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THESIS

THE ENGAGED AND EMPOWERED COMMUNITY: AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

by

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September 2010

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13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

Countless dollars have been spent on various programs and initiatives over the past decade to enhance homeland security. Although great strides have been made in many areas, one that continues to lag behind is preparedness at the local level. Documents ranging from the *National Response Framework* to the recently completed *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review* emphasize the need for both the public and private sectors to embrace the responsibility they have concerning community readiness efforts.

The primary focus of this thesis is to determine what factors contribute to successful community preparedness efforts, as well as identifying those barriers that impede such progress from being realized. To that end, a variety of group structures and approaches currently in use are recognized and discussed. In addition, cases located both within the United States and abroad are identified and examined. Interviews conducted with members of these groups provide a first-hand account of what steps are being made to improve emergency preparedness within their local jurisdictions. This thesis culminates with the offering of the Community Oriented Readiness Effort. This program incorporates those recommendation produced by this research and provides the core components needed to adequately engage and empower required resources at the local level.

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THE ENGAGED AND EMPOWERED COMMUNITY: AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABAG	Association of Bay Area Government
BENS	Business Executives for National Security
CA	California
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CERT	Community Emergency Response Team
CIP	Critical Incident Protocol
CORE	Community Oriented Readiness Effort
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
EMAC	Emergency Management Assistance Compact
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
MMRS	Metropolitan Medical Response System
MSU	Michigan State University
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
SWVPP	Southern West Virginia Preparedness Partnership
UK	United Kingdom
WV	West Virginia

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Attempting to recognize those who have assisted me during this 18-month journey will certainly fall short. However, I will attempt to do so, because each one has played a significant role and are deserving of that recognition.

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To those at the Beckley Fire Department who have carried on the work of our organization during my absences, I offer my heartfelt gratitude. Specifically, to those who make up our administrative staff (Department Secretary Nancy Singleton, Captains Billie Trump and Kevin Price, and Lieutenants Ernie Parsons and Bryan Trump). I genuinely appreciate all of your support.

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I would be remiss if I did not thank my classmates for the special way they affected me. The distinctive qualities that each one possessed have added so much to my professional and personal life. I will never be able to thank you enough for accepting me as a fellow student, listening to and respecting my ideas and input, and assisting me in any way that you could.

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I.   INTRODUCTION

> The responsibility for responding to incidents, both natural and manmade, begins at the local level-with individuals and public officials in the county, city or town affected by the incident.[1]

This thesis proposes to define a number of actionable recommendations for those who are currently involved in community-level emergency preparedness efforts, or those who might become involved in such initiatives in the future. Such proposals can not only enhance the planning, response, and recovery capabilities of these particular jurisdictions, but can have far-reaching implications concerning our nation's overall homeland security capabilities. A number of national and state planning documents emphasize the need of multidisciplinary and multiagency participation at the local level. Yet, in order to achieve the requisite levels of participation, active collaboration among all community stakeholders must be achieved. This research will assist those involved in such efforts by focusing on the following:

- Identifying those components that aid in the success and sustainability of local-level emergency preparedness efforts.

- Identifying those factors that hinder these groups from realizing their goals and objectives on both a short and long-term basis.

A.   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Achieving homeland security is a daunting task, even under the best of circumstances. Although disasters may have a national effect, they begin and take place locally. Because of this, they require and demand the initial and prolonged investment of the affected community. The 9/11 Commission (2004) recognized the necessity of local involvement and stated that the authorization of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) does not end with the federal government. It was their contention that preparing those at the local level, which includes the local government, business community, and non-governmental organizations, is not a luxury; but rather, a necessity in the present world in which we live. If ignored, it will have a detrimental impact upon the number of

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[1] Department of Homeland Security, *National Response Framework,* p. 15.

lives and resources expended in regards to our national security. This is noted in DHS's (2008) *National Response Framework*, where it states that the efforts of public officials and individuals from the affected jurisdiction must be incorporated. Again, this notion was reiterated in a statement made recently by DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano, and published on the DHS Web site (2009):

> Preparedness is a shared responsibility and everyone—including businesses, universities and non-profit organizations—has a role to play. Ensuring our private sector partners have the information and training they need to respond to disasters will strengthen our efforts to build a culture of preparedness nationwide.[2]

To this end, numerous initiatives have been made to address community-level preparedness, a critical component of our nation's homeland security efforts. These community-based efforts recognize that the public and private sectors are interrelated, therefore, must work together to accomplish shared objectives and to ensure community cohesion in the midst of a disaster. The problem is that many of these efforts fall short of accomplishing their intended purposes or lack the ability to survive beyond the initial phases of their development. The National Academy of Public Administration's (2003) report entitled *Powering the Future: High Performance Partnerships* states that "Despite their proven successes, high-performance partnerships are relatively rare. Why? They are difficult to create and even harder to sustain" (p. 3). Simply put, the repositories of resources represented by local governments, the business community, and non-governmental organizations are not being adequately employed for the continuance of essential services and maintaining community resiliency. It is the opinion of researchers Bach and Kaufman (2009) that the American public are woefully underutilized, or as they say "missing in action" (p. 1). They go on to say that efforts must be made that will reach out to our nation in a meaningful way, one that invites their participation in understanding, assessing, and dealing with risk in the proper manner.

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[2] From a statement released October 15, 2009. Secretary Napolitano announced new proposed standards for a 9/11 Commission-recommended program for the private sector to improve preparedness for disasters and emergencies. Retrieved October 15, 2009 from http://www.dhs.gov/ynews/releases/pr_1255621627246.shtm.

Community efforts must be more that simply a sum of their individual parts. Whether one is looking at a chamber of commerce, a parent-teacher organization or a homeland security group, they must be formulated in a manner where the participants feel connected. There must be opportunities for people to be truly involved; beginning with the initial planning stage of disaster management activities and continues throughout the process. It is a component that can transform a lackluster effort into one that is dynamic and productive. Unfortunately, it would seem that in many of these instances, the necessity of engaging and empowering their participants is not being acknowledged or accomplished.

In the future, a change must take place in how homeland security is viewed in order to achieve progress. Since 9/11, a great deal of responsibility has been placed and assumed by the federal government to protect and keep our nation safe. Efforts, such as the *National Response Framework* and the *National Infrastructure Protection Plan,* attest to this notion. However, within the pages of these documents are found the community fire chief, the county health director and the business owner who actually carry out the stated objectives. Therefore, it is imperative that more focus be placed upon community involvement as it relates to homeland security. Specifically, why do certain community preparedness efforts achieve their stated goals and objectives while others do not? Why are some of these groups able to sustain their efforts year after year, while others dissolve in short order? What are the components that aid in successful ventures and what are the barriers that impede it? Finding answers to these basic questions will assist in filling the gaps that exist in our country's homeland security efforts.

B.   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research will examine a number of existing cases that are currently involved in homeland security efforts at the local level and will address the following questions:

- What factors contribute to successful community-level preparedness efforts?
- What are the barriers that impede such initiatives?

C.   ARGUMENT

To effectively secure our nation's homeland security, a multi-tier approach must be taken; soliciting the input and participation at the federal, state, and local levels. Focusing upon the latter, broad-based involvement at the grass-roots level is a must. One reason that local involvement is required is that there is no one more familiar with the unique needs of a community and the resources available to address these needs than those who work and live there. In *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned Report* (DHS, 2006) stated that the private and non-government sectors often perform certain functions more efficiently and effectively than government because of their vast levels of expertise and experience. Another reason that community investment is required concerns our nation's critical infrastructure. It is widely believed that 85% of this infrastructure controlled by the public sector. As was evident during the recent *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review*[3], many question this figure, but the fact remains that local jurisdictions have a tremendous impact upon their function and durability. As is stated in the *National Infrastructure Protection Plan* (DHS, 2009), the owners and operators are those who generally develop and implement the protective programs and resiliency strategies for the critical infrastructure and key resources under their control. Lastly, another reason for bolstering local community involvement is the fact that government aid will not be immediately available at the time of a disaster. It is therefore prudent to plan and prepare before such events take place in order to be as self-sufficient as possible.

An example from the United Kingdom (2008) illustrates how participation at the local level can play a vital role in a country's overall preparedness initiative. As part of their national strategy, the UK. produces an annual document entitled the *National Risk Register,* which includes sub-components called "Community Risk Registers." Government representatives consider the likelihood of a range of different hazards in specific areas of England and Wales, then incorporate "Local Resilience Forums" to

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[3] Opinions posed by respondents to the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review concerning this matter can be found at http://www.homelandsecuritydialogue.org/dialogue3/counterterrorism/ideas/85-of-our-nations-infrastructure-is-in-the-private-sector.

discuss and seek solutions to deal with them in a productive and pro-active manner. These forums incorporate the views and input of local emergency services, as well as public, private and voluntary organizations. A by-product of this increased involvement is a heightened awareness of the risks present at the local level and the ability to address these hazards in a pro-active manner.

