether the state promoted regional efforts. For example, in South Carolina, although there were regional initiatives, most of the local portion of funds were distributed to the counties based solely on population. Most of the local funds were not used for regional initiatives. However, with the switch to a more competitive grant program in Fiscal Year 2006, states were judged on how their plans supported expanding regional collaboration.

While the "Goal does not mandate that State and local governments adopt a regional governmental structure... it does require that all levels of government embrace a regional approach to building capabilities."¹⁰ The term "capabilities" is often thought of only in the response sense: equipment. However, expanding regional collaboration is also focused on promoting multi-jurisdictional preparedness activities such as planning, training, and exercises. Planning throughout the nation is inadequate. As stated in the National Plan Review report, "the current status of plans and planning gives grounds for significant national concern."¹¹ Also, the report notes that "Our large homeland security community is characterized by divided and decentralized planning responsibilities and highly diversified administration."¹² Inadequate planning can also affect communications. Although technology exists in many jurisdictions to allow for interoperability, "regionalized strategic plans are largely not in place."¹³

Enhancing regional collaboration will aid in ensuring that plans are aligned despite the diversified administration of homeland security activities. Regional, multidiscipline planning is difficult because of the amount of collaboration and cooperation required. While equipment can be purchased and the actual act of receiving

¹⁰ *State Homeland Security Program and Capability Review Guidebook*, 64.

¹¹ Department of Homeland Security, *National Plan Review, Phase 2 Report* (Washington D.C: Department of Homeland Security, June 16, 2006), viii.

¹² *Ibid.*, xii.

¹³ Department of Homeland Security, *Tactical Interoperable Communications Scorecards Summary Report and Findings* (Washington D.C: Department of Homeland Security, January 2007), iii.

the equipment serves as a deliverable within a grant, coordination, cooperation, and collaboration do not. However, creating multi-jurisdictional plans to utilize that equipment is more difficult. Various disciplines including fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, public and private health, etc., must work together to plan with respect to homeland security. Despite mandates and guidance to collaborate, silos still exist with respect to response and planning.

C. STATE PRIORITY

Expanding regional collaboration has been mandated in South Carolina. In support of South Carolina Executive Order Number 2003-02, the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) was established as the lead in crisis management for terrorist events.¹⁴ In support of the executive order, SLED established four regional CTCCs.¹⁵ These councils were established to “maximize local involvement and streamline readiness and communication procedures.” The councils were also created to develop a network for distributing federal funds to “fulfill our statewide mission.”¹⁶

Building regional capabilities has been a strategic goal for South Carolina since the attacks of 9/11. While South Carolina has many regional initiatives, the largest is specialized weapons of mass destruction teams. The formation of “regional” Chemical Ordnance Biological Radiological (COBRA) teams began shortly after 2001 and has been a priority for South Carolina since their inception. They have been supported by State HSGP funds under the aim of furthering goal 2.2.9 – “Enhance South Carolina’s capabilities to provide regional support and assistance to the jurisdictions for responding to a WMD event.”¹⁷ There are four advanced COBRA teams, one in each CTCC region of the state. According to the COBRA Standard Operating Procedure, “The Advanced Teams are the focal point for regionalized coordination, planning and training of all the teams within their respective regions.”¹⁸ However, regional planning and coordination

¹⁴ Mark Sanford, *South Carolina Executive Order Number 2003-02*.

¹⁵ Robert M. Stewart, letter to CTCC members, dated March 28, 2003.

¹⁶ Robert M. Stewart, memo to CTCC members dated June 19, 2003.

¹⁷ *2003 State Homeland Security Assessment and Strategy, Executive Summary* (Columbia, South Carolina: State Law Enforcement Division, 2003), 19.

¹⁸ *COBRA Response Team, Plan and Standard Operating Guidance, Version 1.0* (Columbia, South Carolina: South Carolina Emergency Management Division), 11.

has not taken place. There are no regional plans to specify how these teams can be utilized and what their capabilities are. Largely because of this, these teams were not utilized in the Graniteville train derailment in 2005. The state utilized the DHS Pre-Positioned Equipment Pods that provided truckloads of personal protective equipment and only elements of three COBRA teams were utilized.¹⁹ In actuality, COBRA teams are county teams made up of in-county personnel and equipment. They perform no regional coordination function, planning, and limited training. One of the main impediments to regional planning, according to the Emergency Management Director responsible for one of these teams, is that there is no regional governance structure within the state. While South Carolina has many regional structures already in place, including Regional CTCCs, the state must still expand them to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate CBRNE events.

Due to the emphasized role of regional collaboration, and perhaps more importantly to its impact on grant funding, “regional capability” has become a commonly used phrase within DHS and therefore at the state level. In addition to COBRA teams, regional councils have been formed to meet requirements of grants and efforts have been undertaken to create regional response capabilities. Within South Carolina’s Homeland Security Strategy, Strategic Goal 2.2 is to “Improve State, Regional, and local capabilities to respond to terrorist attacks employing chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive devices, infectious disease outbreaks, public health threats, and other emergencies.”²⁰ Regional capabilities including regional COBRA teams, specialty decontamination equipment, mass fatality trailers, mobile hospital systems, Urban Search and Rescue teams have been established and sustained within the state. The State Exercise Program now conducts exercises regionally so that various counties participate in the planning of and conduct of the exercises.

D. BENEFITS OF REGIONAL COLLABORATION

“Expanded regional collaboration supports the development of a seamless, national network of mutually-supporting capabilities to prevent, protect against, respond

¹⁹ South Carolina State Emergency Operation Center, *Situation Report #10* (Columbia, South Carolina: South Carolina Emergency Management Division).

²⁰ *COBRA Response Team, Plan and Standard Operating Guidance, Version 1.0*, 16.

to, and recover from the full spectrum of threats and hazards.”²¹ High-risk communities obviously need more assets to be able to respond to possible Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear Explosive/Weapons of Mass Destruction (CBRNE/WMD) events or natural hazards. To avoid duplications, regions must plan so that they are able to assess gaps by identifying shortfalls, and then identify ways to address those gaps via mutual aid. Below is a list of benefits of regional collaboration that the state of Kansas has outlined:²²

- Safer and better prepared system to protect from, respond to, recover from and mitigate the effects of a natural and/or man-made hazard;
- Common baseline and sustainability plan across the region and state;
- Grassroots view of priority needs;
- Coordination of solution areas enhanced to ensure avoidance of duplication;
- Shared approach for determining use of funds during a time of dwindling resources (most amount of good for the least amount of money);
- Maximize resources through sharing;
- Increase capabilities through regional assets (the whole is greater than the sum of the parts);
- Gain strength through collective personnel and resources (strength in numbers and many minds are better than one);
- Integrated approach for all hazards;
- Confidence in response capability – builds trust throughout the region;
- Stay ahead of national expectations – regional collaboration is becoming more and more a priority at the federal level.

These are just an example of why collaboration is important; it allow for more effective utilization of homeland security funding, strengthening of mutual aid agreements, and ultimately a safer and better prepared nation.

E. LITERATURE REVIEW

Expanding regional collaboration has only recently been identified as a National Priority. For this reason, and though several regional structures exist in South Carolina and the nation, there is little supporting academic literature on how to enhance

²¹ *National Preparedness Guidance*, 19.

²² State of Kansas, *Regional Approach to Homeland Security*.

collaboration within and among these regions. The source documents on which this thesis is built are: 1) The federal guidelines and mandates (Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 and the National Preparedness Guidance) which provide the foundation for regionalization concepts and associated policies; 2) literature on why collaboration is difficult, which provide a baseline understanding of why collaboration is difficult to obtain; 3) documents from other states, which provide clear examples of several models for expanded regional collaboration. There is limited secondary literature on the impact and effectiveness of regionalization.

The need for regional collaboration is obvious and has been repeated in much of the national guidance. Howitt mentions a variety of reasons for lack of collaboration such as costs, turf wars, and a lack of policy. He states that there is a “geographic mismatch between the scale of the problem and the scope of the government institutions that must deal with it. The impact of a terrorist attack with weapons of mass destruction could well extend over a broad metropolitan or interstate area, potentially involving dozens or hundreds of local governments and several states. The American government, however, lacks strong decision-making structures that connect diverse localities or that reach across state borders.”²³

There are regional planning organizations, such as the Council of Governments (COGs) that conduct regional planning across the nation. However, these entities are not governmental organizations so there is a cost associated with the planning. The National Association of Development Organizations, which provides advocacy for these organizations, states that according to a survey, “The most pressing homeland security need in small metropolitan and rural areas... is the need to provide incentives for regional cooperation among local jurisdictions.”²⁴

There are several criteria that DHS has recommended for the states to consider when creating collaborative regions: the locations of existing regions, proximity to large metropolitan areas, population, population density, critical infrastructure, and

²³ Arnold M. Howitt, “Promoting Regional Collaboration,” *Beyond the Beltway: Focusing on Homeland Security* (Cambridge: Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government, September 2002), 28.

²⁴ National Association of Development Organizations, “Regional Approaches to Homeland Security Planning & Preparedness,” August, 2005.

capability.²⁵ FEMA has also provided elements that should be examined in regional planning including multi-jurisdictional boundaries, overlapping areas of response, unique infrastructure, and mutual risk areas.²⁶

Enhanced regional collaboration is identified as a priority not just by the federal government, but also by numerous city and state-level organizations. The Emergency Services Discipline has stated that “no single community can be expected to develop and maintain the necessary capacity for a large-scale event.”²⁷ The U.S. Conference of Mayors has confirmed that enhanced regional collaboration is needed to organize supplies during a disaster and for general emergency management issues. The National Association of Counties has requested funding to enhance regional planning and coordination. The National League of Cities has also called for cooperation in working regionally.²⁸

Throughout these documents, reasons are given for why regional collaboration is difficult and people do not naturally want to embrace it, but not for why collaboration is a bad idea. Regional planning has existed since at least 1909.²⁹ It is an efficient and effective way to share the costs of planning, response to, and recovery from a terrorist or natural-hazard event.

F. PREVIOUS SOLUTIONS/METHODS

Enhancing regional collaboration is an overarching National Priority and must be addressed by each state. According to the Implementation Plan for Regionalization developed by Iowa, regions have been established there to help streamline the grant process, and are therefore used primarily for funding rather than planning issues.³⁰ In

²⁵ *National Preparedness Guidance*, 21.

²⁶ *Managing the Emergency Consequences of Terrorist Incidents: Interim Planning Guide for State and Local Governments* (Washington D.C: Federal Emergency Management Agency, July 2002), 16.

²⁷ “Bioterrorism: Is Your Town Ready? Report Says Regionalization Is the Key” *EMS Magazine* (August 2004).

²⁸ William R. Dodge, *Regional Emergency Preparedness Compacts: Safeguarding the Nation’s Communities* (California: Alliance for Regional Stewardship, March 2002), 10.

²⁹ William N. Cassella, Jr., “Regional Planning and Governance: History and Politics,” in *Regional Planning: Evolution Crisis and Prospects*, ed. Gill C. Lim (New Jersey: Allanheld, Osmun & Co. Publishers, Inc., 1983), 17.

³⁰ *Implementation Plan for the Regionalization of Iowa Homeland Security*, November 2004.

Kansas, by contrast, regionalization was established not only to aid with the grant process but also to facilitate regional planning and response capabilities.³¹

Many states have already identified regions either for the streamlining of homeland security funding or as planning committees. Texas utilizes existing regional COGs as the basis for the Homeland Security regions in the state.³² The COGs are assigned the task of developing regional homeland security plans that are integrated into the statewide plan. Missouri has proposed that the existing State Highway Patrol Regions be utilized as the homeland security regions.³³ The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) “strongly recommends” that states develop sub-state regions to address planning issues regarding prevention and response. Also, states are required to assess at least one multi-jurisdiction metropolitan area by analyzing alternative make-ups for that area, conducting an analysis of the varying areas identified, and selecting a preferred area.³⁴

Several regional structures are in place within the health discipline. The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control has eight districts in which regional plans such as the Mass Casualty Plans are developed. Outside of South Carolina, planning regions exist in the National Capital Region, the Columbus Region, and the Kansas City Region.³⁵ All of these regions include multi-jurisdictional areas where planning has taken place.

South Carolina is mostly a rural state with four population centers throughout the state. Each homeland security region is centered around one of the population centers. A Regional CTCC represents each homeland security region, which in turn were initially created to support the HSGP.

Many of the state agencies within South Carolina are “regionalized” for operational and planning purposes. The State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) and State EMD have four counterterrorism regions for planning. EMD also has different planning zones for the Fixed Nuclear Facilities. State EMD, along with SLED, has

³¹ State of Kansas, *Regional Approach to Homeland Security*.

³² Rick Perry, *Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan* (State of Texas, January 30, 2004).

³³ *Homeland Security Statewide Regionalization Framework* (State of Missouri, July 2006).

³⁴ *National Preparedness Guidance*, 22.

³⁵ Dodge, *Regional Emergency Preparedness Compacts*.

established regional assets in four regions of the state. These regional assets, however, are actually county assets that have been designated to use regionally. For example, the four regional COBRA teams (advanced hazmat teams) are assigned to the four most populous counties in the state and are *de facto* county teams. They consist of county volunteers, they typically respond in-county, and unless requested for mutual aid by the state, do not respond to other counties. Other than the equipment being placed strategically in regions, there is no regional response. Regional plans do not exist and regional training and exercises are limited.

G. EXPANDING REGIONAL COLLABORATION

“Regional approaches have been recognized as a key way to address the threat of terrorism.”³⁶ This thesis will examine why regional collaboration is difficult and not readily accomplished and recommend solutions on how to expand regional collaboration utilizing Iowa, Michigan, and Arizona as case studies. These states will be examined to see what steps they have taken to expand regional collaboration. Consistent patterns will be analyzed to determine what has aided in expanding regional collaboration. The effectiveness of regional collaboration efforts are measured by the degree to which states have developed regional planning structures, regional strategies, and funding allocations based on regions. Existing literature will be examined to determine the basis of regional collaboration barriers and theories to overcome them. By analyzing existing literature, examining other state and/or regional structures, and building upon personal experience, a set of recommendations or guidelines will be produced to expand South Carolina’s ability to collaborate regionally.

There are a variety of ways to enhance regional collaboration, including enhancing plans, tying federal funding directly to regional structures, and creating regional strategic plans. The central piece of this thesis will identify how other states have overcome impediments to regional collaboration, and what specific steps they have taken to expand regional collaboration. Various regional structures and plans will be reviewed, and a series of guidelines will be created from these plans by which to enhance collaboration.

³⁶ *Homeland Security: Effective Regional Coordination Can Enhance Emergency Preparedness* (Washington D.C: United States Government Accountability Office, September 2004), 1.

The research associated with this thesis will provide guidance for the regions and the state as a whole to meet the national mandates of enhancing regional collaboration, and to develop a set of best practices and therefore guidelines on how to collaborate in order to begin the planning process of preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a disaster.

Regional collaboration is a national priority but has been an obstacle for many states due to lack of guidance. This project, while not conclusive, will offer guidance on how to expand regional collaboration. Chapter II will discuss the definition of regional collaboration, metrics associated with the achievement of regional collaboration, and impediments to achieving regional collaboration. Chapter III will examine efforts within South Carolina that have been implemented to expand regional collaboration and specific difficulties within the state that hinder regional collaboration. Chapter IV is a case study of three states' efforts to expand regional collaboration. Chapter V will provide specific, actionable recommendation on how regional collaboration can be enhanced in South Carolina (and elsewhere). Chapter VI will serve as a brief discussion and conclusion to this thesis.

II. ACHIEVING REGIONAL COLLABORATION

A Region, someone has wryly observed, is an area safely larger than the last one to whose problems we found no solution.³⁷

In order to establish metrics for achieving regional collaboration, the definition of regional collaboration must first be understood. Although the above quote by Jane Jacobs is not the definition of regions one would hope to find, it does reflect the ambiguous nature of a region. This chapter attempts to define, describe, and measure regional collaboration, discusses the variety of current regional concepts and how regions are structured within states. Section C, Effects of Regional Collaboration, discusses some of the specific benefits of regional collaboration. Measuring Regional Collaboration, Section D, examines efforts to measure, or apply metrics to, regional collaboration. Section E, Key Elements of Regional Collaboration, looks at the three key elements of regional collaboration: Leadership, Mission, and Stakeholder Involvement. Section F, Impediments to Regional Collaboration, expands on the difficulties and barriers to regional collaboration including several theories as to why regional collaboration is especially difficult in the United States. The purpose of this chapter is to gain a better understanding of regional collaboration, and despite its value and importance, why it is not readily achieved or implemented.

A. DEFINITION OF REGIONAL COLLABORATION

What defines a region? The Taskforce for Regional Disaster Resilience defines a region as “any area that is defined as such by stakeholders responsible for disaster preparedness and management.”³⁸ The Task Force goes on to note that regions “generally have certain accepted cultural characteristics and geographic boundaries and tend to coincide with the service areas of the infrastructures that serve them.”³⁹ Regions have been defined based on geography, mutual aid agreements, pre-existing regional structures

³⁷ Robert Fishman, “The Death and Life of American Regional Planning,” in *Reflections on Regionalism*, ed. Bruce Katz (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institute Press, 2000), 107.

³⁸ The Infrastructure for Security Partnership, Task Force for Regional Disaster Preparedness, “Special Report: Guide For An Action Plan to Develop Regional Disaster Resilience,” February 16, 2006, 8.

³⁹ “Special Report: Guide For An Action Plan,” 8.

such as that of Highway Patrol regions in a state or council of government (COG) regions. The National Preparedness Guidance offers some sensible guidance to defining regions within a state:

1. Analyze alternative geographic and jurisdictional compositions options such as:
 - a. Any currently designated multi-jurisdictional area (e.g., UASI Urban Area, State Emergency Management district, State homeland security region, or Local Emergency Planning Committee);
 - b. The jurisdictions and entities included within a standard planning radius from the center of the core city (e.g., all counties within a 100 mile radius from the center of the core city); and
 - c. The entities within the Metropolitan Statistical Area (as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Office of Management and Budget).
2. Conduct an analysis of alternatives around the identified options in Step 1 above. Planning considerations include:
 - a. Compare each of the options identified above to the collective set of potential effects of major events (i.e., the potential set of major events as represented by the National Planning Scenarios);
 - i. For each option, using the set of potential effects as the basis, assess factors such as total population, population density, and presence of critical infrastructure; and
 - ii. For each option, consider the resident capability present in each of the jurisdictions and tradeoffs among the options versus the collective capability needed to prevent and respond to these events.
3. Select a preferred regional geographic and jurisdictional option.

Once a preferred option is selected, efforts should begin to adjust and update plans, strengthen mutual aid, and begin regional training and exercises according to the region. Initially, evaluating and strengthening existing planning and regional collaboration structures provides the foundation for a system of sub-State regions that cover the entire State. In the future, such regions will be required and will subsequently be assigned to the Tier System (to be included in the Final Goal to be released on October

1, 2005). To the extent possible, all States should begin in FY 2005 to assess options and consider various regional configurations that develop or modify sub-State regions to center on major population areas.”⁴⁰

Though it is not presently enforced, the National Preparedness Guidance does require that all states take an approach similar to the one above to “analyze alternative options for the geographic and jurisdictional composition of their sub-State regions.”⁴¹ This process was also required to identify a multi-jurisdictional, metropolitan area in the state, later used to develop the Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan.

Webster’s dictionary defines collaboration as “to work jointly with others or together...”⁴² Webster also defines collaboration as cooperating. The United States Government Accountability Office has defined collaboration as “any joint activity by two or more organizations intended to produce more public value than could be produced when the organizations act alone.”⁴³ Collaboration can also mean coordination. The United States Government Accountability Office has defined regional coordination as the “use of governmental resources in a complementary way towards goals and objectives that are mutually agreed upon by various stakeholders in a region.”⁴⁴

Regional collaboration is not defined by the Interim National Preparedness Goal; however, the Goal does state that regional collaboration is achieved “through mutual aid agreements and assistance compacts in order to meet the target levels of capability in the most effective and expedient manner.”⁴⁵ This statement is quite ambiguous. While this statement may work for general, national guidance purposes, it leaves states and locals questioning how to achieve such. Mutual aid agreements are only one effect of regional collaboration.

⁴⁰ *National Preparedness Guidance*, 22.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴² Merriam-Webster Online. <http://webster.com/dictionary/collaboration>. Accessed November 27, 2006.

⁴³ William O. Jenkins Jr., “Homeland Security, Assessment of the National Capital Region Strategic Plan,” Testimony before the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate (Washington D.C: United States Government Accountability Office), 4.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *National Preparedness Goal*, 11.

There has been much debate concerning the definition of a region. Should a region be based purely on geography or capability? There is no clear way to decide, and states have therefore taken very different approaches to defining regions, as we will see in the next chapter. Often, states simply adopted an existing state agency regional structure without analyzing existing mutual aid agreements between the counties or examining other relationships between these counties such as regional mass casualty plans. While a “cookie-cutter” approach is not appropriate for defining regions within states across the nation, lessons may be gleaned from efforts taken by several states to enhance regional collaboration.

The formulas used to enhance regional collaboration depend on a number of variables of the member jurisdictions such as their number, type, and composition (the definition of the region).⁴⁶ The process of identifying and defining the region will “require candidates to assess their primary methods or approaches for enhancing preparedness” and the subsequent structure of the region will have an impact decision-making. If regions have been defined using varying criteria, preparedness efforts will not be consistent and gaps will exist. Regional structure can also affect decision-making, making it difficult to be consistent in planning, response, and recovery from a major disaster. Although all decision-making should be made according the National Incident Management System, regional structures can have an impact. Therefore, it is vital that for emergency preparedness, regions be defined on an agreed set of criteria.

B. STRUCTURE OF THE REGION – CAPABILITY OR GEOGRAPHY

Regions are defined in the *National Preparedness Goal* as a “geographic area consisting of contiguous State, local, and tribal entities located in whole or in part within a designated planning radius of a core high threat urban area.”⁴⁷ But the identification of a high threat urban area is not an easy task, especially in a rural state. Population, population density, and critical infrastructure weigh heavily when looking at high threat areas. HSGP funding is based on the terrorist threat to an area. There is debate, however,

⁴⁶ The Emergency Management Accreditation Program, “A Framework for Assessing Regional Preparedness: A White Paper on Applying Emergency Preparedness Standards to Multijurisdictional Areas” (April 2006).

⁴⁷ *Interim National Preparedness Goal* (Washington D.C: Department of Homeland Security, March 31, 2005), 11.

as to whether the threat of natural hazards and their risks should also be tied to the allocation of homeland security funding. Until recently, the risk picture that determined HSGP funding looked only at terrorism risk. However, the Fiscal Year 2007 HSGP guidance states that natural hazards can be mitigated with the funding as well.⁴⁸ This is a new line of thought within this grant program. While “dual-benefit” has always been implied with terrorism as the key focus, the Fiscal Year 2007 grant program guidance clearly states that funds can be used for natural hazards as long as there is a dual-benefit for terrorism. An additional component of this debate focuses on the proper weight of capabilities rather than geography in the determination of regional boundaries. This would produce a region that is not necessarily centered on a high threat area, but rather one that follows the flow of key capabilities.

Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) cities are regional efforts funded by DHS. But the definition of UASI cities, or regions, is somewhat ambiguous. For example, as described in the HSGP Guidance, any city with a population of 100,000 or above is eligible. A ten-mile radius circle is then drawn around the boundary of the city to determine the urban area region. Other areas outside of this area can be added, but none of the areas within that ten-mile area can be deleted or excluded from the urban area. There is no documentation to explain the reasoning behind the ten-mile area region. Also, only a terrorism threat is used to qualify the city. With the all-hazards scope, all hazards will need to be examined to be consistent with the HSGP, which may expand the boundary of the region. Based on recent history, terrorism has only been focused in high population areas; however, natural hazards can strike anywhere.

C. EFFECTS OF REGIONAL COLLABORATION

The outcomes or effects of regional collaboration have been documented in several sources. The United States Government Accountability Office notes that “effective regional collaboration is characterized by, among other things, the presence of a regional organization of many diverse stakeholders that identifies a problems and possible solutions...The combined outcome of the collaboration interaction of those parties is a strategic plan that is made actionable by the presence of goals and

⁴⁸ FY2007 Homeland Security Grant Program: Program Guidance and Application Kit.

objectives.”⁴⁹ According to DHS, metrics, or benchmarks, for achieving regional collaboration include “(1) formalizing mutual aid agreement with surrounding communities and states to share equipment, personnel, and facilities during emergencies; (2) conducting exercises of the execution of mutual aid agreements to identify the challenges and familiarize officials with resources that are available in the region; and (3) coordinating homeland security preparedness assistance expenditures and planning efforts on a regional basis to avoid duplicative or inconsistent investments.”⁵⁰ Pre-planning at a regional level can also reduce stress during an actual event by the knowledge of available assets in a defined region, the knowledge and trust of those who will be responding to provide aid and assistance, and a defined set of roles and responsibilities according to National Incident Management System (NIMS) standards.

D. MEASURING REGIONAL COLLABORATION

DHS does not provide sufficient metrics for regional collaboration. A single statewide agreement, by terms of the *National Preparedness Goal*, would constitute regional collaboration. South Carolina indeed has a statewide mutual aid agreement in place, but its signing in no way constitutes the acceptance or realization of regional collaboration. While mutual aid agreements are a part of regional collaboration, they are not the proper end state. While South Carolina is a small state, regional planning remains a problem. Neighboring jurisdictions are not aware of each other’s capabilities, plans, or resources. Although regions have been established, little collaboration has taken place.

Regional collaboration can be measured by its effect as presented in the above section. Although expanding regional collaboration is a national priority, it is not a target capability and therefore lacks metrics. How does a region or state know it has achieved regional collaboration? It is not simply the creation of regional councils, or the funding or regional response teams. One way to determine the level of regional collaboration is the creation of regional plans that address all phases of preparedness including prevention, response, recovery and mitigation. These plans are not intended to usurp the counties’ or state’s own plan, but are intended to provide a maximum benefit for all agencies. The culmination of regional councils, mission, etc. is the creation of a regional plan that

⁴⁹ *Homeland Security: Effective Regional Coordination Can Enhance Emergency Preparedness*, 23.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

outlines, in accordance with existing plans, roles and responsibilities as well as assets available for mutual aid. Plans must be in place to ensure that these councils and teams are functional.

Howitt and Pangi note that “Effective collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries is essential to encourage compatibility in equipment and operation planning, minimize redundant investments in specialized equipment, reduce geographic gaps in preparedness by smaller communities, spur joint training and exercises, and broker stronger mutual assistance agreements.”⁵¹ Also, “regionalization... implements a process in which response disciplines and jurisdictions are forced to accurately assess capability levels in order to plan integrated response protocols.”⁵² The actions of these benefits can also be used to measure regional collaboration.

One measure of achieving regional collaboration is the creation of a strategic plan for the region. A strategic plan provides a region with a clear mission and vision statement, and an outline to work toward specific goals and objectives. The United States Government Accountability Office has outlined six desirable characteristics of a regional strategy:

- “Purpose, scope, and methodology that address why the strategy was produced, the scope of its coverage, and the process by which it was developed.
- Problem definition and risk assessment that address the particular regional problems and threats the strategy is directed towards.
- Goals, subordinate objectives, activities, and performance measures that address what the strategy is trying to achieve, steps to achieve those results, as well as the priorities, milestones, and performance measures to gauge results.
- Resources, investments, and risk management that address what the strategy will cost, the sources and types of resources and investments needed, and where resources and investments should be targeted by balancing risk reductions and costs.

⁵¹ Arnold M. Howitt and Robyn L. Pangi, “Intergovernmental Challenges of Combating Terrorism,” in *Countering Terrorism; Dimensions of Preparedness*, ed. Arnold M. Howitt and Robyn L. Pangi (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2003), 52.

⁵² Susan K. Reinertson, “Resource Sharing, Building Collaboration for Regionalization” (M.A. thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, September 2005), 13.

- Integration and implementation that address how a regional strategy relates to other strategies' goals, objectives and activities, and to state and local governments within their region and their plans to implement the strategy.
- Organizational roles, responsibilities, and coordination that address who will be implementing the strategy, what their roles will be compared to those of others, and mechanisms for them to coordinate their efforts.”⁵³

E. KEY ELEMENTS FOR REGIONAL COLLABORATION

1. Leadership

In order for collaboration to be successful, the right people must be involved.; those who have the power to create change and foster relationships (key leaders) must be committed to and intimately involved with the process of enhancing collaboration. “Leadership dedicated to stakeholder involvement is a critical characteristic of high-performing partnerships, second only to achieving results.”⁵⁴ Organizational leaders often designate people to attend meetings in their place. This practice is counter-productive for several reasons: the designees do not feel comfortable or capable of representing and speaking for the needs or views of their department or organization, and this in turn causes frustration in the group and hinders collaboration.

2. Mission Statement

In order for regional collaboration to take place, there must be a clear mission or vision statement of the desired end goal or result. Once the National Preparedness Goal is finalized, tiers will be assigned to regions that will aid in the creation of defining a mission. But in the absence of such focus presently, regional groups tend not to be productive.

3. Stakeholder Involvement

In order for the regional concept to work, each county must have a sense of ownership in the region and something to offer. Each county must feel that it belongs to a region with similar interests, and that their specific needs are being recognized and addressed: “Allowing all stakeholders to jointly name and frame...issues for regional collaboration is important for one simple reason – to foster ownership and commitment. Since no single institution or entity is responsible or has the authority to address a multi-

⁵³ Jenkins, “Homeland Security,” 5.

⁵⁴ *Homeland Security: Effective Regional Coordination Can Enhance Emergency Preparedness*, 23.

jurisdictional problem, the issues and potential solutions must reflect the interests and viewpoints of people that have a stake in the issue, those who are needed to implement any potential outcome, and those that might feel compelled to challenge the process or its outcome.”⁵⁵ Only by creating a sense of ownership for each county will the homeland security regions in South Carolina be able to enhance regional collaboration and therefore make South Carolina more prepared to respond to a terrorist and/or natural disaster.

F. IMPEDIMENTS TO REGIONAL COLLABORATION

1. Collective Action

The actual make-up of the regional structure is important to enhancing regional collaboration. If the region is too large, collaboration cannot take place due to its heterogeneity. According to Victoria Basolo, a variety of the problems with regionalism are “associated with higher number of jurisdictions within a region.”⁵⁶ Basolo bases most of her article on Mancur Olson who was interested in group dynamics, specifically how the size of the group affects group productivity. Olson argues that the rationale for forming a group is for collective action to foster a product of common good. However, the propensity of individuals in the group is to want a higher benefit for a lesser cost. Olsen argues that “as a group gets larger, any one person’s share of the collective good is lessened, which reduces an individual’s motivation to bear any of the cost.”⁵⁷ He also points out that a larger group does not produce a collective good unless it is coerced or has some outside incentive for group members to act in the common interest. In this context, Basolo asserts, the state and federal government have the authority and power to provide outside incentives for a larger regional group.