Suffice it to say, regional partnerships representing both the public and private sectors are key to addressing emergencies in a positive and pro-active manner. The challenge is to identify those components that contribute to successful community-level preparedness efforts, as well as the barriers that hinder such initiatives. This research will identify pertinent information received from individual participants that will aid in identifying these factors, allowing communities across the nation to benefit from these findings.

D.　　PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PROJECT

1.　　Immediate Consumer/Customer

Thousands of community preparedness efforts are currently in existence, while others will be formulated in the future. The conclusions reached and recommendations made can enhance those that are currently operating as well as those who might be experiencing less than stellar results. In addition, this information can assist those who are about to embark upon such an initiative.

2.　　Homeland Security Practitioners and National Leaders

Whether such leaders are found at the federal government level or in rural America, there is one thing they agree. There are never enough resources and these resources never arrive quickly enough. The key ingredient to our nation's homeland security agenda is found in the collective efforts of government, emergency response, business, non-governmental organizations, and the private citizenry. This research will aid in determining those ingredients needed to bring these resources together in a collaborative and coordinated manner.

3. Literature

Currently, there is information available concerning small group efforts and how they should interact and collaborate with one another. However, the significance of this research will be found in taking an in-depth look at five "real-world" community-level preparedness efforts and listening to the words of those who are involved at the grass-roots level. The information collected from these personal interviews will assist other researchers and practitioners in providing appropriate recommendations concerning any similar future efforts. This is vital because community engagement and empowerment is an issue that is and will remain an important component of our nation's overall homeland security efforts.

4. Future Research Efforts

Study will offer important insight to local preparedness efforts, they represent but a few perspectives of what is present across our country. However, the data compiled through qualitative analysis will prove to be instrumental in the work of those researchers involved in similar areas of study in the future. The conclusions reached and the recommendations made will provide yet another stepping stone for others to understand how best to enhance community involvement. It is hoped that such efforts will lead to a network of communities located across our country who are better prepared and more resilient to face whatever disaster might come their way.

E. CONCLUSION

Over the past decade, our nation has faced numerous challenges that have taxed the resources and resolve of the American people. Whether they concern incidents that affect the entire nation or only affect a single community, it is the collective effort of individual citizens that can have the greatest impact upon such events. This thesis looks to address the disparity between those community efforts that are successfully incorporating the resources and expertise of their community stakeholders and those that have fallen short in accomplishing this objective.

The next chapter reviews existing research as it relates to the necessity of emergency preparedness at the local level, examples of the various groups and partnerships already in existence, as well as those factors that aid or hinder such efforts in attaining their goals.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

I don't believe in writing anything that I don't know about or haven't researched about personally. I like to transport the reader to places, and in order to do that I have to do the research.[4]

A.   INTRODUCTION

Although countless efforts have been made to ensure homeland security from various perspectives, this literature review will identify sources that focus upon the local community and the part it can play in this national initiative. The literature is organized into the following categories:

- Homeland Security from the local perspective - This section addresses the need for each local community and those that work and live within it to assume responsibility to adequately prepare for a disaster.

- Community-based preparedness initiatives - This section builds upon the first category as a number of different community-based preparedness groups are introduced and described.

- Components for success - Discussion is offered concerning the different components discovered during this review as being integral to a group's success.

- Barriers to success - Conversely, there are obstacles that will hamper progress, and these are listed and addressed within this category.

B.   HOMELAND SECURITY FROM THE LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

As Nazi Germany was marching across Europe in 1940, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt delivered a fireside chat intended to incite action from industry in preparation for possible war. Stressing the theme of "splendid cooperation" between government and the private sector, Roosevelt emphasized that it was not the American politician, but the American people who had the power to turn the tide of any struggle the

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[4] Interview conducted with Jackie Collins, retrieved January 19, 2010 from http://www.ivillage.co.uk/newspol/readerswriters/authors/articles/0,,532363_533397,00.html.

country might find itself.[5] Seven decades later, the *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review Report: A Strategic Framework for a Secure Homeland* (DHS, 2010) echoes this same principle. This document states that if we are to achieve this ambitious goal, the Homeland Security Enterprise must be matured and strengthened. To accomplish this, the following recommendation is offered:

> Foster communities that have information, capabilities, and resources to prevent threats, respond to disruptions, and ensure their own well-being. Individuals, families, and communities are essential partners in the homeland security enterprise. Building and sustaining capability at the community level is essential to meeting homeland security strategic aims and realizing our vision for a secure homeland. (p. 69)

Others also recognize this prerequisite around the globe, as noted in *The National Security Strategy for the United Kingdom* (Cabinet Office, 2008). This document acknowledges the changing nature of threats and the broader affiliations it demands:

> We will build the coalition of public, private and third sectors already involved in counter-terrorism. We will work with owners or operators to protect critical sites and essential services, with business to improve resilience; with local authorities and communities to plan for emergencies and to counter violent extremism; and with individuals, where changing people's behaviour is the best way to mitigate risk. (p. 8)

Hardenbrook (2005) agrees with the notion that when disaster strikes, the burden of meeting response and recovery efforts falls primarily on the shoulders of local officials. He goes on to say that the need to address homeland security and emergency preparedness efforts at the regional and local levels has become even more apparent in recent years. Bach and Kaufman also feel that if local jurisdictions are to respond to critical incidents in an effective manner, the responsibility to do so will fall upon those affected communities, their neighbors and families.

To meet the challenge of national emergency preparedness, a determination must be made as to how to employ the public on a large scale basis. This was noted in the *Report on Executive Seminar on Multi-Jurisdictional Networked Alliances* (Department of

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[5] Summarized from fireside chat offered by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on December 29, 1940. Full text of delivery can be accessed at http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=15917.

Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Association & Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security, 2008) where collaboration between different sectors and jurisdictions demands exceptional coordination of resources, information, and expertise. Therefore, emergency preparedness, whether for manmade or natural disasters, requires the coordinated action of agencies and communities from all walks of life.

C.   COMMUNITY BASED PREPAREDNESS INITIATIVES

In the recent past, a number of efforts have been instituted to heighten the level of preparedness at the local level. They are similar in that they set out to incorporate participation on a broad-based level by bringing together the resources and expertise represented by their members. Differences might include the structure of the organization, the particular mission in which they hope to accomplish, as well as those who make up their membership. The following provides just a few examples of these types of community-based preparedness initiatives.

1.   Alliances

Alliances have traditionally been viewed as a close association of groups that are formed to advance common interests or causes, such as labor unions opposing a certain legislative bill. In reference to homeland security and emergency preparedness, alliances have taken on a role that is relatively new. Known as multi-jurisdictional or multi-organizational networked alliances, these associations can link multiple entities in a way that increases the resilience of individual communities, and in turn, hardens an entire nation against a variety of threats. Researchers Dake and Kaufman (2009) note in their paper, Understanding and Advancing Cross‑Sector Collaboration in Homeland Security and Emergency Management that the increasing complexity of modern society has created universal susceptibilities that go beyond any public, private, or civic sector boundary. It is their position that traditional organizational structures are limiting, bringing about a need for a new method for joint problem solving. Rather than arranging themselves in a vertical manner where leadership is assigned to a single sector or discipline, these alliances are organized horizontally with members collaborating around

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areas of common interests. This less centralized format takes advantage of the ideas and expertise spread throughout the entire alliance. As Brafman and Beckstrom (2006) state, "A decentralized organization stands on five legs. As with a starfish, it can lose a leg or two and still survive. But when you have all the legs working together, a decentralized organization can really take off" (p. 87). This approach is proving to be more flexible in developing solutions to problems that cannot be addressed by any single segment of a community.

In reference to the *Multi-Jurisdictional, Network Alliances and Emergency Preparedness* seminar noted earlier, DHS, FEMA, and the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security brought together subject matter experts to converse about these types of associations. Throughout this event, discussions centered upon why such alliances are formed and the benefits derived from them. Those who attended noted that a major strength of these associations is that they can engage in activities and be organized in a manner that reflects the uniqueness of a community's participants and problems. The seminar discussion identified three different areas of capabilities that gave these types of alliance an edge in promoting and maintaining successful cooperation among their participants. They were:

- *Value orientation*-Included such items as clear and direct communication among participants and flexibility to bring stakeholders together in a setting that promotes collaboration.

- *Networking*-Key ingredients included focus, leadership, reciprocal benefits, and trust.

- *Leading across boundaries*-Alliances offered unique environment in which diverse participants can address and assist in solving their shared problems.

2. Community Response Team

Community response teams are defined as organizations of volunteer emergency workers who have received specific training in basic disaster response skills, and who agree to supplement existing emergency responders in the event of a major disaster. They can take on many forms, spanning from those sponsored by a local fire department to

those that are federally funded and promoted under an umbrella organization, such as Citizen Corps. Perhaps one of the most recognized of these efforts is the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. The CERT concept was actually developed and implemented by the Los Angeles City Fire Department in 1985, but has grown and become more recognized since 9/11. As the program's Web site states, their mission is to educate people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. CERT programs have and continue to be established in every state of the nation.