2. Local Autonomy

Basolo mentions several theories to hypothesize why regionalism is not fully endorsed by all jurisdictions. The Local Autonomy theory is self-explanatory: it is a “cultural explanation concerning the desire for local autonomy in governance.”⁵⁸ Local autonomy is embedded in American culture and can be traced back to the fight for

⁵⁵ University of Montana, Public Policy Research Institute, “Planning Across Boundaries: Habits of Effective Regional Collaboration” (February 26, 2006), 2.

⁵⁶ Victoria Basolo, “US Regionalism and Rationality”, *Urban Studies* 40, no. 3 (2003): 453.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 454.

⁵⁸ Basolo, “US Regionalism and Rationality,” 449.

political freedom and the lack of trust in big government. “In many ways, the American system of federalism reflects the political values cherished and nurtured by the people. The founding fathers distrusted the centralized political system of European countries and carefully guarded against the concentration of power in one hand. During the early years of the post-Independence period, deTocqueville observed that the advantages enjoyed by American local institutions were among the foremost reasons cited by its citizens for the country’s power and prosperity.”⁵⁹ The concern about fragmentation and the concept of regional governance can be dated back to the National Municipal League’s annual conference in 1909, which proposed a form of governance that would preserve local governments’ rights, but still have a regional representative council.⁶⁰

3. Public Choice

Public Choice theory is more of a competition-based theory in that “rational self-interest promotes competition among localities and reduces the likelihood of regional cooperation.”⁶¹ Independent, smaller units of government appear to be the more favorable form of government in the United States. In 1993, there were more than 33,000 special-purpose districts in the United States, making them the most common form of local government. Of these 33,000 special purpose districts, 90% perform a single function such as sewer or water services.⁶² The creation of numerous special-purpose districts, towns and cities within counties, and the law of home rule support the local autonomy theory. Citizens and leaders do not want to cede any of their territory’s power and are therefore disinclined toward regionalism.

The three theories Basolo examines (Collective Action, Local Autonomy, and Public Choice) all “suggest that the number of jurisdictions in a region impacts outcomes.”⁶³ If a region is too small, on the other hand, collaboration is equally ineffective. The literature exposes the discrepancy here; for example, the GAO reports

⁵⁹ Gill C. Lim, “Regional Planning in Transition,” in *Regional Planning: Evolution Crisis and Prospects*, ed. Gill C. Lim (New Jersey: Allanheld, Osmun & Co. Publishers, Inc., 1983), 5.

⁶⁰ Cassella, Jr., “Regional Planning and Governance,” 17.

⁶¹ Basolo, “US Regionalism and Rationality,” 449.

⁶² Henry G. Cisneros, *Regionalism: The New Geography of Opportunity* (Washington, D.C: Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, March 1995), 8.

⁶³ Basolo, “US Regionalism and Rationality,” 456.

that “regional organizations that include representation from many different jurisdictions and diverse stakeholders serve as structured forums for these parties to discuss public policy problems and agree on possible solutions.”⁶⁴ In areas where regional planning for preparedness is a new theory, it is vital to start with a small group or ensure that there is “some outside inducements that will lead the members of the large group to act in their common interest.”⁶⁵ The planning process can quickly become difficult if there are too many people in a room without a clear picture of the end result. Therefore, the actual structure of the region is vital to expanding regional collaboration. A right mix of capability, cohesiveness, and familiarity is needed to expand regional collaboration. A region must be large enough to offer the benefits of regional collaboration, such as sharing the cost of the risk and therefore the costs to mitigate the risk, but yet still small and homogeneous enough to actually develop and implement common solutions.

Which level of government determines the regional structure depends on the strength of leadership at the local level. In regions where leadership is strong and encourages collaborative effort, regions formed locally will have a more coherent structure and function more collaboratively. “By allowing jurisdictions to identify the boundaries of the region, they can take advantage of regional leadership or political relationships that can bring additional stakeholders, resources, or ideas to the process.”⁶⁶ However, if leadership is not strong, it is up to the state to promote regional collaboration attempting to keep geographic, existing mutual aid agreements, cultural, and regional leaders concerns in mind while determining the structure.

4. Concept of Regions

The concept of regional planning has been around for years in the transportation and health arena, but is difficult to implement for preparedness planning. “Regional cooperation was already key to living the good life before September 11. Public, private, and civic sector leaders, along with citizens, had already accepted the need to come together across regions to compete successfully in the global economy, protect air and water quality, and provide roads, transit, airports, parks, and other quality-of-life

⁶⁴ *Homeland Security: Effective Regional Coordination Can Enhance Emergency Preparedness*, 23.

⁶⁵ Basolo, “US Regionalism and Rationality,” 454.

⁶⁶ *Homeland Security: Effective Regional Coordination Can Enhance Emergency Preparedness*, 20.

amenities. They had even begun to come together to shape sensible regional growth to avoid squandering increasingly scarce resources on profligate sprawl. On September 11, the toughest regional challenge shifted from improving the quality of life to saving lives. Overnight, everyone realized that shaping balanced growth has to begin with safeguarding the citizens, businesses, and institutions and ‘hardening’ the infrastructure that makes our regions competitive in the global economy.”⁶⁷

5. Ownership

While it has been widely observed that every event is local, terrorism or any catastrophic event is actually regional in scope. Because a catastrophic event will quickly deplete if not incapacitate local first responders and resources, it is vital that regional planning take place to help mitigate the effects of a catastrophic event. However, building regional relationships is often difficult. “Coalition building is critical to regionalism because of the nature of a region. In most cases, the region is nobody’s community. This means that getting any action at the regional scale requires creating new collaborative alignments among interests who previously either didn’t believe that they shared issues in common, or who knew it but felt no compelling reason to act on it. In the end, the story of effective...regionalism is always going to be the search for cross-cutting issues, an never-ending saga that is the meat and potatoes of those efforts.”⁶⁸

6. Cultural Change

The homeland security community (fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, etc.) are all primarily response rather than preventative agencies. Pre-9/11 this also applied to the lead for terrorism response, the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Ashton Carter notes that strictly responding to an event has been so deeply entrenched in its culture that “the attorney general has to prod the Federal Bureau of Investigation publicly to shift its efforts from ‘solving the case’ to preventing another disaster.”⁶⁹ 9/11 changed first responders into first preventers. Preventing terror attacks cannot be done in isolation, but must be a collaborative process. “Achieving greater integration requires

⁶⁷ Dodge, “Regional Emergency Preparedness Compacts,” 4.

⁶⁸ Bruce Katz, ed., *Reflections on Regionalism* (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 4.

⁶⁹ Ashton B. Carter, “The Architecture of Government in the Face of Terrorism”, in *Countering Terrorism; Dimensions of Preparedness*, ed. Arnold M. Howitt and Robyn L. Pangi (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2003), 20.

meeting significant organizational challenges.”⁷⁰ The key agencies mentioned above do not work together on a routine basis. There are still disciplinary obstructions that hinder the process of collaboration and cooperation. Perhaps the most common example is the inability of the New York Police Department and the Fire Department New York to work in a collaborative and cooperative environment. There are also conflicts between fire and emergency medical services as to who can provide treatment to patients; many fire fighters are becoming paramedics and the emergency medical community feels infringed upon.. Yet another example is that of emergency management and homeland security, where there are two different agencies in the state with these functions. While many of these disciplines can work past their problems during the response to an incident because life safety always comes first, planning for homeland security is much more challenging. It is very difficult to get all agencies or disciplines to attend a meeting and then discuss gaps and capability building and/or sharing. No agency wants to admit a weakness and all are territorial. This hinders collaboration. Yet another hindrance to regional collaboration is the lack of similar structure across all disciplines. For example, law enforcement has representation at the local, county, state, and federal level, while agencies such as fire and EMS generally only have representation at the local level.

7. General Structure

Despite the lack of interconnectedness between first responders, they are not solely to blame for the lack of regional collaboration; the very structure of the American government does not lend itself to regional collaboration. “The fragmentation of subnational government also makes it difficult to organize prevention and emergency response functions across jurisdictional boundaries in a given metropolitan area or state.”⁷¹

“Improving preparedness for terrorism is an expensive, time-consuming, and exacting task.”⁷² The major push for terrorism preparedness came after 9/11. Because many local agencies do not have the budgets for normal, day-to-day operations, it was and continues to be an expensive task to equip, train, and ultimately prepare first

⁷⁰ Howitt and Pangi, “Intergovernmental Challenges of Combating Terrorism,” 38.

⁷¹ Ibid., 40.

⁷² Ibid., 52.

responders for a terrorist event. Because many within the homeland security community have not worked closely together before, preparedness planning is very time consuming. It takes years to build the trust of other disciplines in the community and even longer to build a sense of trust and competency throughout the region.

Achieving regional collaboration is not an easy task. Relationships and trust must be built and sustained, leadership must step outside of their comfort zones to discuss homeland security planning, and regional collaborative groups must have clear missions to direct them. The benefits of regional collaboration are worth the front-end work to build relationships, garner trust, and create mission statements. The next chapter will identify regional efforts in South Carolina and how the lack of integrated regional planning has created further impediments to regional collaboration.

III. SOUTH CAROLINA REGIONAL STRUCTURE

South Carolina is mostly a rural state. The largest city in the state is the capital city, Columbia, with a population of just over 115,000. The total population of the state is 4,012,012. The largest county in the state is Greenville County with a population of 379,616. Tourism and agriculture are the state's largest sources of revenue.⁷³ South Carolina, like many other states in the Union, is a home rule state with forty two counties, 269 cities, and over 500 special purpose districts;⁷⁴ the sheer number of municipalities within the state makes it difficult to expand regional collaboration. Another impediment is the inconsistent structure of the regions. This chapter will look at those structures in some detail: Section A, Counter-Terrorism Coordinating Council; Section B, Emergency Management Division; Section C, Department of Health and Environmental Control; Section D, Highway Patrol and Communications; Section E, Councils of Government; Section F, Firefighter Mobilization; Section G, Animal Response Teams; and Section H, Regional Planners. Each of the agencies, organizations and teams represented by the regions discussed herein is a key partner in homeland security. The final section of this chapter, Section I, Discussion, provides an overview of how regional collaboration has been implemented throughout the state and the effects of such efforts.

A. COUNTER-TERRORISM COORDINATING COUNCIL

There has been a lack of regional planning for coordinating resources within the CTCC regions. This is due in part to the lack of a mission at the regional level. The Homeland Security Advisor (HSA) for South Carolina, the Chief of SLED, has not provided specific missions for the Regional CTCCs; therefore, they lack motivation and direction. The HSA would like the regions to take ownership of the Regional CTCCs and develop their own mission statement. This has yet to be done and the councils are beginning to falter. Representatives are being sent to attend the meetings in place of

⁷³ *South Carolina's Economy*. <http://www.scprt.com/facts-figures/geographyclimateeconomy.aspx>. Accessed December 18, 2006.

⁷⁴ *Home Rule Status by State*. <http://www.celdf.org/HomeRule/DoesmyStatehaveHomeRule/tabid/1115/Default.aspx>. Accessed December 18, 2006.

council members, the meetings are held only when there is new information related to homeland security funding, and there is a sense of frustration in the meetings because of lack of focus. The regional committees involve people in key leadership roles such as sheriffs and emergency management directors. Figure 1 is a representation of the membership of the regional committees. The State CTCC mission statement below has therefore been the only guidance available to the regions; however, it is doubtful that regions are aware of the State CTCC mission. The mission of the State CTCC is to:

Support and advise the State Law Enforcement Division concerning its counter terrorism mission in an effort to facilitate and foster cooperation and coordination among various governmental and private entities and disciplines both statewide and regionally. This shall be accomplished through:

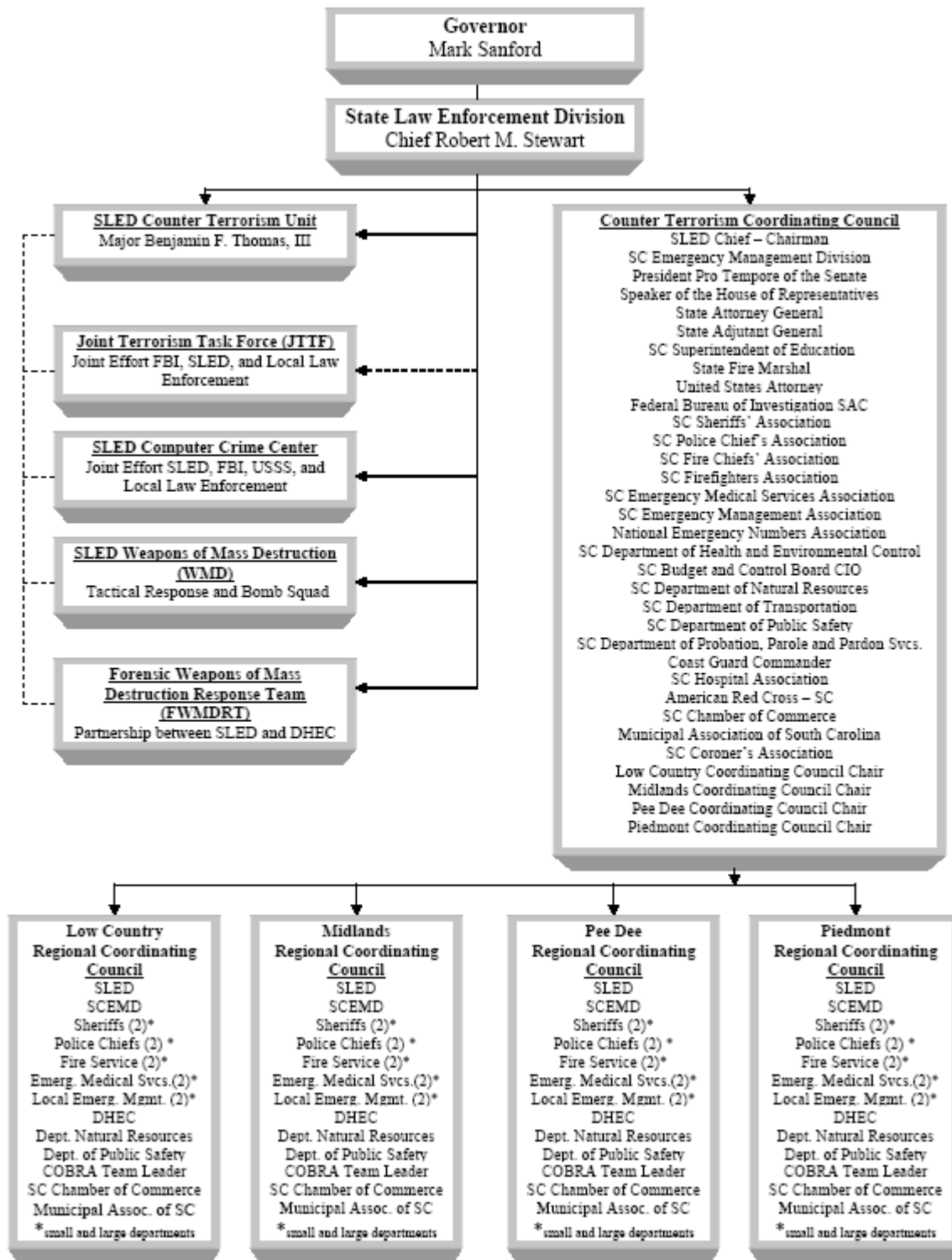
- planning,
- training/exercises,
- determining required resources including equipment and location,
- grant funding recommendations,
- information sharing,
- mutual aid agreements,
- establishing best practices, and
- any other activities consistent with furthering the counter terrorism effort.⁷⁵

There are several reasons the current Regional CTCCs are not collaborating including regional structure, lack of guidance, and lack of responsibility. The current regional structure encompasses counties of varying size (both population and area). The regions are generally centered around one major metropolitan area or county. These large counties house the Advanced COBRA team for each region. With one large county and the remainder of the counties more rural, the regions do not have a uniform distribution therefore making collaboration difficult. The only thing that connects most of the counties is geography. For example, within the Low Country region, Charleston County has the Port of Charleston, which is an important piece of critical infrastructure within the Low Country. But, the Low Country region also contains Calhoun County, which is otherwise largely rural county with little to no critical infrastructure. Therefore, in the

⁷⁵ South Carolina Law Enforcement Division.

Low Country CTCC meetings, it is difficult for Calhoun County to make a case for a need to resources when a larger county such as Charleston is in the same room. Often, the smaller counties such as Calhoun feel left out, and all the counties feel as though Charleston County is the 800-pound gorilla standing in the corner.

Figure 1. South Carolina Counter Terrorism Coordinating Council Organization Chart



The CTCC regions are represented in Figure 2. These regions are aligned to the SLED regions throughout the state and serve as the planning regions for SLED's CTCC Planners. Within the four CTCC regions are the Advanced COBRA teams and a mix of Basic COBRA teams, as depicted in Figure 3. York County is in the process of becoming an advanced team. The Advanced COBRA teams are located in Greenville, Richland, Charleston, and Horry, the most populous counties in each of the four regions. The Basic COBRA teams are located in all counties with a population over 100,000. The mission of the COBRA teams are to "rapidly respond to and assist jurisdictions in effectively addressing the consequences of a critical incident involving weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and toxic industrial chemicals (TIC) in collaboration with and supported by other COBRA teams and local, state, and federal resources."⁷⁶ Also in Figure 4 are the regional Explosive Ordnance Device (EOD) teams. While the COBRA teams may or may not have a bomb capability, the HSGP has supported and enhanced these various teams throughout the state. Charleston County is shaded differently because it has two EOD teams.

The CTCC regions are also being utilized for the newly formed regional teams (Disaster Medical Assistance Team and one Incident Support Team) supported by the HSGP for Fiscal Year 2006. These teams will not be located in the same counties as the Advanced COBRA teams. Also, a catastrophic planning initiative is being implemented in each of the Advanced COBRA team counties to develop a regional concept of operations plan.

⁷⁶ *COBRA Response Team, Plan & Standard Operating Guidelines*, 1.

Figure 2. Counter Terrorism Coordinating Council Regions

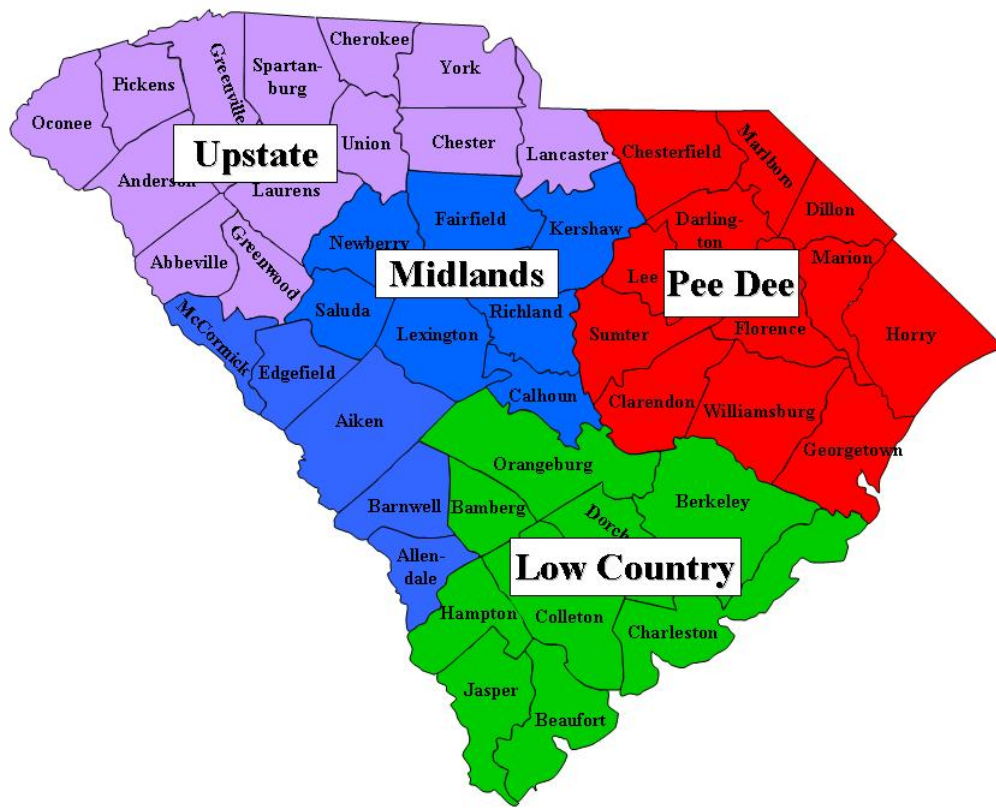


Figure 3. COBRA Teams

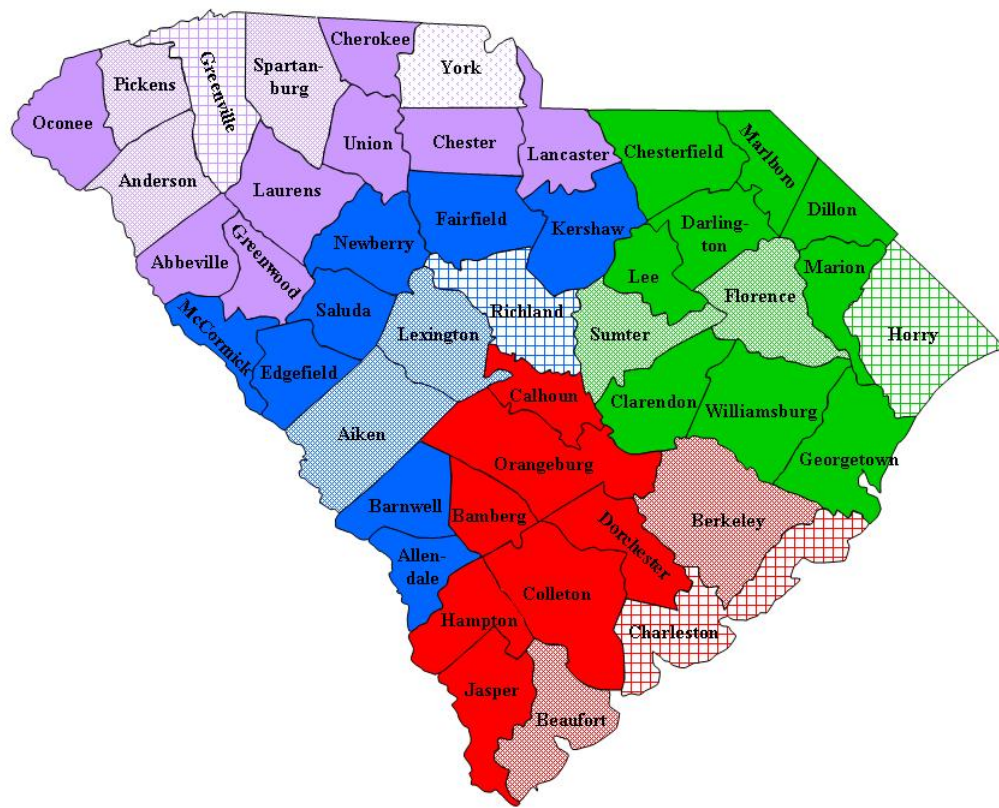
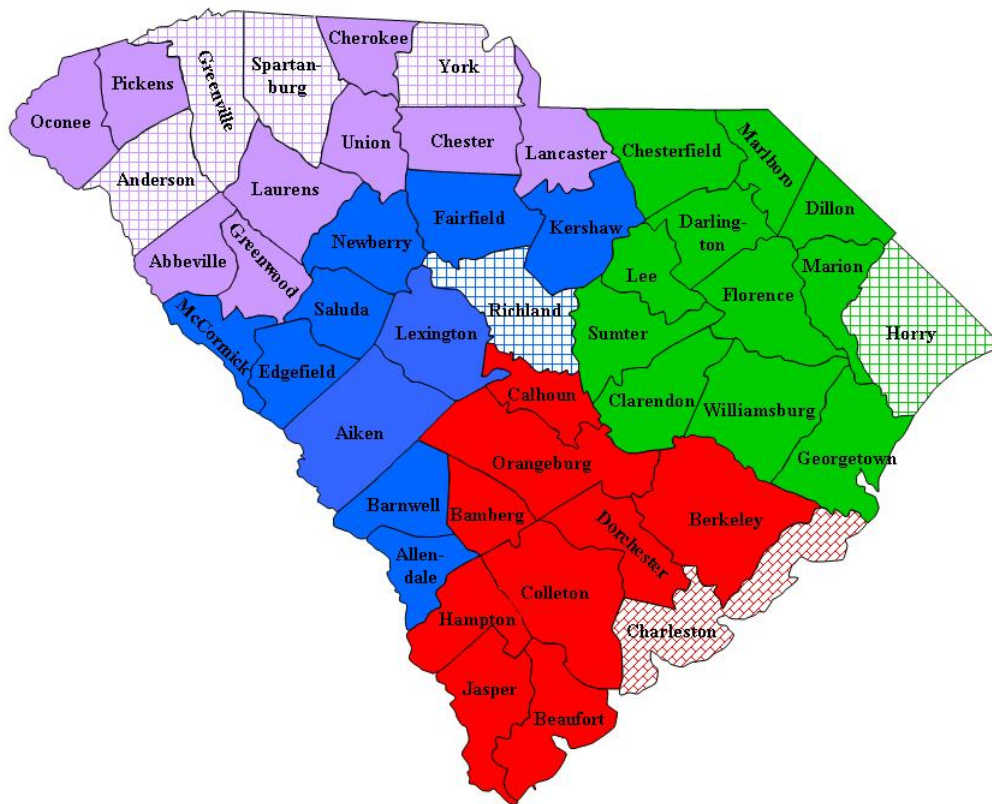


Figure 4. Regional Explosive Ordnance Device Teams

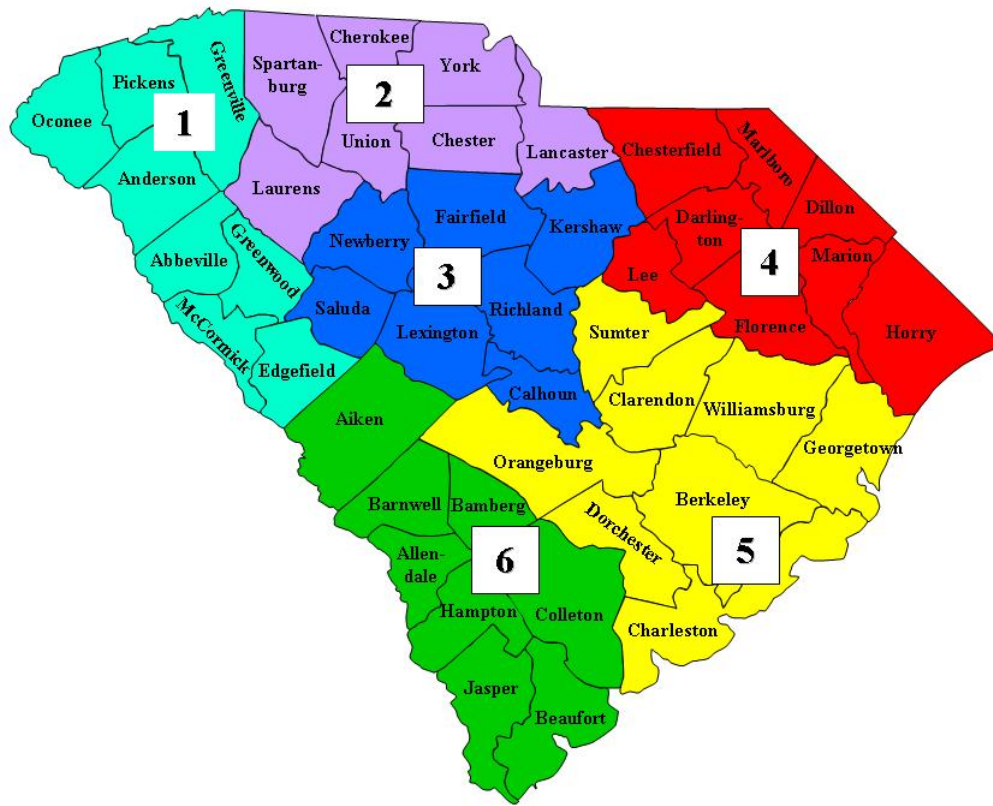


B. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

The South Carolina EMD operates within two different regional structures. The Homeland Security Exercise Program, which is funded through the State Administrative Agency (SLED) by DHS, operates within the CTCC regional structure as depicted in Figure 2. However, EMD also has Fixed Nuclear Facility regions, as depicted in Figure 5. These regions also serve as the newly created Emergency Management Regions. EMD has two personnel assigned to each Emergency Management Region to assist emergency management with plan enhancement, exercises, and the development of a comprehensive emergency management program.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Adjutant General's Office, Emergency Management Division, "Posting Notice for Emergency Preparedness Coord 1", Position # P000143108, posted 9/15/2006.

Figure 5. South Carolina Emergency Management Division Regions



C. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

DHEC's mission is to "promote and protect the health of the public and the environment."⁷⁸ DHEC plays several key roles in preparedness such as coordinating the Mass Casualty Plans based on the regions in Figure 6. Also, DHEC, through its Bureau of Land and Waste Management, Division of Waste Assessment and Emergency Response is part of the State Weapons of Mass Destruction Team. There are twelve regional DHEC Environmental Quality Control (EQC) District office Emergency Response Teams (DHEC use to have twelve EQC regions and eight health regions). DHEC also handles the Centers for Disease Control Public Health Emergency Preparedness program and the Health Resources and Services Administration Bioterrorism Preparedness program.

⁷⁸ Environmental Services, EQC Regional Offices.
<http://www.scdhec.gov/environment/envserv/regions.htm>. Accessed December 18, 2006.