3. Megacommunities

According to Gerencser, Kelly, Napolitano, and Van Lee (2008), a megacommunity is:

> A sphere in which organizations from three sectors-business, government, and civil society-deliberately join together around compelling issues of mutual importance, following a set of practices and principles that make it easier for them to achieve results without sacrificing their individual goals. (p. 53)

In contrast to traditional public-private partnerships where the local government and the business community are the primary partners, the megacommunity seeks to include what these researchers term as the "civil society." More commonly known as Non-Governmental Organizations or NGO's, they include agencies such as the American Red Cross or a local ministerial association. Proponents of this structure stress that this civil society represents a different point of view and a level of expertise than can be offered by others. These NGO's are allowed to focus upon the issues that affect their community in an unbiased fashion, because they are not hampered by governmental bureaucracy or motivated by profit. Megacommunities are designed in a manner where there is no central decision-making framework. Rather, everyone in the program has some influence in relation to its mission, operation, and outcome. Gerencser and Kelly (2009) view this

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structure as especially conducive to the manner in which today's young people have been socialized through the Internet via various means, such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace. These researchers feel that in a number of ways, today's young leaders are already accustomed to the megacommunity concept because of the hi-tech, multi-tasking environment in which they operate.

4. Networks

A network is simply an interconnected system of things or people. In relation to homeland security and emergency preparedness, the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) is one such example. EMAC provides form and structure to interstate mutual aid, whereby needed resources can be requested and received by any community throughout the nation. Although EMAC is a congressionally ratified organization that interacts at the state level, the local jurisdiction forms the building blocks in which this network's success depends upon. It is at this level where resources (personnel and equipment) are typed and categorized in a manner that aids in quick identification and deployment. Another identified function for networks is in the area of information sharing. In the report, *Creating a Trusted Network for Homeland Security,* The Markle Foundation Task Force (2003) affirms that all levels of government should create networks for information collection, sharing, and analysis. This task force stresses that this should be performed in a manner that not only preserves, but enhances privacy and other civil liberties. One major step forward concerning this "trusted network" has been the establishment of state fusion centers. Although primarily viewed as a law enforcement program, fusion centers are highly dependent upon the information and intelligence received from a variety of sources. As an example, the West Virginia Intelligence Fusion Center (2009) states on their Web site that they rely upon the cooperation of local, state, and federal law enforcement, public safety agencies, and the private sector in order to better protect the citizens of the United States against all hazards. Such statements are common among other fusion centers and stress how the local community can play a vital role in information sharing programs.

5. Public-Private Partnerships

The public-private partnership is not a new phenomenon; if fact, it has been utilized for a variety of purposes throughout the years. For the purpose of this research, a public-private partnership is defined as "a cooperative venture between the public and private sectors, built on the expertise of each partner that best meets clearly defined needs through the appropriate allocation of resources, risks and rewards" (Government of Canada, n.d.). Examples include government and private industry combining their resources for a shared venture. Examples would include a highway construction project or to provide certain services, such as fire protection. Generally, such arrangements have certain things in common: generally, they are bound by a contractual agreement and funding is transferred from one party to the other for services rendered.

Efforts have been made to broaden this traditional arrangement to one that is better suited to accomplish our nation's homeland security needs. A prime example is the Critical Incident Protocol (CIP), a program conducted by Michigan State University's (MSU) School of Criminal Justice. The coordinators of this program have established the following goals concerning the CIP:

- Create public and private sector understanding of common goals to protect lives and property while sustaining continuity of community life.

- Encourage public and private sector entities that already engage in the assessment and planning process in isolation to form cooperative partnerships.

- Assist those businesses and communities that lack emergency planning experience in the development of a joint emergency planning process.

- Develop an understanding of mutual or respective goals and understand how public and private resources can complement and support each other.

- Serve as a resource for those engaged in the joint planning process.

According to statistics published on the CIP Web site, this program has been initiated in 47 communities in 24 states with 4,200 participants establishing community public-private partnerships for joint management of critical incidents (CIP-MSU online, n.d.).

Burlin and Kamensky (2004) describe such efforts as "Communities of Practice," and state that an essential component of these types of arrangements is that participation must be voluntary. Giving of one's time and talents is vital, because participants are more likely to come together, share ideas with fellow peers and stakeholders in order to solve mutual problems. It is to be an affiliation that incorporates the resources and expertise of those who both have an intimate knowledge of the community in question and have a vested interest in it.

6.   Local Strategic Partnerships

The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) program is a United Kingdom (UK.) effort focused upon community and regional enhancement. This program was established in 2002 and viewed as a way of coordinating joint collaboration at the local level for various programs. In many ways, the UK.'s LSP program is much broader than similar U.S. community efforts, as it is designed to accomplish a variety of objectives. These include crime reduction, community cohesion, issues involving the employment, education, and health of the affected community, as well as emergency preparedness. Representatives from all levels of government, emergency responders, medical and public health, religious leaders and a host of others work together to meet their community's needs. Collectively, they address many of the same initiatives we do here in the U.S. which include information sharing between citizens and law enforcement through the use of neighborhood policing teams, continuity planning efforts for government, public service agencies, and business, as well as critical infrastructure protection. There are, however, notable differences, including the structure in which LSP's operate within, as well as certain documents that each one is to produce. One is the Sustainable Community Strategy, which is based on data from the local area and establishes a shared vision over a 10-20 year time period. Another document is known as the Local Area Agreement, which

is based on the priorities identified in the Sustainable Community Strategy and is essentially the "road map" concerning how to achieve that long-term vision.

The decision about partnership membership is strictly a local one. However, it is stressed that the public, private, and third sectors[6] are all adequately engaged and represented, as well as including representatives from all affected regions, communities and neighborhoods. Currently, there are hundreds of LSP's operating within the UK. Although each one is at different stages of development, they are common in that they are each striving to meet the unique needs of its own community.

D.   COMPONENTS FOR SUCCESS

Countless sources are available that detail how the various local-level preparedness efforts focused upon in this review should be initiated, what stakeholders should make up their membership, and the essential ingredients needed to accomplish their overall mission. Many were reviewed to determine what factors are considered essential to any successful community-based effort. A compilation of these findings can be found in Appendix A. An evaluation of this data found that the majority fall into the following broad categories: strategic planning, leadership, interpersonal dynamics, and training and education.

1.   Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is defined by Bryson (2004) as "a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization (or other entity) is, what it does, and why it does it." (p. 6) Such a regimented effort is needed by those groups discussed in the previous section, as they attempt to bring together a wide variety of individuals and perspectives towards a unified goal. Bryson lists a number of benefits derived from utilizing these types of planning efforts, the primary one being the promotion of strategic thinking and acting though deliberate conversation among group participants. Regular dialogue concerning important issues is a key feature of moving an

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[6] In the United States, the "third sector" is more readily known as "non-governmental organizations." These would include entities that range from emergency support organizations (e.g., The American Red Cross) to a local ministerial association.

effort forward in an effective manner. Decision-making is also enhanced by using strategic planning techniques. Such practices focus attention on the crucial issues facing a group and assist those charged with making key decisions to do so in a pro-active and informed manner. Yet, another benefit is enhanced organizational effectiveness. As will be noted later, progress and achieving results is vital to the success and sustainability of any community preparedness group. Strategic planning efforts encourage participants to clarify and address major issues in the midst of a dynamic environment and to respond to them in an informed and practical way. Figure 1 illustrates how strategic planning is to be considered; namely, a vehicle in which public value is created.
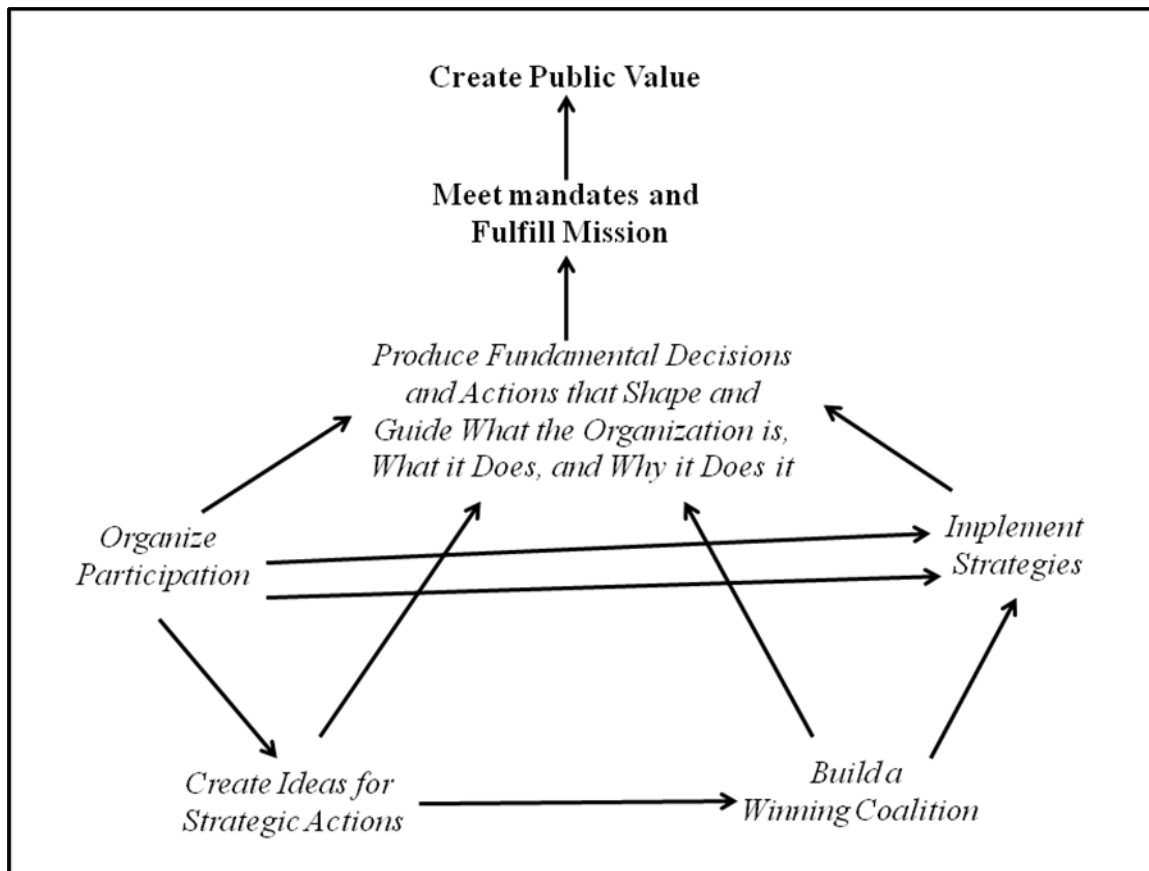
Figure 1. Purposes and Functions of Strategic Planning, From Bryson.