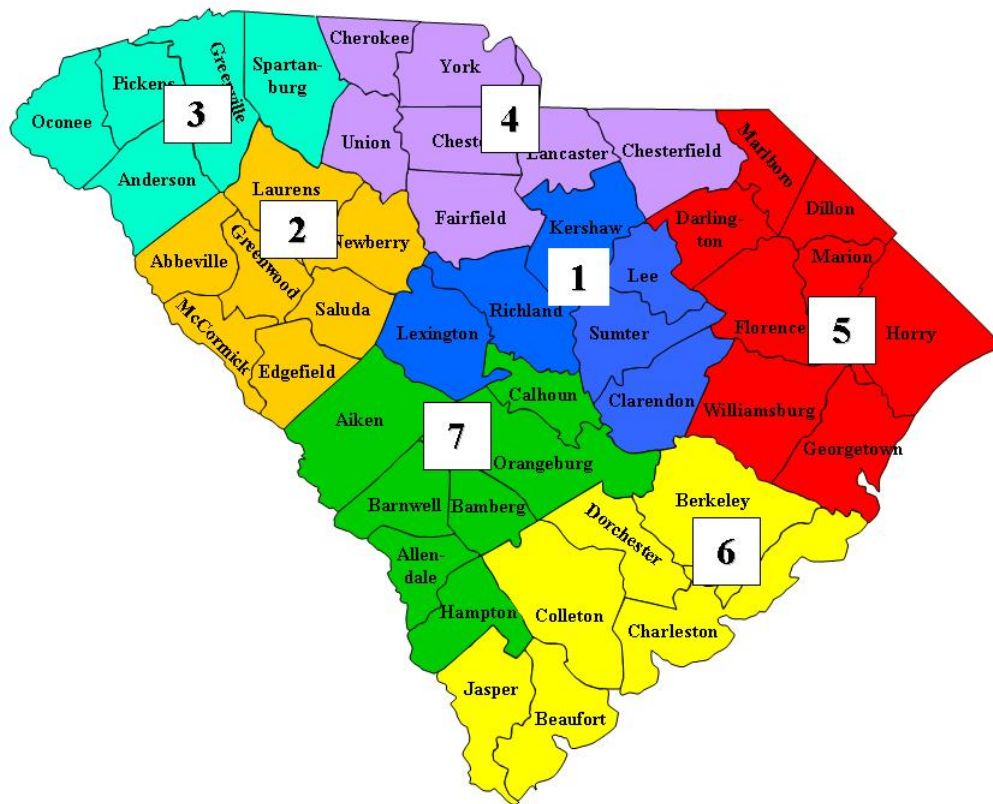
Figure 6. Department of Health and Environmental Control Regions



D. HIGHWAY PATROL AND COMMUNICATIONS

The South Carolina Highway Patrol and Palmetto 800 Regional Mutual Aid Communications Channel regions are identical and are depicted in Figure 7. Palmetto 800 is the South Carolina Statewide 800 MHz Radio and Mobile Data System utilized throughout the state. Planning and programming of radios is done by regions. For example, all law enforcement officers within a region have at least one common channel called Law Enforcement Common.

Figure 7. South Carolina Highway Patrol and Palmetto 800 Regional Mutual Aid Communications Channel Regions



E. COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENT

The State of South Carolina has ten Councils of Government (COG) as depicted in Figure 8. Each COG represents a multi-county planning district. EMD utilizes the COG regions for earthquake planning. Also, in 2002, the COGs were utilized to develop regional hazard mitigation plans in most areas of the state.⁷⁹ COGs have also been used to conduct HazMat training throughout the various regions.

⁷⁹ *Hazard Mitigation Plan* (Columbia, South Carolina: South Carolina Emergency Management Division, October 2004), 13.

Figure 8. South Carolina Council of Government Regions

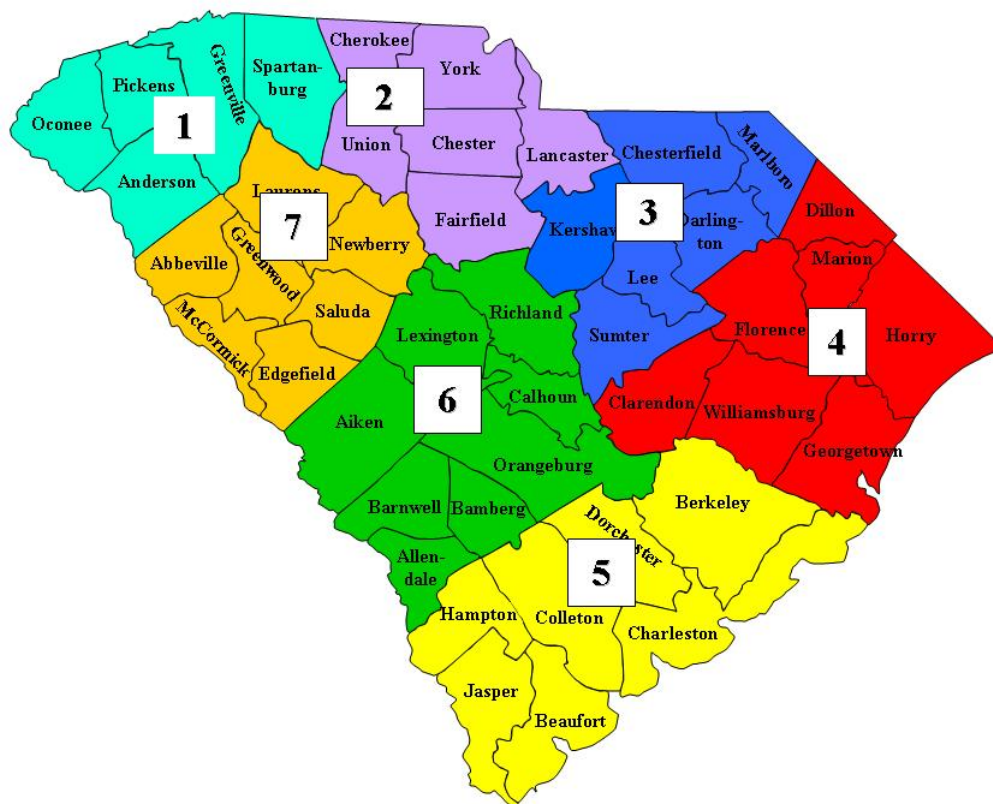


F. FIREFIGHTER MOBILIZATION

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (LLR), Office of the State Fire Marshall manages the South Carolina Firefighter Mobilization Plan. The “Firefighter Mobilization Act of 2000” established this program to mobilize and task the state’s fire service during a large-scale incident where the local fire departments are overwhelmed. Regional coordinators are assigned to the regions as depicted in Figure 9. These regions are identical to the Fire Academy’s regions. “During Firefighter Mobilization Plan activation, these coordinators can be called on to contact fire departments in their region about providing assistance and resources.”⁸⁰ Although this is mostly an emergency management function, the emergency management regions do not align with the LLR regions. LLR has also, with the support of homeland security funding, placed four mass decontamination trailers and four Urban Search and Rescue teams throughout the state to serve in regional capacities.

⁸⁰ South Carolina Fire Fighter Mobilization Brochure.

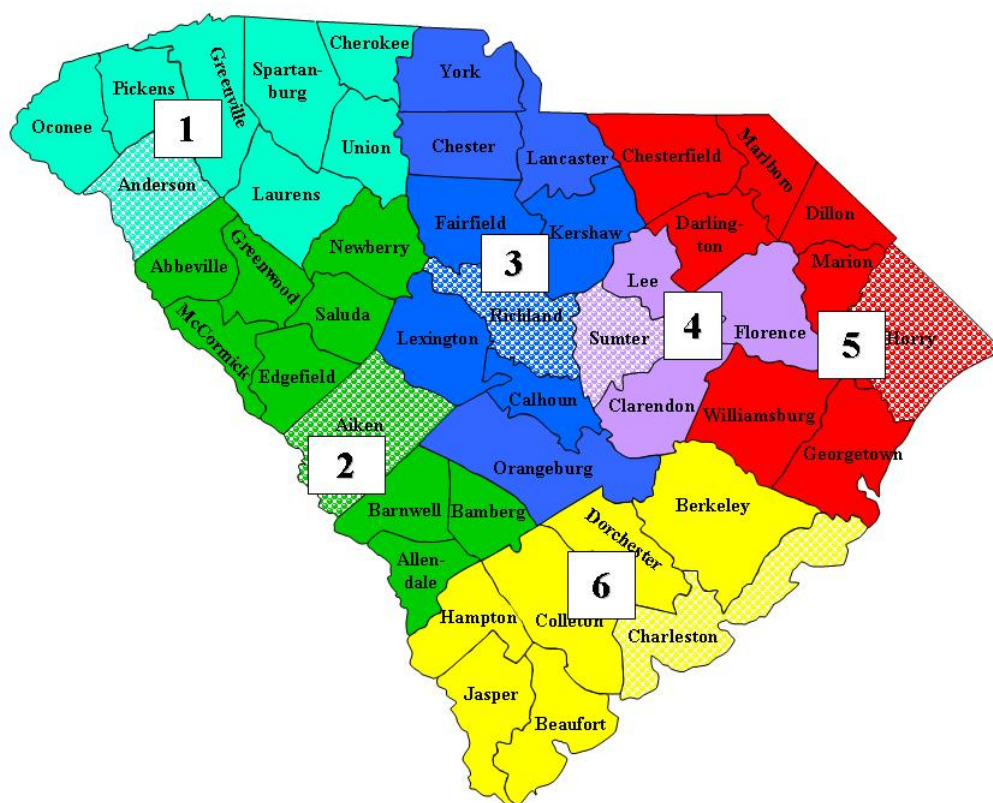
Figure 9. South Carolina Firefighter Mobilization Regions



G. ANIMAL RESPONSE TEAMS

Clemson University created county and regional animal response teams, known as County Animal Response Teams (CART). These teams are equipped with funding through the HSGP and are designed to respond to disasters involving animals and/or agricultural assets. As depicted in Figure 10, there are six regional CARTS throughout the state. County CARTs are also located sporadically throughout the state. The operational status of the regional or county CARTs is debatable. The teams were provided with equipment, but have not been staffed adequately and have not participated in any of the homeland security exercises held throughout the state.

Figure 10. Regional County Animal Response Teams



H. REGIONAL PLANNERS

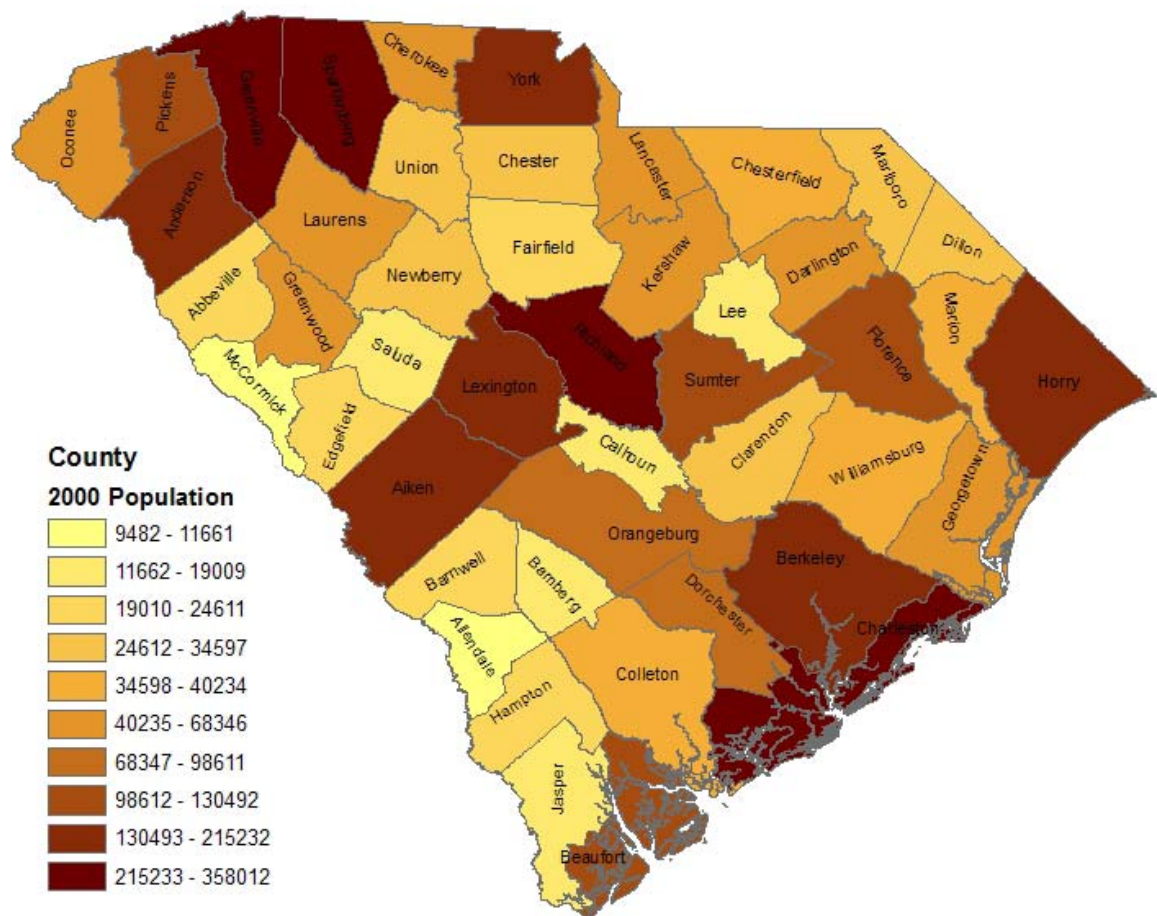
There are several regional planners established within South Carolina, but they serve different regions. SLED planners work within the CTCC regions. EMD planners serve within Fixed Nuclear Facility regions. Fire Service coordinators serve within the various fire regions. South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control planners serve within public health regions. All of these regions vary. No two state agencies have the same regions. The result is a county receiving at least five different planners trying to further the state strategy with varying players. This is not only very confusing to the counties themselves, but also to the planners trying to conduct planning meetings and explain why different regions exist.

I. DISCUSSION

Figure 11 represents the population of South Carolina. The darker counties are the most populous and if compared with the figures above, contain the most capabilities. Figure 11 highlights the importance of regional collaboration in the state. Because most

of the counties in the state have fewer than 100,000 people, most of them are not able to sustain all the capabilities needed to respond to a terrorist event or routine hazardous material spills.

Figure 11. South Carolina Population (2000)



As seen in the previous regional structures, South Carolina has many regional structures by which state agencies, and other planning entities such as the COGs operate. However, due to overlap of planning regions, lack of coordination between various homeland security efforts such as specialized response teams, and recognition of the different regions, planning for homeland security has been impeded. The regions were created in silos without discussion of the implications to other agencies and planning. Within the CTCC regions, counties are being forced to work together when there is no natural relationship between them such as mutual aid agreements or similarities in

infrastructure or threat. As noted in the figures provided in this chapter, only two of the regional structures in the state align. Homeland security planning is being promoted by varying disciplines in each of these regions throughout the state, but without coordination. As a result, there is overlap in resources and plans. Because of this, there is a danger that plans will contradict each other. For example, the DHEC regions vary from the communications regions. DHEC personnel radios are programmed according to the communication regions; therefore, DHEC personnel cannot communicate with all of the hospitals in their region. Also, regional mass casualty plans for public health and hospitals are drafted within different regional structures than the counter-terrorism regions. During homeland security exercises, which are conducted within the counter-terrorism regions, there is confusion as to how hospitals will coordinate when there are several different regional structures, some with coordinating hospitals outside of the counter-terrorism regions. Also, there are counter-terrorism planners within each of the counter-terrorism regions to further the mission of the homeland security strategy and draft regional plans. However, there are also planners with State Emergency Management Division who have very similar missions, but the regions in which they operate are different.