It is this type of process that can bring together creative ideas, organize participation, and produce actions that meet stated goals and objectives.

There are a number of individual components that make up strategic planning; beginning with what defines success, and then deciding upon what results achieve that success. A clear mission statement should be the starting point for defining and measuring performance goals. The National Academy of Public Administration (2003) states that it is imperative to link the partnership and partners' missions, as this type of coordination will ensure that time and effort are utilized in a complimentary, rather than a contradictory manner. Reddick (2008) agrees that a mutually reinforced and agreed upon strategy is a key factor in enhancing cooperation. He asserts that collaborating agencies should have a clear and compelling rationale for their working together. However, a mission statement is just the first of many steps, as strategic planning is a continuum consisting of individual components. Once a strategic plan is created, stakeholder consensus concerning its completeness and accuracy must be acquired. This plan is then to be implemented, evaluated, and revised accordingly. Figure 2 illustrates the various components of the strategic planning cycle.

Figure 2. The ABC's of Strategic Planning, From Bryson and Alston.

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Steiss (1985) concurs that strategic management is a perpetual process, where a group's goals and objectives are continually identified, policies are formulated, and strategies are selected in order to achieve the overall aims of an organization. According to Choi (2008), a long-term perspective must be incorporated, whereas a clear focus can be maintained throughout the life of the group in regards to its strategic agenda.
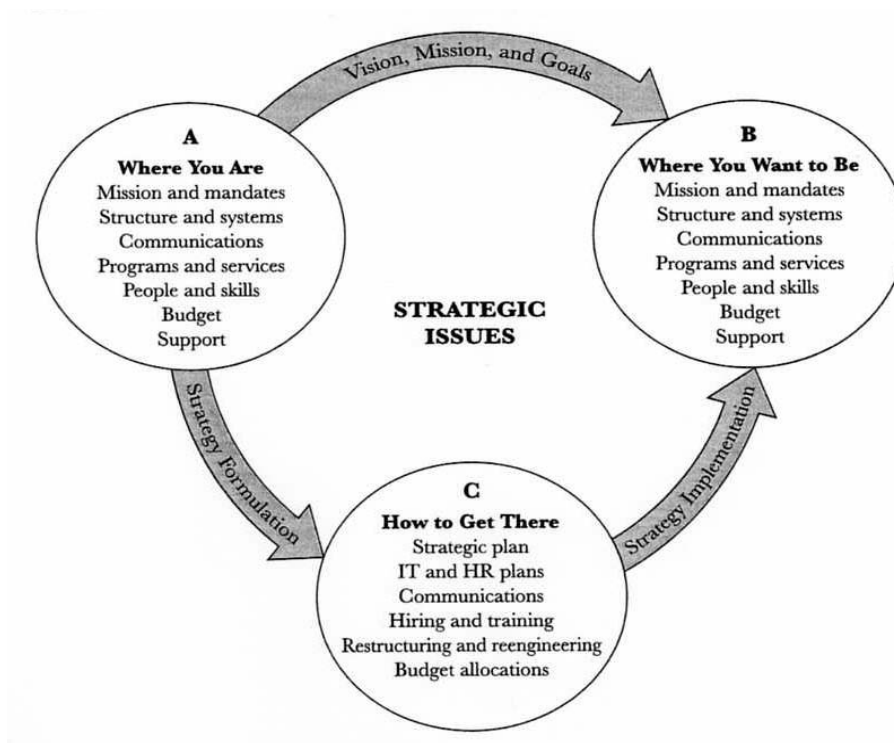
Bryson concludes his book by offering some advice for those groups about to embark upon the strategic planning process:

- Start where you and the other people who might be involved in or affected by the process currently are.

- Have a compelling reason to undertake strategic planning. If stakeholders and key decision makers do not see important benefits to be derived from this process, they will not be active supporters and participants.

- Remember that there is no substitute for leadership (this will be discussed in the next section).

- Tailor the process to the particular group, community, and situation.

- Be aware that the most important resource concerning strategic planning is not money, but the attention and commitment of key decision makers.

- If the going gets tough, keep in mind the potential benefits of the process. It should be noted that the ultimate end of strategic planning should not be stringent obedience to any certain process or plan. Rather, it is to be seen as an opportunity to promote intelligent and deliberate thoughts and actions among a group's stakeholders.

2.   Leadership

No factor was identified more often during this review as being vital to a group's success than that of leadership. Through the years, numerous authors and researchers have defined leadership in a variety of ways. Covey's (2006) brief definition touches upon issues that were found to be vital to any local-level preparedness initiative. Simply put, he states, "Leadership is getting results in a way that inspires trust" (p. 40). Traits that touch upon the necessity of taking action while inspiring confidence in those in whom the leader is working with. Leadership spans all phases of a group's efforts,

beginning with its formulation and must continue throughout the life of the group. Gerencser et al. (2008) state that during the development stage of any effort, the most visible role is that of "initiator." Brafman and Beckstrom call this person a "catalyst," and it is during this period that they exhibit the energy and excitement needed to propel the effort further. These researchers state that individuals assuming the role of initiator should possess the following attributes.

- They must fully understand their own self-interests and how they relate to the group's overall objectives.

- They should view the effort they are involved as the best option in accomplishing whatever objectives have been established.

- Initiators should have an established, positive reputation that can help the group get its efforts up and running.

- They should embrace innovation, not depending that something has already been tried before moving forward.

- Since any community effort requires commitment, initiators focus their time considering how best to organize and utilize resources at their disposal.

After the start-up phase, attention should be directed towards the strategic planning efforts discussed in the previous section. Here, leadership also plays a vital role. As Bryson states, there is simply no substitute for it, and should be understood to be a joint venture that incorporates the skills and abilities of a number of individuals. Those filling leadership roles must have the ability to understand the people involved, able to express the importance of the planning effort and champion the initiative throughout the entire process. Doing so, in the midst of varying opinions, perspectives, and agendas requires a different kind of person with unique skill sets. Dorn, Henderson and Marcus (2006) propose that "Leaders who are able to influence and accomplish such collaboration of effort across organizations-multi-jurisdictional, multi-agency, and public-private-are termed meta-leaders" (p. 128). The meta-leader is able to connect such contrasting groups by aligning their core interests and motivations, as in the case of

community emergency preparedness. Ashkenazi, Dorn, Henderson and Marcus (2007) identified five different dimensions of meta-leadership. These dimensions are illustrated in Figure 3 and a brief description of each follows.
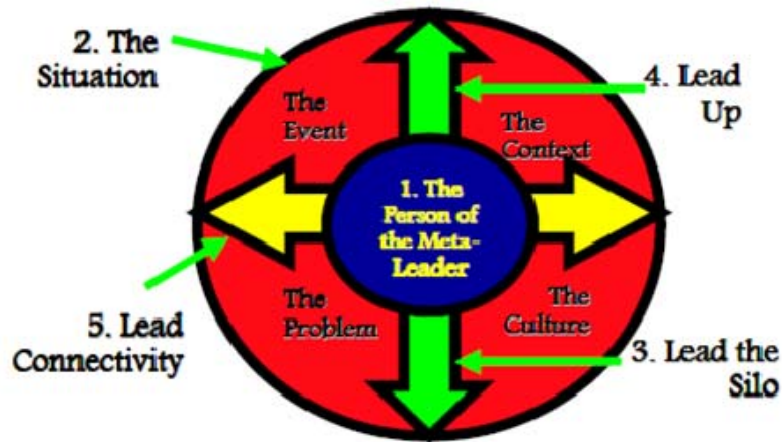
Figure 3.   The Five Dimensions of Meta-Leadership,
From Ashkenazi, Dorn, Henderson and Marcus

- *The person of the meta-leader*-A person must first look at themselves in the mirror and determine their own strengths and weaknesses. In order to direct large-scale or multifaceted efforts, the meta-leader must possess self-discipline to the degree where they are comfortable in their own environment. Only then can they lead others in a confident and effective manner. Self-discipline, initiative, and the ability to build meaningful relationships with a myriad of individuals and agencies are all desired attributed. Only through an honest self-assessment can one determine if they are ready to assume such a challenging role.