Taking the next step in enhancing regional collaboration can ensure that the resources present in the various regions are aligned, know of each other's capabilities, are integrated into county, regional, and state plans, and function in a more integrated fashion. Currently, team responsibilities and capabilities are unknown across the county and regional level. While the state is aware of most of the teams, their capabilities are ambiguous and they are not integrated into plans such as the State Emergency Operations Plan.

Although regional assets and teams have been placed strategically throughout the state, as presented in the above graphics, there has been little to no planning to discuss how these teams will be integrated into a response when they are needed. There is no document that provides a regional concept of operations strategy for utilization of these teams. Several assets and resources have been placed throughout the regions in the state. Enhancing regional collaboration can ensure that these assets and resources are known,

there is a plan for the utilization of these resources, and that funding has been utilized in the most efficient and effective manner possible to supply these resources regionally.

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IV. REGIONAL COLLABORATION THROUGHOUT THE NATION

Regionally coordinated and planned programs are not new and have existed in such fields as transportation, health, environmental planning and so forth for many years. However, in contrast, homeland security is a relatively new program area, not emerging in prominence until after the terror attacks of September 11, 2001. Accordingly, new operating procedures regarding regional planning and response are necessary – a new paradigm shift in preparedness is necessary to meet current challenges.⁸¹

In the National Preparedness Guidance, every state was encouraged to identify sub-state regions to support tiers within the Target Capabilities List. Many states and regionals throughout the nation have taken on regional collaboration and formed true regional partnerships, created strategic plans, and allocated funding on a regional basis. This chapter will identify three such cases – Iowa (Section A), Michigan (Section B), and Arizona (Section C) – to determine how they have achieved effective regional collaboration by addressing the impediments to regional collaboration as outlined in the literature. Section D will provide a brief overview of how additional states have enhanced regional collaboration, and Section E will provide a summary of these states' efforts. The case study should provide lessons learned and allow some assessment of how regional collaboration has been expanded across the country. As several sources have noted, there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution, nor did the federal government mandate that states form regions based on any specific criteria.

As stated in previous chapters, regional collaboration can be measured only by the amount of regional planning, development of strategies, and other regional initiatives that have been developed, since there are presently no metrics for the effects of regional collaboration. Regional collaboration can be enhanced by having strong leadership and creating a sense of ownership within the regions. Impediments to regional collaboration, as documented by Howitt, include costs, turf wars, and creation of policy. This chapter will offer recommendations on how to overcome these impediments. The United States

⁸¹ “Emergency Management and Homeland Security Informational Letter,” Volume 06-12, March 30, 2006, 3.

Government Accountability Office has stated that regional collaboration can be enhanced by developing mutually agreed upon goals and objectives, creation of strategic plans, and coordination of homeland security expenditures. States have promoted regional collaboration through funding, creation of specialized response teams, regional response plans, regional strategic plans, and the formation of regional taskforces. These efforts have assisted in fostering and expanding regional collaboration.

Nearly every state identified in this chapter had some form of regional coordination councils, taskforces, or advisory councils. These councils are necessary to gain consensus on homeland security issues, develop plans, submit investment justifications for grant funding, and build a network of professionals that can further the homeland security mission by enhancing regional collaboration.

A. ARIZONA

Arizona, like Iowa and several other states, allocates homeland security funding primarily through regions. Its homeland security projects are initially approved and then prioritized by the Regional Advisory Councils before being sent to the state advisory council.⁸² The regions provide recommendations to how counties or other municipalities in the region should receive funding.⁸³ Arizona, as ordered by state statute, has also created regional strategic plans that align with the state's homeland security strategic plan.⁸⁴ These strategies provide Arizona regions with a specific purpose, or mission, regional goals, objectives, review of capabilities, and a process to implement the strategy. By drafting strategies that align with the state's strategy, regions are able to plan for how they will achieve preparedness. The collaboration required to develop these strategic plans is an added benefit to the actual plan.

As outlined in Arizona's State Statute, each regional council member serves for two terms and is recommended by those who sit on the state advisory council to the

⁸² "Arizona's Regional Approach to Homeland Security," http://www.azdohs.gov/documents/News/NR_051006_%20HS%20Regional%20Approach.pdf. Accessed December 26, 2007.

⁸³ ARS Title 41; Chapter 41 Arizona Department of Homeland Security, <http://www.homelandsecurity.az.gov/documents/ARS%20Title%2041.pdf>. Accessed December 18, 2006.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

governor for appointment. Arizona is required to have the following on their regional advisory councils:

- A representative of a fire service from an urban or suburban area in that region;
- A representative of a fire service from a rural area in the region;
- A police chief;
- A county sheriff;
- A tribal representative;
- An emergency manager;
- A mayor;
- A county supervisor;
- Two at-large members (selected by representatives of the legislature on the state council);
- A representative from the department of public safety;
- A public health representative.

Arizona has gone to great lengths to detail the requirements of the regional committees, who will appoint them, how long they will serve, and what their mission is, thereby minimizing confusion. This process allows for a standard, consistent methodology to be implemented across the state. The above listing of representatives is fairly comprehensive, but it does not incorporate the private sector. Stakeholders within the private sector are vital assets to homeland security. The protection of critical infrastructure is one of the National Priorities and it is important to incorporate stakeholders into the planning process. Also, since the Infrastructure Protection Program is part of the Office of Grants and Training, Department of HSGP, including the private sector would allow for a more comprehensive approach to all grant programs.

Arizona's regional structure is a good effort at enhancing regional collaboration. Arizona's state statute not only mandates regional collaboration, but also provides specific guidance on how to structure the regions and what their mission is. In South Carolina, there is no such statute or mission for the regional councils. The CTCC regions within South Carolina are not specifically tasked with creating strategies or grant recommendations, and the committee make-up is very fluid. South Carolina should

examine how Arizona has implemented regional structures in the state and incorporated them into the planning process. Since South Carolina has regional organizations already established (CTCCs), it would not be difficult to direct them to develop a regional strategy that outlines their goals and objectives.

B. MICHIGAN

Michigan has taken several steps over the past years to develop a regional approach to homeland security. Since efforts began in 1999 to assess domestic preparedness, the state has adjusted its guidance, funding strategy, and disciplines represented on Local Planning Teams to stay in synch with national preparedness and grant guidance. The state recently establish seven Regional Homeland Security Planning Boards “to effectively coordinate planning in the four mission areas (i.e., prevent, protect, respond and recover) associated with the *National Framework for Preparedness*. The RHSPBs will serve as the focal point for managing the region’s prioritized capability enhancements, with a primary aim on achieving a more efficient use of funds and thereby increasing the return on investment.”⁸⁵ These planning boards consist of, and are directly affected by, the local planning teams to ensure a bottom-up approach. The Local Planning Teams are multi-disciplined teams that represent all responder disciplines and programs in the county.

Each Local Planning Team (LPT), at a minimum, consists of the following discipline-related representatives:

- 1 urban fire service representative (paid)
- 1 rural fire service representative (volunteer)
- 1 municipal law enforcement representative
- 1 county law enforcement representative
- 1 emergency management representative
- 1 emergency medical service representative
- 1 HazMat team representative
- 1 public works representative
- 1 public safety communications representative

⁸⁵ “Emergency Management and Homeland Security Informational Letter,” 3.

- 1 governmental administrative representative (i.e., county commissioner, mayor, township supervisor,
- school district superintendent)
- 1 local public health representative
- 1 health care (hospital, medical director, etc)
- 1 tribal, if present in county
- 1 private security
- 1 cyber security

These Local Planning Teams are required to have a chair, co-chair, and secretary. Each county Local Planning Team is allowed one seat on the Regional Homeland Security Planning Board. These Local Planning Teams have been utilized to assess capabilities, develop Regional Homeland Security Strategies, and based on these, create enhancement plans that will be submitted for federal homeland security funding. This method differs somewhat from Arizona's in that enhancement plans are developed at the county level and then submitted to the regional level for approval and review.

South Carolina has Needs Assessment Committees similar in function to the Local Planning Teams of Michigan. The Needs Assessment Committees are multi-discipline, but only represent fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, and emergency management. The Needs Assessments Committees were utilized in previous years' homeland security grant funding (Fiscal Year 2003–Fiscal Year 2005) to determine how to allocate the county allocation for homeland security funding. However, since FY2006, county allocations have not been awarded to all of the state's counties and the Needs Assessment Committees no longer meet or participate in planning. However, the Needs Assessment Chairman was recently added to the Regional CTCC membership. The continuous involvement and specific guidelines for Michigan's Local Planning Teams should be incorporated into South Carolina's Needs Assessment Committees. This would ensure that all counties are actively participating in keeping the state prepared. This would also expand regional collaboration within the state by re-engaging the Needs Assessment Committee members at the county level, adding other disciplines to the committee (as done in Michigan), and creating a sense of ownership in the state's

homeland security efforts. As described in previous chapters, many of the smaller counties do not feel as though their voice is represented adequately due to all of the money now going only to the larger counties. This would allow the state to reach back out to the smaller counties, and re-enforce it within the larger counties, to let them know that the state wants, and needs their input, to ensure that all counties in the state have the necessary resources available (regionally) to prepare for a terrorist event.

C. IOWA

The state of Iowa regionalized by mirroring the Iowa Emergency Management Association, the Iowa State Association of Counties, and the Iowa Department of Public Health regional boundaries. Iowa utilizes these regions to administer grant funds and as an avenue to receive input for homeland security issues. Iowa provided a portion of the state allocated management and administration funds to each of the regions to manage the HSGP funds for the region. At the direction of the Governor, each region elected a Regional Homeland Security Board whose responsibilities are to select a chair and vice-chair to facilitate meetings, develop bylaws for operation, select a fiscal entity to administer the grant funds, and determine funding priorities and allocations to develop and/or enhance capabilities.⁸⁶ Iowa is one of the only states to have publicly documented how homeland security funds are awarded. Iowa provides a set amount of funding to each region to expand regional collaboration.

Unfortunately, South Carolina does not have the luxury of three association or state agency regions aligning, as detailed in the previous chapter. This would solve many regional overlap problems at the state and county level. Iowa has placed much responsibility on the regions within the state. Unlike Arizona, the regions are allowed to select their own board. By allowing Iowa regions to select their own board, they address the GAO finding that taking “advantage of regional leadership or political relationships that can bring additional stakeholders, resources, or ideas to the process.”⁸⁷

In Iowa, regional projects are funded based on the regional population, critical asset score, and agricultural production value. This method truly supports the statement in the previous chapter that regions share not only the risk, but also the responsibility to

⁸⁶ *Implementation Plan for the Regionalization of Iowa Homeland Security*, 5.

⁸⁷ *Homeland Security: Effective Regional Coordination Can Enhance Emergency Preparedness*, 20.

respond to that risk. Also, by combining risk elements and distributing funding to regional projects, Iowa is able to provide incentives for local jurisdictions to collaborate.

The National Association of Development Organizations, which provides advocacy for these organizations, notes that according to a survey, “The most pressing homeland security need in small metropolitan and rural areas... is the need to provide incentives for regional cooperation among local jurisdictions.”⁸⁸ South Carolina should utilize its existing regions to receive input into homeland security efforts, and should utilize a funding formula similar to that of Iowa to allocate homeland security grant funding to the regions.

D. OTHER STATE EFFORTS TO EXPAND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

On October 9, 2001, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) along with the Department of Emergency Management created seven Regional Domestic Security Task Forces.⁸⁹ The task force is designed to enhance the detection of possible terrorist threats, facilitate the sharing of information, protect critical infrastructure by conducting security audits and vulnerability assessments, promote and oversee training and the purchase of equipment, and conduct public awareness campaigns. It is comprised of police chiefs, fire chiefs, emergency management directors, federals, state, and local officials, medical officers, and industry executives.

The Florida regional system, including its homeland security governance structure, has been recognized in the homeland security discipline.⁹⁰ During a recent Southeast Homeland Security Advisors meeting, Florida discussed how they had utilized the regions to aid in capabilities assessment. Similar to South Carolina, Florida’s Homeland Security Advisor is from the state law enforcement discipline and is appointed by the governor. Also similar to South Carolina, state law enforcement within Florida oversees homeland security, but works closely with state emergency management, which is responsible for responding to disasters. FDLE utilized the Domestic Security Taskforce regions to conduct capability assessments utilizing the Target Capabilities List. Also,

⁸⁸ National Association of Development Organizations, “Regional Approaches to Homeland Security Planning & Preparedness,” August 2005.

⁸⁹ Regional Domestic Security Task Force, October 15, 2001.

⁹⁰ National Governors Association, “A Governor’s Guide to Homeland Security,” 2007, 23.

Florida has given these regions a specific tasking in enhancing the detection of terrorism via the steps mentioned above. Florida's inclusion of industry executives in its task forces is also a good practice that should be implemented in achieving regional collaboration. Since the private sector owns 85% of the critical infrastructure in the nation, it is a key player in our efforts to implement the National Infrastructure Protection Plan.

Pennsylvania allows counties to divide themselves into regions based on existing mutual aid agreements, rather than utilizing the structure of the state's nine regional counterterrorism task forces established by the Pennsylvania Counterterrorism Planning, Preparedness and Response Act of 2002.⁹¹ Despite the mandate as set forth in that legislation, Pennsylvania allowed the regional membership to determine its own structure. As supported by the Governmental Accountability Office and the National Preparedness Guidance, it is vital to allow jurisdictions to identify boundaries so that they can take advantage of existing regional relationships and re-assess the structure of the regions, as warranted, to ensure that the proper structure is in place.^{92,93} Utilizing mutual aid agreements is one way to determine regional structure. Pennsylvania appears to be the only state in which regional stakeholders are allowed to determine their own regions. The process of establishing regions and then verifying those regions via analysis of other regional structure options is the second step of defining the appropriate regional structure as identified in the National Preparedness Guidance. Allowing stakeholders to identify their own regions increases regional collaboration, as noted in a Governmental Accountability Organization report.⁹⁴ Other states should emulate Pennsylvania and examine their mandated, or un-mandated, regional structures to determine whether those structures have "buy-in" from the member counties, and if it is the best regional structure by which to promote collaboration. This would follow recommendations of not only the Governmental Accountability Office, but also the National Preparedness Guidance.

In Texas and Connecticut, the COGs serve as the regional planning structures for the state. The COGs also play "a key role in facilitating emergency preparedness

⁹¹ *Homeland Security: Effective Regional Coordination Can Enhance Emergency Preparedness*, 14.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 20.

⁹³ *National Preparedness Guidance*, 22.

⁹⁴ *Homeland Security: Effective Regional Coordination Can Enhance Emergency Preparedness*.

coordination and integrating preparedness plans.”⁹⁵ COG regions are a good place to start when determining regional structure, because they often have completed regional planning projects, such as economic or transportation initiatives, and have in-depth knowledge of the resources and cohesiveness throughout the region. Because of their extensive planning knowledge, the COGs should be included as members of regional councils.

Enhancing regional collaboration is important to building capabilities, as demonstrated by North Dakota, which created anchor communities to serve as cities that could ensure an effective level of response to a CBRNE incident.⁹⁶ Similar to South Carolina’s COBRA team communities (or counties), these anchor communities have the resources to sustain preparedness efforts such as response teams.

The National Capital Region (NCR), which consists of Arlington, Loudoun, Fairfax, and Prince William counties and the City of Alexandria in Virginia; Montgomery and Prince George’s counties in Maryland; and the District of Columbia, is a critical area for the United States and therefore has its own Office within the Department of Homeland Security. The Homeland Security Act established the Office of National Capital Region Coordination (ONCRC) within DHS to “oversee and coordinate federal programs for, and relationships with, federal, state, local, and regional authorities in the NCR.”⁹⁷ The ONCRC is specifically tasked with coordination of federal emergency preparedness programs, including terrorism, in the region for federal, state, local, and private entities, and assessing the progress of such programs within the NCR. The NCR expands collaboration between two states and the District of Columbia. While the oversight of a federal department is not realistic for every sub-state region, the oversight committees of the state, such as the South Carolina State CTCC, should utilize the same oversight power and strategies to ensure that State regions are expanding regional collaboration. The State CTCCs should review the regions’ plans to enhance

⁹⁵ *Homeland Security: Effective Regional Coordination Can Enhance Emergency Preparedness*, 14.

⁹⁶ Susan K. Reinertson, *Resource Sharing, Building Collaboration for Regionalization*, 25.

⁹⁷ *Homeland Security, Coordinating Planning and Standards Needed to Better Manage First Responder Grants in the National Capital Region* (Washington D.C: United States Government Accountability Office, June 24, 2004), 4.

preparedness, evaluate their response capabilities, and provide documented public reports on successes and recommendation to enhance collaboration within the regions.

There are several other documents, including the Alliance for Regional Stewardship's *Regional Emergency Preparedness Compacts: Safeguarding the Nation's Community* and Susan K. Reinertson's Thesis entitled *Resource Sharing, Building Collaboration for Regionalization* that discuss regionalization efforts throughout the nation. The effectiveness of regional collaboration has not been measured in any of these reports. However, several effective solutions such as anchor communities and regional planning commissions can be derived from the variety of strategies used to expand regional collaboration.

E. SUMMARY

Many of the methods employed by other states to expand regional collaboration can be applied to South Carolina. South Carolina has several regional teams in place, and has established regional coordination councils, but the regions have not developed homeland security strategies, or regional response plans. However, even with the regional initiatives that South Carolina has implemented, lessons learned from other states should be applied to further enhance the function of these initiatives. As in Arizona, specific guidance should be given to the Regional CTCCs on their mission and assigned responsibilities such as developing regional strategies. Michigan has utilized and nurtured local planning groups that are now making impacts at the regional level. Iowa has allowed regions to elect their own leadership. South Carolina should re-energize the county committees to incorporate them as stakeholders in regional initiatives. The next chapter will examine specific recommendation and implementation steps on how to effectively utilize lessons learned from other states to enhance regional collaboration.

V. ENHANCING REGIONAL COLLABORATION IN SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolina has several regional teams that would be available to respond to and support the response to a CBRNE/WMD event; it also has a statewide communications system that allows for interoperability. South Carolina must, however, still work towards enhancing regional collaboration. This chapter will outline how South Carolina can expand and enhance regional collaboration utilizing strategies from existing states and addressing issues found in the literature. This chapter will outline how South Carolina can expand and enhance regional collaboration utilizing strategies from existing states, as discussed in Chapter IV, and addressing issues found in the literature, as discussed in Chapters I and II. Arizona, Michigan, and Iowa have taken specific, documented steps to expanding regional collaboration. All three states have clearly identified regional roles and responsibilities, involved the regions directly in the Homeland Security Grant funding process, and provided clear focus for the purpose of the regions. Although methods and legislation introduced and utilized in other states may not be entirely applicable to South Carolina, actions taken in other states to expand regional collaboration can be applied in whole or in part to the state. Michigan has very similar committee structures at the county and regional level, similar to South Carolina. While legislation may not be adopted, as in Arizona, there are still specific recommendations, such as providing specific term limits for committee chairs and development of regional strategies, that can be implemented in the state to enhance regional collaboration. Iowa provides funding based on population, critical assets, and agriculture production value within regions. Agriculture is South Carolina's second largest industry, tourism being first, and a model utilizing methodology similar to Iowa's could be applied to the state. Specific recommendations that South Carolina can implement are to develop regional strategies, re-engage the Needs Assessment Committees, restructure homeland security grant funding in the state, and establish requirements for the Regional CTCCs. These steps will aid in increasing leadership, stakeholder involvement, and effective utilization of homeland security grant funding.

Although regional collaboration “makes sense,” it has not been fully implemented in South Carolina. A basic structure is there, but the current geographic makeup of the region, and lack of planning, guidance, and motivation has left the Regional CTCCs with a frail backbone and no true substance. In order for the Regional CTCCs to enhance collaboration, there are significant challenges that must be addressed at both the state and regional level. The information presented here will guide the regions in enhancing collaboration by enabling them to regionally prepare for and respond to a disaster.

SLED serves as the State Administrative Agency for the HSGP, and the Chief of SLED is the Homeland Security Advisor who co-chairs the State CTCC with the State Emergency Management Director. These two agencies are key to implementing the recommendations set forth in this thesis. SLED is fundamental in ensuring that the state’s Homeland Security Strategy is implemented along with the National Priorities, including expanding regional collaboration. While SLED is not the only state agency involved in Homeland Security, it is ultimately held accountable for the monies obligated within the state as the State Administrative Agency. It should continue to take the initiative, ensuring that all monies have been allocated efficiently and effectively in that regionally designated resources and assets are known, incorporated into plans, and that regional capabilities have been built across the state. Other stakeholders in this initiative include the local units of government that are represented currently on the Regional CTCCs and county Needs Assessment Committees. Their involvement will be described later in this process.

A. IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

1. Increasing Stakeholder Involvement

a. Key Stakeholders

Depending on the region and the amount of involvement desired, key leaders from the public and private sector should be involved in expanding regional collaboration. Law Enforcement, Fire, Emergency Medical Services, Emergency Management, Government, Private and Public Health Care, private utilities, public works, community/volunteer groups, and academics are a few of the disciplines that may be represented on a regional homeland security council. In general, representation from the four basic services of law enforcement, EMS, emergency management, and fire are

represented. There is little doubt why these key disciplines should be involved in homeland security planning. They are the true first responders and will be the first ones to arrive on the scene of a terrorist attack or natural hazard event.

Because of the criticality of critical infrastructure and plans associated with those critical infrastructure/key resources, the inclusion of the private sector, including private utilities, is vital in homeland security planning. There is a disconnect between the private sector and the public sector throughout the nation. Not including the private sector in planning can cause confusion and distrust. The Buffer Zone Protection Plan Program is designed to bring together critical infrastructure owners and/or operators and the first responder community. The result of the BZPP process are Buffer Zone Plans that are “intended to help local law enforcement and first responders develop effective preventive measures that make it more difficult for terrorists to plan or launch attacks from the immediate vicinity of high priority infrastructure targets.”⁹⁸ Therefore, it is vital for the private sector to be involved in the state and regional homeland security process so that a relationship is developed and trust is gained.

As pointed out in the previous chapters, leadership is key to enhancing regional collaboration. The leadership should consist of representatives from all disciplines involved in homeland security planning, including the private sector. It is important that the private sector be involved in preparedness planning. One way to ensure that all agencies responsible for homeland security are involved in planning efforts is to examine documents that detail responsibilities. The Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) will be used during disasters (natural and man-made) to lay out responsibilities and roles. Table 1 details the primary agencies that are responsible for each of the Emergency Support Functions in an EOP at both the state and county level.

⁹⁸ *Fiscal Year 2005 Buffer Zone Protection Program: Program Guidelines and Application Kit* (Washington D.C: United States Department of Homeland Security, 2004), 10.

Table 1. Comparison of Lead Emergency Support Functions at the State and County Level

ANNEX	ESF	State Responsible Agency	County Responsible Agency
ESF-1	Transportation	Department of Transportation	County School Bus Director
ESF-2	Communications	Budget and Control Board, Division of the State Information Officer	County Communications Officer
ESF-3	Public Works and Engineering	Budget and Control Board, Division of Procurement Services	Assistant County Administrator for Public Works
ESF-4	Firefighting	Forestry Commission – Wildland Fires Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation; Division of Fire and Life Safety – Structural Fires	President, County Fire Chief’s Association
ESF-5	Information and Planning	SC Emergency Management Division, OTAG	County Director of Emergency Management
ESF-6	Mass Care	Department of Social Services	County Director of Department of Social Services
ESF-7	Resource Support	Budget and Control Board, Division of Procurement Services	County Purchasing Agent
ESF-8	Health and Medical Services	Department of Health and Environmental Control	Department of Health and Environmental Control, Health Department
ESF-9	Search and Rescue	Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation; Division of Fire and Life Safety – Structural Fires	President, County Fire Chief’s Association, Fire Rescue Liaison, EMS Rescue Liaison, and Law Enforcement Rescue Liaison
ESF-10	Hazardous Materials	Department of Health and Environmental Control	President, County Fire Chief’s Association
ESF-11	Food Services	Department of Social Services	County Food Services Director
ESF-12	Energy	Office of Regulatory Staff	County Department of Public Works
ESF-13	Law Enforcement	State Law Enforcement Division	County Sheriff
ESF-14	Long-Term Community Recovery and Mitigation	SC Emergency Management Division, OTAG	County Administrator for Public Works
ESF-15	Public Information	SC Emergency Management Division, OTAG	County Administrator

ESF-16	Emergency Traffic Management	Department of Public Safety	County Sheriff
ESF-17	Animal Emergency Response	Clemson University Livestock – Poultry Health	County Codes Enforcement
ESF-18	Donated Goods and Volunteer Services	Budget and Control Board, General Services Division	County Redevelopment Authority
ESF-19 (state)	Military Support	SC National Guard, OTAG	

South Carolina does have a majority of the agencies represented both on the CTCC, as depicted in Table 1, and in the State's Emergency Operations Plan; certain important agencies such as the Forestry Commission and the SC National Guard are not represented on the State or Regional CTCC. In order to enhance collaboration and support coordination, a crosswalk should be developed to ensure that all agencies that serve as leads within the State EOP are also represented on the CTCC. The State EOP is all-hazards and therefore all agencies responsible for emergency support functions may be called upon during a terrorist event. In fact, the Forestry Commission is leading the effort for the Incident Command Teams being established within the state.

The South Carolina State Homeland Security Strategy is designed to guide the state's mission and goals for building preparedness for all hazards, with a focus on terrorism. Within the strategy, goals and objectives are defined to build capability within the state. The South Carolina National Guard, an asset to the state, is not mentioned in the strategy. It is not clear if this exclusion is an oversight or intentional omission. Other states have included the National Guard in their homeland security organizations and referenced it as a support – or even lead – role in their Homeland Security Strategies. South Carolina has done none of the above. The Guard would provide transparency to federal assets as well as ensure that state Guard assets were being utilized to their fullest extent. Also, the Guard has several subject matter experts who could add to the homeland security mission in South Carolina. Although the South Carolina National Guard performs both federal and state missions, it should be integrated into the planning process

for homeland security in South Carolina, and as such, integrated into the State Homeland Security Strategy and Counter Terrorism Coordinating Council.

Effective regional collaboration requires leadership and stakeholder involvement. “Leadership dedicated to stakeholder involvement is a critical characteristic of high-performing partnerships, second only to achieving results.”⁹⁹ “Allowing all stakeholders to jointly name and frame...issues for regional collaboration is important for one simple reason – to foster ownership and commitment. Since no single institution or entity is responsible or has the authority to address a multi-jurisdictional problem, the issues and potential solutions must reflect the interests and viewpoints of people that have a stake in the issue, those who are needed to implement any potential outcome, and those that might feel compelled to challenge the process or its outcome.”¹⁰⁰

b. Needs Assessment Committees

South Carolina’s County Needs Assessment Committees should be re-energized and expanded to support local planning efforts. Similar to Michigan’s Local Planning Teams, the Needs Assessment Committees membership should be expanded to include:

- 1 urban fire service representative (paid), if applicable
- 1 rural fire service representative (volunteer), if applicable
- 1 municipal law enforcement representative
- 1 county law enforcement representative
- 1 emergency management representative
- 1 emergency medical service representative
- 1 HazMat team representative, if applicable
- 1 public works representative
- 1 public safety communications representative
- 1 governmental administrative representative (i.e., county commissioner, mayor, township supervisor, school district superintendent)
- 1 local public health representative

⁹⁹ *Homeland Security: Effective Regional Coordination Can Enhance Emergency Preparedness*, 23.

¹⁰⁰ University of Montana, Public Policy Research Institute, “Planning Across Boundaries: Habits of Effective Regional Collaboration,” (February 26, 2006), 2.

- 1 health care (hospital, medical director, etc)
- 1 tribal, if present in county
- 1 private security
- 1 cyber security

This expansion would ensure that all homeland security efforts, including efforts supported by other programs such as the Centers for Disease Control Public Health Emergency Preparedness program and the Health Resources and Services Administration Bioterrorism Preparedness program, by expanding the knowledge base within the committee. This would ultimately create a more efficient method of requesting grant funding. Grant guidance strongly suggests that programs such as those listed above and the HSGP support and complement each other. By expanding the Needs Assessment Committees, all program efforts could be drafted at the grass-roots level. In order to keep the Needs Assessment Committees engaged, they should be heavily involved in the drafting of the regional strategy and requests for grant funding. Also, the Needs Assessment Committees should become more involved in determining risk within their county. As subject matter experts about the critical infrastructure, threat, vulnerability, consequence, and other risk factors, this committee would be very valuable in providing information.

c. Regional Counter Terrorism Coordinating Councils

Currently, the leadership at the regional level is seeking guidance to find a specific mission for the councils. Regional CTCC chairs have been unable to provide guidance to their councils on the development of a mission or strategic plans to create a sense of purpose within the councils. The lack of mission has created stagnancy within the councils. The regional councils are becoming less involved in homeland security planning and are only meeting when new guidance on funding is released. Also, there are not strategic plans at the regional level to guide preparedness efforts or requests for funding.

The Regional Counter Terrorism Coordinating Councils are the key stakeholders for expanding regional collaboration. The regional councils provide an avenue for collaboration and coordination and should be taken advantage of. By

developing mission statements, providing them more fiscal responsibility in relation to grant funding decisions, and clearly establishing roles and responsibilities of the council, these regional councils would ensure that issues not only at the state level, but also at the regional and local level are known, identified, and addressed in a regional strategy. Engaging regional councils will not only ensure that grant funds are expended in an efficient and effective matter, but they can also be utilized for other homeland security projects such as identifying critical infrastructure to quantify risk and implementation of the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

Arizona's specificity for its regional advisory councils should be mirrored in South Carolina. The state should update its Regional CTCC membership roster, make it clear how the members are elected, and set term limits. Also, the requirement of the Regional Strategies will allow for greater coordination and collaboration within the region.

2. Develop Regional Strategic Plans

The CTCC regions should be required to develop regional strategies that tie to the state's Homeland Security Strategy. The creation of a strategy would fix many of the impediments to regional collaboration at the regional level currently. The development of a strategy would aid in defining a mission and objectives, and create a road map for how the region could enhance collaboration and homeland security efforts. The mission statement of the State CTCC could be utilized as a guide, or starting point, for the region's mission. Also, the questions "How prepared do we need to be?," "How prepared are we?," and "How do we prioritize efforts to close the gap?" could be utilized as a starting point for determining what should be addressed in the strategy.

Developing a regional strategy would allow the region to determine its own requirements for how best to protect its resources and boundaries. This would also give the counties within the region more of a sense of ownership within the region. Developing a strategy will take much time and collaboration between all stakeholders. This process will encourage all stakeholders to provide input. By taking a more active role in obtaining preparedness funding, local governments will be more involved. The involvement of all stakeholders will allow them to become more familiar with each other, thereby creating a sense of trust and understanding of each other's needs and capabilities.