- *The Situation: The problem, change or crisis*- Awareness is now diverted from the individual to the situation at hand. Whether the scene is a planning meeting or an emergency incident, a variety of opinions and options are present which demand a resolution. In these situations, there is oftentimes a gulf between perception and reality. Mullin, (2002) feels this is the time for leaders to exercise situational awareness; to take charge and close this gap through the collection and discernment of additional input and information. The meta-leader must address each situation on its own merit and evaluates the pros and cons of any decision associated with them.

- *Lead the silo*-Before one can be expected to lead others in a community from various agencies and disciplines, they must first have the respect and support of those within their own organization. Without these, it would be difficult if not impossible to acquire the credibility needed to lead on a broader scale. In fact, it is the meta-leader's day-to-day subordinates that can serve as supporters and proponents of their supervisor's vision concerning any community-wide effort.

- *Lead up*-Everyone answers to another, and a great leader is also a great subordinate. They balance their allegiance to their own organization, while doing the same concerning community-related issues. The meta-leader is dependable concerning their various charges and is honest and loyal with their own boss. Within the context of a local level initiative, being able to effectively influence one's supervisor is vital in gaining the support needed to adequately lead such a broad initiative. Acquiring their supervisor's "buy-in" is crucial, as their boss possesses a number of valuable resources, not the least being the time needed to devote towards it.

- *Lead connectivity*-The ability to link such an eclectic group of agencies and individuals is indeed a gift of the meta-leader. Ashkenas, Jick, Kerr and Ulrich (2002) state that this type of leader is able to employ the gamut of public agencies and private interests that are to be recruited to share in this type of enterprise. The meta-leader is cognizant of the individual motivations at play and is able to link them in complementary matter for the greater good of the group.

As would be expected in any ambitious venture, the leader will surely face numerous hurdles along the way. In the book, *Blue Ocean Strategy*, Kim and Mauborgne (2005) list four categories of hurdles and propose that "tipping point" leadership is needed to successfully address such obstacles. In essence, tipping point leadership recognizes the need to abandon many of the conventional wisdoms used when leading others and instead calls for a vastly new approach.

The first of these four hurdles is called the "cognitive hurdle," and presents itself when organizations or groups are molded to the status quo; unaware of the need for a strategic shift or change in focus. To overcome this issue, they must come face to face and become intimately involved with the people they are serving and the situations they are planning for. Oftentimes, preparedness groups spend a great deal of time in the meeting or classroom, but rarely venture out into the environment in which such plans

will take place. By doing so, this challenge may be overcome. Next is the "resource hurdle." Most organizations and efforts have limited resources, and because of this situation, many efforts curtail their current operations or alter their future vision. A change in perspective is needed, where instead of focusing upon getting more resources, leaders concentrate on multiplying the value of the resources they currently have. Public and private sectors oftentimes represent a multitude of untapped resources; oftentimes undiscovered or underutilized. The "motivational hurdle" is simply the lack of motivation, initiative and participation, and it can be the death of any community-based program. Kim and Mauborgne propose focusing efforts on the "kingpins," the natural born leaders within the group to motivate others. In addition, "fishbowl" management should be used in regards to the kingpins, making their work as transparent to others as possible; fostering a sense of inclusion that will motivate others to others to readily follow. Lastly, there is the "political hurdle." Considering the varied agendas and motives present in any public-private partnership, politics and plotting can be a challenge. To overcome this dilemma, these researchers propose that tipping point leaders must identify the "devils," those who might oppose the overall mission of the group, as well "angels," those that will serve as its greatest supporters. Rather than creating an "us versus them" environment, the true leader will strive to create a "win-win" environment for each group identified.

As has been determined through this review, leadership involves a broad range of skills and traits, too numerous to list in their entirety. However, the National Academy of Public Administration (2003) offers a fitting summary. This body has produced what they call the "5 C's of Effective Leadership" which includes credibility, commitment, change agent, communications, and capability. As has been seen, each one is vital to any local-level group effort.

3.   Interpersonal Dynamics

It must be understood that bringing together individuals representing different organizations and disciplines can present its own unique set of challenges. It is no different concerning emergency preparedness efforts, and in reviewing the work of

others, it was obvious that addressing group dynamics in a positive manner can be the deciding factor in producing a successful outcome. A study performed by Armistead and Pettigrew (2004) looked at community public-private partnerships and sought to determine what factors are present that maximize mutual gain for all. Labeled blue (win-win) behaviors, they included such actions as trust, forgiveness/tolerance, an open and frank atmosphere in which to work within, as well as clear and effective communications.

The first issue of trust was an often-mentioned component during this research, evidence of its importance concerning these types of community initiatives. Covey (2006) stresses the importance of it in the title of his book, *The Speed of Trust*: *The One Thing That Changes Everything.* The Business Executives for National Security (2006) state that business-government relationships require a minimum level of trust in order for these entities to work together on a regular basis to achieve shared goals. According to Kim and Mouborgne (2005), trust is a by-product of building execution into overall strategic planning of any collaborative effort. This principle will minimize the detrimental effects of distrust and noncooperation. This atmosphere of reliance upon one another is essential during the planning and preparatory stages, but according to Kolluru, Smith, and Stewart (2009), is needed throughout all phases of operation. According to these researchers, the role of trust as it relates to public-private interaction during time-sensitive situations (such as the aftermath of a disaster) cannot be overlooked. It is worth noting that trust must be earned and can very easily dissipate. According to the Department of Homeland Security's (2008) *Report on Executive Seminar on Multi-Jurisdictional Networked Alliances*, "The trust that supports networked relationships is easy to lose, but extremely difficult to recover. Alliances must have an ability to re-establish trust through an openness and neutrality that allows private organizations and government agencies to work together." (p. 6)

The overall atmosphere or environment in which partners are expected to operate was the focus of a report produced by the Queensland Government Department of Emergency Services. This group determined that incorporating the input and participation

of the community was so important that they formulated a Community Engagement Division. In the report, *Charter for Community Engagement* (n.d.), this division put forth the following five engagement principles:

- *Inclusiveness*-reaching out and connecting with those found at all levels within one's community.

- *Reaching out*-discovering new ways in which the local government and the community in which it serves can work together.

- *Mutual respect*-projecting empathy while understanding and acting upon the experiences of others that are different than our own.

- *Integrity*-promoting uprightness in all aspects of conduct within the group

- *Affirming diversity*-incorporating the values, interests and opinions of those that make up the community-wide partnership.

The National Academy of Public Administration (2003) arrived at many of the same conclusions in their report, *Powering the Future: High-Performance Partnerships*. In it, they defined the essential ingredients of positive group dynamics as "organizational infrastructure." They assert that bringing together members of a broad-based partnership must be rewarding for everyone concerned. This reward can come in different forms; whether it's a return on investment, enhancing their community in a meaningful way, or gaining access to new opportunities. However, such rewards should come at a cost, which is essentially requiring every partner to bring something of value to the overall effort. Whether its resources, experience, expertise, or access to an area or facility, everyone gives something towards the betterment of all. The overall goal, as this administration states, should be to convert stakeholders into investors. If approached from this perspective, all partners would be able to contribute in some way to the overall success of the group.

Yet another vital component concerning group dynamics is the manner in which the affected partners communicate with one another. In the report referenced in the previous paragraph, National Academy of Public Administration (2003) determined that

if a group seeks to strive towards and attain common objectives, it is imperative for information to flow to every level of the partnership. Proctor and Trafford (2006) agree that an awareness of communication processes is essential if efforts are maximized in a way that achieves their strategic goals. Adequate time must be invested into developing a formal communications plan, utilizing all of the various mediums at one's disposal. This would include newsletters, Web sites, e-mail, and any other available tool used to disseminate information in an expedient manner. However, the *Powering the Future: High-Performance Partnerships* report stresses that communication is a two-way street, where feedback is welcomed and member input is incorporated into the group's ongoing planning efforts. Choi and Jacobson (2008) also identified a link between open communication and a willingness to compromise. Touching upon the issue of trust mentioned earlier, these researchers found that an open climate of discussion and a positive exchange of ideas also aided in the areas of conflict resolution. Figure 4 depicts Choi and Jacobson's Communication/Trust and Compromise/Collaborate matrix that display how a community group's efforts can be viewed as a combination of these different factors.
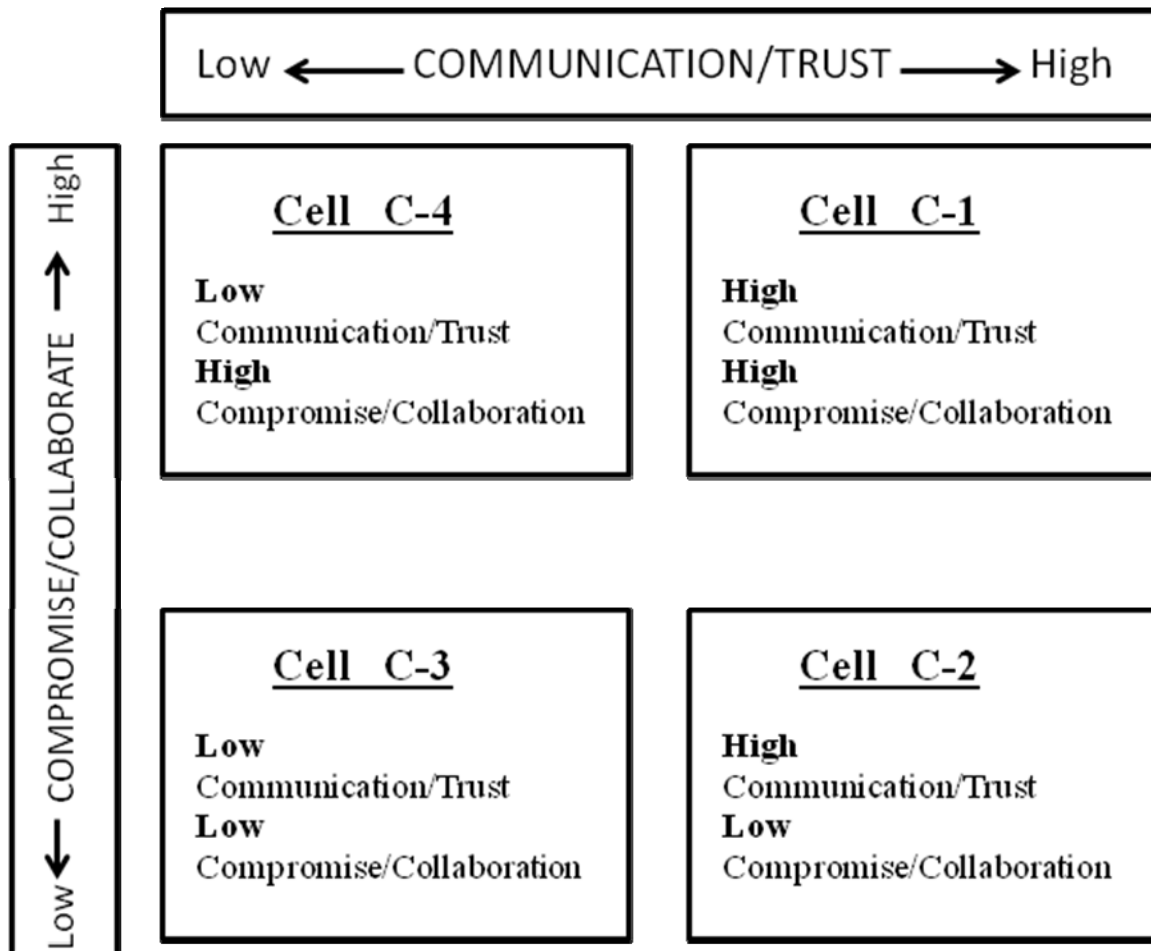
Figure 4. Communication/Trust and Compromise/Collaborate Matrix,
From Choi and Jacobson

These researchers argue that high levels of all of these ingredients (C-1) would aid in accomplishing whatever goals a group has set for itself; willing to consider opposing views and arrive at an amiable decision. On the other end of the spectrum (C-3) all of these attributes are found to be deficient, almost ensuring an effort doomed to failure. Most group efforts probably find themselves in one of the other two quadrants, where deficiencies might lie in one form or another.

In closing, inclusion, engagement, trust and the ability to communicate in an equitable and effective manner are vital to any local-level emergency preparedness group.

4.   Action

The value of strategic planning and its associated efforts have already been addressed; yet, they will not be realized without action being taken upon them. This section briefly addresses the importance of providing fundamental skills and instruction to participants, as well as the value of producing viable and positive outcomes in the wake of such training.

a.   *Training and Education*

The starting point, according to Armistead and Pettigrew, is to train and educate individuals on how to properly function within a community group setting. To many, such an environment is foreign, so there must be a shared understanding of what is expected of each participant and their role within this type of setting. Gerencser et al. (2008) feel that a fundamental reason for conducting group meetings is to instruct the various participants and then to allow them the opportunity to exhibit graduated levels of competency. Fundamental education and training must be delivered, those skills needed to carry out the group's chosen initiatives. Many of the members of a community-level group are in the best position to provide this training, lending their expertise as well as serving as liaisons to host speakers on topics of local and national interest. The Bureau of Justice Assistance (2005) feels this type of working relationship can be taken advantage by the public and private sectors alike. Here, strategic planning can also prove to be beneficial. According to Canton (2007), a number of communities approach this in a fragmented fashion rather that considering it in relation to the group's overall strategy. If training is tailored to the goals that have been mutually agreed upon, buy-in will be much more easily achieved. Drabczyk (2005) feels that the skills needed to plan for and respond to emergencies holds value for responders and citizens alike. Not only is the entire partnership better prepared in the wake of a critical incident, there are a number of other reciprocal benefits received because of these preparatory measures. Perry (2004) notes that confidence levels of all members are heightened, which in turn produces a number of other social and psychological advantages.

b. *Results*

"The best way to build support for the partnership is to deliver tangible results quickly." (Business Executives for National Security, 2006, p. 11) A number of sources utilized during this review came to this same conclusion, recognizing the importance of tangible outcomes and its impact upon long-term sustainability. The National Academy of Public Administration stated that achieving results was the core of a performance-based partnership, distinguishing it from other forms of associations. Gerencser et al. (2008) make the same observation, where they state that megacommunities don't exist to merely consider and review problems, but are there to take action that produces productive and perceptible changes. Results serve as a barometer for one's success, or lack thereof, and can allow the group to either sustain their current efforts or decide upon a different course of action. Lastly, achieving results can have a tremendous impact upon the membership of the group as a whole, as existing participants are inclined to remain involved and potential members are more inclined to join such a progressive community effort.

In this section, a brief summary has been provided concerning components that previous researchers have determined as integral to any successful collaborative effort. Attention is now directed towards those factors that have been labeled as barriers concerning these same types of group initiatives.

E.   BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

Just as there are components needed for local preparedness success, the literature review produced a number of barriers that encumber groups from realizing their overall goals. Although not as plentiful, a summary of these types of obstacles is provided in Appendix B. A cursory glance produces items such as multiple or particular goals not related to overall mission, lack of communication, tension between alliance partners, and leaders not supporting collaborative efforts. Barriers such as these appear to support the opinion of Proctor and Trafford (2006), where they state that the main impediments to the development and long-term success of these kinds of relationships are not so much technological ones as cultural ones. Bringing together such a diverse blend of participants

presents both tremendous opportunities and challenges. As stated before, it takes a meta-leader to accomplish this feat. This presents its own barrier, as it requires an enormous amount of time and effort to assume and carry out this role. Unfortunately, most are not willing to do so, and those that do tire of the rigor required. Suffice it to say, an absence or insufficiency of any of the other components of success discussed earlier (strategic planning, interpersonal dynamics, and action) would also equate to impediments to success. There are many others, however, the remainder of this section will focus upon the following: dissimilarity, lack of engagement, and insufficient resources.

1.   Dissimilarity

According to the report *Public-Private Partnerships for Emergency Preparedness* (DHS, 2006),[7] a lack of understanding and trust between various agencies, disciplines, and individuals can prevent or inhibit the establishment of effective partnerships. Traditionally, public safety agencies often underestimate the private sector's interest and involvement, while private sector groups can overestimate the capabilities of their public sector partners. Such misconceptions can lead to a failure to recognize the value of not only their partner's contributions, but even more importantly, their very own. According to researchers Hocevar, Jansen and Thomas (2006), factors such as competition for resources and territoriality were also determined to be barriers to collaboration. In their report, *Building Collaborative Capacity: An Innovative Strategy for Homeland Security Preparedness,* these researchers determined that the issue of competition was not as evident in a crisis situation. However, in regards to the planning phase, they went on to state that "Bureaucratic processes and historical relationships embedded in competition over resources, decision authority, power, and visibility prevail and create inhibitions to cooperation" (p. 267). Denize and Young (2007) determined that competing interests between governmentally imposed goals and various performance metrics of the group as a whole oftentimes produced challenges. Dake and Kaufman (2009) determined that

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[7] This report comes from a series of "Best Practices" concerning public-private partnerships found within DHS's *Lessons Learned Information Sharing* program. It can be accessed at www.llis.gov.

confronting and overcoming issues related to sectoral boundaries can certainly be uncomfortable to deal with. However, they must be successfully dealt with in order to create an atmosphere of openness and acceptance.