Regional Strategies provide a guidebook for how the region wants to address homeland security issues including preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. A regional strategy is not only valuable for addressing grant requests via Investment Justifications and Enhancement Plans, but it allows for the region to have an all-hazard, multi-discipline, multi-jurisdictional plan defining goals and objectives towards enhancing regional collaboration and all homeland security efforts.

3. Involve Regions in Funding Decisions

Once a regional strategy has been developed, it can serve as a road map to create investment and enhancement plans that can be used to apply for funding. The funding decisions are based on identified gaps from the capability assessment that was conducted as a requirement of the FY2006 Homeland Security Grant Program. This capability assessment was conducted in South Carolina on a county basis and then verified/normalized at a regional level. However, the regions had little input on the allocation of funds once the state received the grant award. Involving the regions in funding recommendations would allow the process to come full circle: the regions would not only evaluate the capability gaps, but also provide recommendations on how to best mitigate those gaps within their region. The regions have more vision on their assets/resources than the state does and can therefore make more informed and effective recommendations on allocation for funding. Also, regional initiatives could be formed at the regional level and in doing so, receive more buy-in. Currently, many of the regional initiative, while valiant efforts to address identified gaps statewide, have struggled due to lack of understanding and buy-in at the regional level.

By increasing regional involvement in funding recommendations, regions will be able to determine for themselves how best to utilize homeland security funding. Federal guidance has suggested that a regional structure be used to distribute homeland security funding. Similar to Arizona, the regions should develop and prioritize their grant requests. SLED should take initiative to ensure that all monies have been allocated wisely and that regional capabilities, including plans that incorporate those capabilities, are being built across the state. By allowing and mandating that the regions develop their

own requests for homeland security grant funding, SLED will be able to ensure that those with the most knowledge of what their needs are the same ones developing grant requests.

4. Long-Term

A regional preparedness structure should be agreed upon so that planning is streamlined and consistent throughout the state. If this is not possible, it is essential that there is clarity on all regional preparedness efforts. The regional CTCCs should serve as the window to these regional preparedness efforts. The CTCCs should consist of regions that are naturally aligned via existing mutual aid agreement or planning areas. Also, the regional CTCCs should be given specific missions so that they are more functional.

The lack of true regional collaboration within the state has caused confusion and frustration at all levels within the state. SLED should take the lead for homeland security in the state and mandate that regions be aligned to promote regional collaboration and homeland security planning. Objective 2.2 of the State Homeland Security Strategy, “Improve State, Regional, and local capabilities to respond to terrorist attacks employing chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive devices, infectious disease outbreaks, public health threats, and other emergencies,” involves all disciplines coordinating and planning on the regional level. Therefore, SLED should work with other state agencies to align planning regions and employ its homeland security planners to ensure that coordination is taking place not only within the regions, but among the state agencies as well. This will take considerable political buy-in among the key leaders in the state. There are significant turf issues between state agencies concerning homeland security planning. For example, the State EMD (which once was the SAA for the HSGP) and SLED (the current SAA) have difficulty in aligning homeland security planning initiatives and determining roles and responsibilities. The current “divide” for preparedness efforts is that SLED will handle all terrorism preparedness and EMD will handle all other hazards preparedness. This results in silos, gaps, and uncoordinated efforts to address many of the same issues, such as notification, evacuation, sheltering, etc. The State of Iowa regionalized its local jurisdictions into homeland security regions mirroring the districts used by the Iowa Emergency Managers Association, the Iowa State

Association of Counties, and the Iowa Department of Public Health.¹⁰¹ South Carolina should examine the regional districts and determine a similar, if not exact, regional structure by which homeland security regions could be coordinated better.

Some of the regions, such as the Fixed Nuclear Facility regions, as noted in Figure 4, are based on the location of nuclear power plants and are structured according the emergency planning zones around those plants; therefore, it would be difficult to change these planning regions. Also, extensive efforts have been made to draft mass casualty plans for the DHEC regions. Efforts should be made within leadership within the state to identify regional plans and determine the most suitable structure by which to align homeland security preparedness efforts. Restructuring all of the regions in the state is not a realistic goal for the short-term. Extensive efforts across the state have occurred, but in silos. The varying regional structures overlap in planning efforts making it difficult to expand regional collaboration.

SLED, as the SAA and the Homeland Security Advisor, should create one standard planning region by which all matters concerning Homeland Security are coordinated. The homeland security planners at SLED should have knowledge, not oversight, of other planning initiatives being conducted within their respective regions. They should be the coordinators of plans to ensure that goals are being achieved. However, SLED must be objective when determining which regional structure to utilize. The SLED regions, or CTCC regions, are the largest regions (some up to thirteen counties), and while South Carolina is not a large state, a large number of counties are difficult to coordinate. As the National Preparedness Goal states, regions should be “located in whole or in part within a designated planning radius of a core high threat urban area.” While the CTCC regions are centered around the four largest population centers in the state, the range of counties around those regions is too large to coordinate planning and/or enhance regional collaboration.

B. OBJECTIVE

The objective of these implementation steps is to enhance regional collaboration. In order to align with federal guidance and due to continually decreasing homeland security funds, more effective and efficient regional coordination is necessary. While the

¹⁰¹ *Implementation Plan for the Regionalization of Iowa Homeland Security*, November 2004.

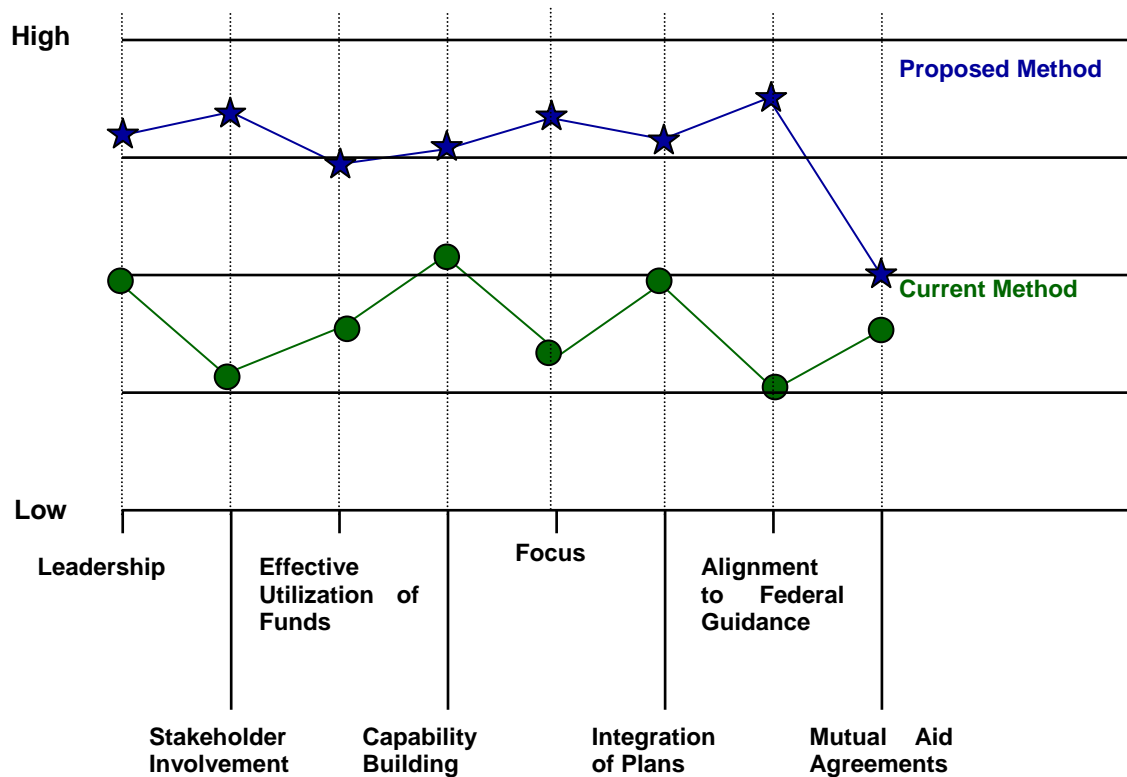
state has made significant strides in developing regional councils, teams, and other capabilities, strategic plans are needed to guide these councils, plans are needed to integrate teams into responses, and regions as a whole are needed to become more involved in securing the state. Currently, state agencies such as SLED and EMD are the leads in regional planning and allocating funding at the regional level. “Regionally coordinated and planned programs are not new and have existed in such fields as transportation, health, environmental planning and so forth for many years. However, in contrast, homeland security is a relatively new program area, not emerging in prominence until after the terror attacks of September 11, 2001. Accordingly, new operating procedures regarding regional planning and response are necessary – a new paradigm shift in preparedness is necessary to meet current challenges.”¹⁰²

The above recommendations could be implemented easily and quickly in South Carolina. There are no major impediments to tying grant funding to the regions, re-energizing the county Needs Assessment Committees, and providing guidelines that are more specific for the regional CTCCs. However, over the long term, South Carolina should examine its many different regional structures (especially between the State Emergency Management Division and the SLED).

The current homeland security regional efforts for South Carolina versus the proposed homeland security regional efforts are displayed in Figure 1. The criteria assessed for this included leadership, stakeholder involvement, effective utilization of funds, capability building, focus integration of plans, alignment to federal guidance, and mutual aid agreements. Research has shown that with the guidance of strong leaderships, regions can have a more coherent structure and function more collaboratively.

¹⁰² “Emergency Management and Homeland Security Informational Letter,” 3.

Figure 12. Expanding Regional Collaboration within the Homeland Security Regions



C. IMPLEMENTATION HURDLES

In order to address the cognitive hurdles, an examination of current federal guidance should occur. Regional collaboration is a national priority and involvement of local governments is highly recommended. A further examination of why the regional COBRA teams were not utilized during the Graniteville train accident, for example, should occur. Elements of only three of the fourteen COBRA teams were not utilized, but federal assets, such as the pre-positioned equipment pods, were.

The regions should be motivated by the need to determine their own fate and determine how their homeland security money will be utilized. During a disaster, they will be the first to respond and should therefore become more engaged in the decision-making and planning process. Due to a decrease in funding, regional initiatives are necessary to ensure preparedness across all areas. Also, regional programs are favored in determining homeland security funding allocations.

The regional councils and teams (including equipment) are already in place, therefore not requiring additional expenditures. Also, there are planners at the state and local level that are available to assist in planning and development of strategies. In order to overcome political hurdles, an all-hazards approach should be encouraged and documented as such in the State Strategy. This would encourage all grant funding including EMPG, fire grants, and public health programs to become integrated and support one strategy. Also, clear definitions of how council members are elected would mitigate political hurdles. In order to ensure that all stakeholders are consulted, involvement of all counties (small and large) in the planning process should be mandated to receive preparedness funding.

Regional governance was included as an impediment to regional collaboration in Chapter I. Throughout the research, there was only one mention of a regional governance structure in Oregon. Also, all of the states opted for adopting regional advisory councils and/or committees to guide implementation of regional initiatives. Throughout the research, there was no mention of forming regional governments in order to enhance regional collaboration. Without regional governments, states have been able to successfully enhance regional collaboration through creation of regional councils, regional strategies, and funding regional initiatives. These regional councils have been successful in building regional capacities, including regional teams, and involving regional and local stakeholders in allocating grant funding and drafting regional strategies.

D. SUMMARY

The steps outlined in the implementation plan section of this chapter, increasing stakeholder involvement, developing regional strategic plans, and involving regions in funding decisions, should be implemented to promote regional collaboration throughout the state. Due to the threats that abound and the numerous preparedness programs being funded throughout the state, it is critical that all preparedness assets be coordinated at the regional level. The State of South Carolina, and specifically SLED, can enhance regional collaboration by requiring the regional councils to develop strategic plans and draft regional investment and enhancement justification plans, re-engage the Needs Assessment Committees, and creating a clearer system of how regional councils are

structured. These efforts will increase leadership and stakeholder involvement, align more with federal guidance, provide for more effective use of preparedness funds, and ultimately create a more prepared state.

Expanding regional collaboration is essential to ensuring that all areas are capable of being prepared for a terrorist, or natural hazard event. Because not every jurisdiction or county can have all the resources needed to prepare for terrorism, sharing of resources and regional planning in support of regional collaboration is necessary. To support the National Preparedness Goal, the State Homeland Security Strategy, and to ensure that South Carolina is prepared, regional collaboration must be enhanced to prepare for a terrorist or natural hazard event.

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VI. CONCLUSION

South Carolina is committed to ensuring that each region of the state has an effective homeland security preparedness and response system. Enhancing regional collaboration is the key to ensuring sustainable and sustained homeland security efforts. The state has been building regional capabilities since September 11, 2001. However, there is still much work to be done to effectively and efficiently enhance regional collaboration and ensure that homeland security efforts are aligned throughout, despite the agency or grant funding them. There are several ongoing, overlapping, uncoordinated efforts to enhance homeland security in the state. Although these efforts have been conducted in isolation, there are currently efforts underway via local catastrophic planners, the regional CTCCs, local Needs Assessment Committees, and other planning councils to begin to assign roles and responsibilities for homeland security and coordination of response assets. The recommendations provided in Chapter V provide for a more coordinative, collaborative use of homeland security dollars as well as planning and operational components of homeland security.

To enhance homeland security efforts, regional strategies should be developed to provide the regions an all-hazards, multi-discipline, multi-jurisdictional plan by addressing the three questions of “How prepared do we need to be?,” “How prepared are we?,” and “How do we prioritize efforts to close the gap?”¹⁰³ Leadership and stakeholders within the state should be re-engaged to ensure that homeland security efforts, other than funding, are being addressed at the local and regional level. Also, with the funding that is available, efforts should be made to ensure that regional committees are heavily involved in the decision-making process of grant allocations. This will increase stakeholder involvement and improve overall homeland security preparedness efforts within the regions.

This thesis has outlined specific recommendations for South Carolina to expand regional collaboration through examining three other states, as case studies, to determine how they have expanded and enhanced regional collaboration to improve their homeland

¹⁰³ *National Preparedness Guidance*, 3.

security preparedness efforts. It is important to note that these recommendations may also be applied to other states homeland security systems throughout the nation. While each state is unique with respect to assets, resources, population, etc., the recommendations can be applied universally. While there is not a one-size-fits-all, or standard, approach to expanding regional collaboration, there are key elements that will enhance regional collaboration including:

- stakeholder involvement
- creation of regional strategic plans
- funding of regionally-elected initiatives.

While the processes outlined in this thesis can be directly applicable to the HSGP, the product of expanding collaboration is the alignment of plans, more effective utilization of resources, and ultimately, a more comprehensive prepared nation. Expanding regional collaboration has been identified as a national priority and as such, should be implemented and expanded upon in its fullest capacity possible to ensure that the state is better prepared for future events, terrorist or natural-hazard related. “Expanded regional collaboration supports the development of a seamless, national network of mutually-supporting capabilities to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from the full spectrum of threats and hazards.”¹⁰⁴ With a decrease in federal preparedness funding, it is vital that states, and the nation as a whole, embrace regional collaboration to ensure that existing assets are utilized effectively and that communities work together to face the terrorism, and natural hazard threat. Catastrophic disasters are limited by jurisdiction boundaries; therefore, expanding regional collaboration is vital to ensuring that states, and the nation as a whole, are prepared.

¹⁰⁴ *National Preparedness Guidance*, 19.

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