2.   Lack of Engagement

At the close of the "Seminar on Multi-Jurisdictional Networked Alliances," it was concluded that emergency preparedness requires that all participants acknowledge they alone do not have all of the answers; therefore, must all be part of the solution. Unfortunately, this can lead to yet another barrier, how to engage all members in an appropriate and productive manner. In the study performed by Armistead and Pettigrew (2004), they determined that engaging the private sector in predominantly public and voluntary-sector activities proved to be problematic. This is noteworthy, as the private sector has traditionally not been seen as an active partner in emergency preparedness activities. Dake and Kaufman (2009) also felt that integrating private and civic society members was a challenge to the successful creation of Multi-Organizational and Networked Alliances. They also found that private sector participants questioned how they could incorporate their ideas and efforts into such a broad, oftentimes, unfamiliar community effort. To address these types of issues, communication was determined to be a critical factor. In essence, the public sector, or any participant that may not be giving or receiving in a "win-win" manner, must be clearly informed as to why their involvement is not only necessary, but how they can contribute in their own unique way. Gerencser et al. (2008) assert that in every community, there is an abundance of capital and commodities that can prove beneficial to any community preparedness effort. According to these individuals, examples would include strategic intellect, areas of expertise, effectiveness of operations, connections, and leadership. Yet, the true impact of these components will not be felt until the group conducts planning sessions, training activities, and similar activities. Again, these are opportunities to engage the involvement of all participants and sustain collective action.

3. Insufficient Resources

Weber (2006) states that having available resources to alleviate or adequately respond to a disaster is paramount; a view that would also apply to the planning phase. It is a rarity to find any entity that is resource rich, and a community-level emergency preparedness group is no different. Resources come in many forms and are needed for a variety of purposes. Examples would include facilities to host group meetings, funding needed to conduct educational classes, as well as equipment used to conduct training exercises. Resources are the lifeblood of any such effort, and none will affect its success or failure more than the participants that make up its membership. Bryson agrees, and states that the resource most needed to carry out strategic planning efforts is not money, but the attention and commitment of key decision makers. This would equally apply to all aspects of the group initiative, because without committed individuals attending, leading, and contributing, nothing of importance would ever be realized. There may be a number of reasons for this lack of involvement, ranging from arrogance to apathy. Yet, for many that possess the interest and initiative to be an active participant in community group efforts, there is still a lack of another precious commodity; time. The Association of Bay Area Government's (ABAG) Preparedness Task Force (2007), a local effort whose goal is to engage ABAG members in disaster preparedness, acknowledges this fact. This group has found that being prepared requires having expendable time and money to devote to preparedness efforts, a luxury most citizens and small nonprofit organizations simply do not have.

F. CONCLUSION

The resources identified universally agreed that a community's way of life can be disrupted in a number of ways, and a review of pertinent information indicated a great need for our nation's communities to be able to meet such challenges and maintain a sense of normalcy. In order to do so, there was broad-based consensus that efforts must be made to bring together the resources and expertise of those at the local level. These included government, the business community, as well as non-governmental organizations.

While there was agreement concerning this particular issue, there were a number of different opinions as to how to accomplish it. Some, such as Clark, Cordes and Roberts (2006) view the public-private partnership as a key component of our nation's homeland security efforts. While Gerencser et al. (2008) see most traditional partnerships as being too limiting, neglecting the needs of the civil society. Still other researchers would prefer to accomplish community preparedness through networks, alliances, or a host of other frameworks. There were also a number of similarities and differences noted concerning the various components and barriers of community based preparedness efforts.

In summary, a great deal of information collected centered upon how groups should be formulated, structured, and governed. A deficiency in this literature review was the limited number of real-world examples concerning local community, homeland security efforts. As was noted earlier, the reason could be that high-performance partnerships are relatively rare because they are difficult to create and even harder to sustain.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative data describe. They take us, as readers, into the time and place of the observation so that we know what it was like to be there. They capture and communicate someone else's experience of the world in his or her own word. Qualitative data tell a story.[8]

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the method used to discover how different community partnerships engage in emergency preparedness efforts in their own jurisdiction. Considering the vast array of local emergency planning efforts that exist today, this research sought to collect information from a variety of different groups and individuals. The central component of this data collecting activity was personal interviews, time devoted to capturing the points of views and motivations of those participating in these preparedness activities.

B. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

In essence, qualitative research is about exploring issues, understanding facts, experiences and occurrences, and then answering applicable questions. While there are many programs and efforts directed towards its pursuit, qualitative research also occurs on a daily basis, in the average workplace, classroom or community. A concerted effort was made to review the prior work of others as it relates to this particular research methodology, its components, and how they can be applied to the study at hand.

1. Nature of Qualitative Inquiry

There are a number of reasons why well-collected qualitative data is important. Huberman and Miles (1994) feel that one major feature is that "it focuses upon naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings; so that we have a strong handle on what 'real life' is like." (p. 10) Qualitative research is used to gain insight into various aspects of people's lives. These include their attitudes, behaviors, value systems, concerns,

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[8] From Michael Quinn Patton's "Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods" (3rd edition) p. 47.

motivations, aspirations, culture or lifestyles. This information is used to inform and may affect business decisions, policy formation, communication and research. Acquiring, analyzing, and producing information in an understandable and usable format is a task that requires much from the researcher. A brief description of the components making up this type of research methodology, as well as those chosen for this study, will now be offered.

2.   Data Collection Strategy

According to Patton (2002), fieldwork is the fundamental activity of qualitative inquiry. It requires the researcher to spend time in the particular setting under investigation, such as the community emergency planning groups under review in this thesis. Although there are various kinds of qualitative data, it is generally acquired by conducting interviews, making observations or reviewing documents. Generating useful and credible qualitative findings through these various methods requires a number of skills on behalf of the researcher. They include familiarity with the topic at hand, hard work, focus, and content examination.

3.   Data Analysis and Interpretation

The challenge of qualitative analysis lies in making sense of substantial amounts of information acquired during the collection phase. Transforming this data into findings that are understandable, adaptable, and applicable to real-world settings can be a daunting task. The researcher must consider the information at hand, the surroundings and dynamics surrounding it, and consider it in relation to his or her own perspective and understandings. This can be problematic, because each qualitative study is unique, therefore, the analytical approach used will also be unique. Patton (2002) provides the following warning:

> Because qualitative inquiry depends at every stage on the skills, training, insights, and capabilities of the inquirer, qualitative analysis ultimately depends on the analytical intellect and style of the analyst. The human factor is the great strength and the fundamental weakness of qualitative inquiry and analysis-a scientific two-edged sword (p. 433).

Qualitative analysis is not an exact science and there is no magic formula that exists concerning this stage. There is however guidance as to how it should take place.

a. *Close Reading of Data*

This first step is a seemingly simple one, yet extremely important. It necessitates the careful reading and comprehension of the information collected. Whether the researcher is reviewing documents, transcribed interviews or notes taken while observing the actions of others, they must be reviewed in an efficient and logical manner. For those conducting interviews, Patton suggests that the researcher transcribe their own field notes or recordings, as this provides another opportunity immerse themselves in the data before transitioning into full analysis.

Perhaps one of the most recognized methods of examining qualitative data is known as thematic analysis. For the researcher, Boyatzis (1998) feels that this type of analysis utilizes qualitative information in a way that facilitates interaction with like-minded researchers or scholars. Thematic analysis is not accomplished in a single step, but rather, is a systematic approach incorporating a number of individual actions. It is meant to capture important categories and reveal patterns in relation to the overall research questions. Countless sources are available offering guidance concerning this topic. Thomas (n.d.) offers a simple, concise approach incorporating the following steps.

b. *Identifying Initial Codes*

Patton states that developing some manageable categorization or coding design is the initial step of data examination. Huberman and Miles (1994) would agree that coding is the basis of analysis, and explain that codes are simply marks or labels placed upon certain segments of data. One of the most utilized is the editing style, where observations are made while systematically reading the text and then organizing it into various categories. The "editor" searches for meaningful segments that can both stand on their own and that relate to the overall aims of the study. This process can be accomplished manually or with the help of specialized software. On this point, Crabtree and Miller (1999) state that the intent of using a software program is to simply get the text into the program, use this technology to better organize it, and then to proceed to

making various links within the data that will address the research questions and aid in its understanding. Patton warns that although computer-assisted software programs can facilitate data storage, coding, and comparing, it is the researcher that actually conducts the analysis.

c.   Development of Themes and Patterns

Boyatzis (1998) asserts that the next step in thematic analysis is to recognize patterns and themes in seemingly haphazard information. A pattern generally refers to a descriptive finding in the text, such as, "Almost all interviewees reported feeling uneasy when asked to be a part of the community group." Conversely, a theme takes a more categorical or topical form, such as "Apprehension." The researcher distinguishes these terms; in that they are to be viewed as a way to categorize the various codes identified in the previous section.

Various methods have been adopted by different researchers in performing this task. One example deals with recurrence, where multiple parts of the transcripts reflect the same general idea or meaning, even though different words may be used. Similarly, any time there are repeated use of key words or phrases related to the research questions, that could constitute a theme. Yet another illustration is the strength in which an interviewee answers questions or the passion exhibited towards certain issues might also constituted certain themes. This would not only be apparent during the actual interview, but could also present itself within the transcribed data.

d.   Mapping

Known as a thematic, mind, or concept map, it is a diagram used to represent how words, ideas, or other items are linked to one another or arranged around central ideas or topics. These maps are used to generate, visualize, structure, and classify ideas and can serve as an aid in organizational problem solving and decision-making. Figure 5 offers a more traditional example, one depicting hierarchical relationships and linking words. Figure 6 is considered more free form, demonstrating relationships in an overlapping fashion.
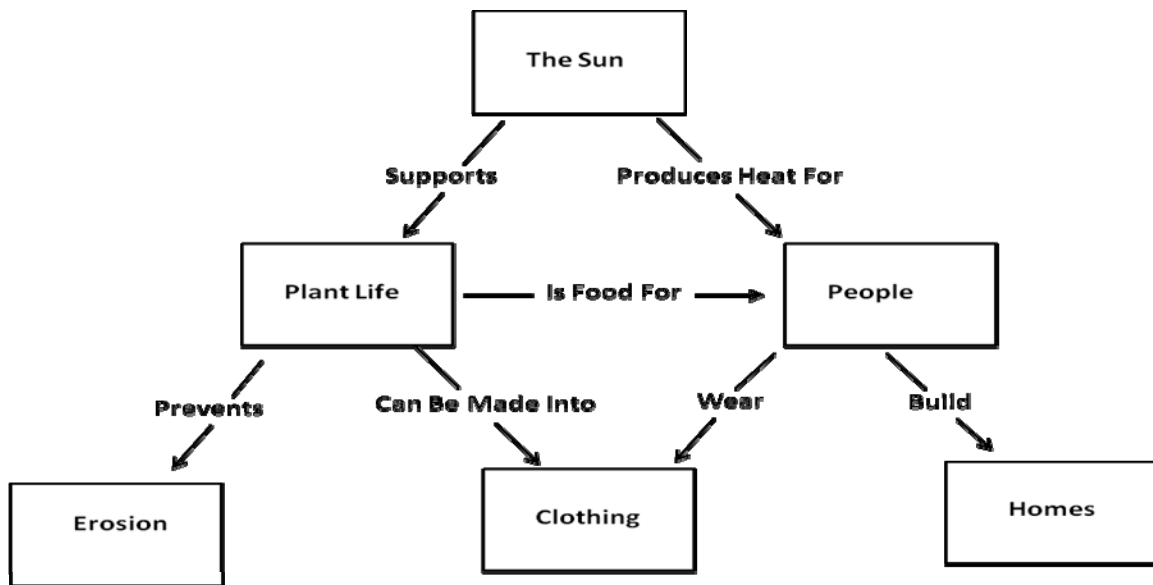
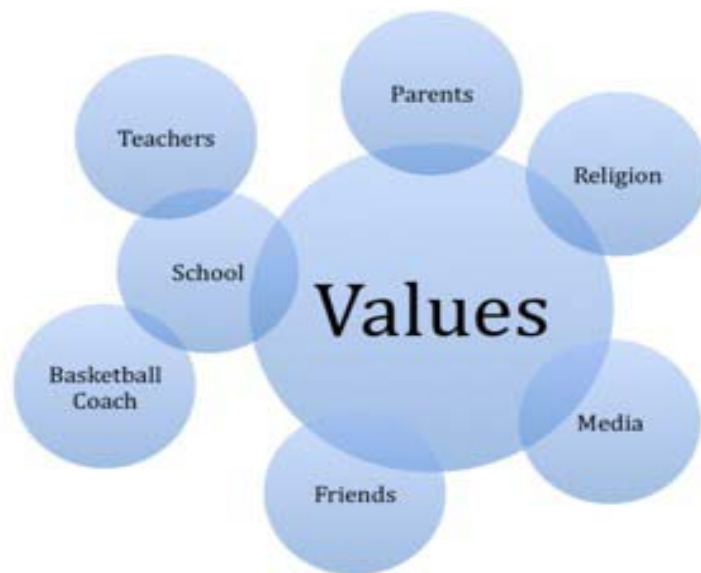Figure 5.   Simple Concept Map, From Faubert and Wheeldon.

Figure 6.   Free-Form Concept Map, From Faubert and Wheeldon.

e.   *Writing Up the Analysis*

Here, a balance must be established between simply describing the data collected and interpreting it. Where numerous individuals or cases are being examined, Patton states that the researcher must be able to synthesize the data, identify and extrapolate lessons learned, and convey it in a logical manner. The goal is to produce an interesting and understandable report that provides adequate evidence to the reader concerning how the individual themes fit into the overall scheme of the study and how they relate to the research questions asked.

f.   *Data Reporting*

Crabtree and Miller (1999) label this final phase as "representing the account" and consist of sharing the results, understandings and impact of the overall research effort. Discretion and judgment come into play, as not every bit of data will make its way into the final report. This process, one that Lofland (1971) called the "agony of omitting," is deciding what to leave in and what to delete. One factor that will influence this decision is the audience in which the findings are intended for. Huberman and Miles (1994) maintains, "Reports are supposed to be written for specific audiences, to achieve specific results" (p. 299). Therefore, the types of readers must be determined; whether they include the respondents who provided the data, practitioners involved in the same field being studied, or colleagues of the researcher. With all of these factors in mind, the researcher must decide how much explanation to include in their findings, a skill that Patton (2002) describes as a balance between description and interpretation. Lastly, he advises that the report should take on the form of a readable and succinct executive summary.

C.   CONCLUSION

Qualitative data possesses inherent strengths that serve the aim of this particular research project well. Vivid accounts offered in a real-world context present a reality that can have a strong impact on the reader, as well as a lasting impression on this particular body of research. Qualitative research can be conducted in numerous ways, including

experiments, histories, and surveys. Yet, according to Yin (1994), the case study is the preferred method when the investigator has little control over events and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context (p. 1). For these and other reasons, case study research was utilized for this project. Cases are to be seen as individual units of analysis, and the case study approach provides a way of gathering comprehensive information about each unit of interest.

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IV.   CASE STUDIES

The distinctive need for case studies arises out of a desire to understand complex social phenomena. In brief, the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events.[9]

A.   INTRODUCTION

A fundamental principle of the strategy guiding this research project is to select cases that are rich in information. Such occurrences provide an opportunity to acquire applicable information and are worthy of a comprehensive inquiry. The case study, as it relates to qualitative analysis, represents a particular way of collecting, organizing, and analyzing data. The overall intent is to gather complete, orderly and all-inclusive information about each case of interest.

Five cases were focused upon during this research project, each one involved in emergency preparedness efforts at the community level. Even though they share this common goal, each one is unique in their own way. Length of tenure, reasons for formulation, and the various ways in which they carry out their missions distinguish them from the others. Collectively, they offer insight as to how this all-important effort is being carried out across our nation.

B.   GROUP SELECTION

In determining what groups would serve as case studies, a statement discovered during the literature review became quite prophetic: "Despite their proven successes, high-performance partnerships are relatively rare. Why? They are difficult to create and even harder to sustain" (National Academy of Public Administration, 2003, p. 3). The problem is not in finding emergency planning efforts that have proven to be successful, because they certainly do exist. "Chicago First" and "Business Executives for National Security" (BENS) are two shining examples of what can be accomplished when partners channel their resources and efforts towards a common goal. Chicago First is a non-profit

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[9] From Robert K. Yin's "Case Study Research, Design and Methods." (2nd Edition) p. 3.

association of private firms in the Chicago area that collaborates with one another and with all levels of government to promote the resiliency of its members and the Chicago business community at large. BENS is a nationwide organization that serves as the primary conduit in which senior business executives can help improve our nation's security. Although this researcher reached out and gained a great deal from representatives from these organizations, they did not meet the criteria in which this project's case studies would be determined. That is because the overall focus of this endeavor is centered upon the local community and those that are charged at the grass-roots level with planning for, responding to, and recovering from a disaster. The groups selected would be representative of any region across our country; absent of any continuous funding stream and deficient in the number of Fortune 500 companies found among their participants. That is not to say that larger corporations should not be participants in these local emergency planning efforts, because if they are part of the community, they certainly should. The point is; the average town, city, or district across our country is expected to prepare as best they can with limited resources. Therefore, these groups were chosen with this in mind.

Another measure utilized in selecting these groups was that they were all considered successful. The dilemma, is defining success, as the term is very subjective. Kay (2009) dealt with this same issue as it relates to collaborative efforts within and among different preparedness groups. He put forth the following; "Success as defined in this project includes sustainability, replication, and adaptability of the case studies presented" (p. 40). In other words, these groups continue to exist beyond their initial formulation stage and advance towards new goals. In addition, they continually evolve and reinvent themselves in order to meet new challenges. Therefore, this same definition was applied to those groups under consideration.

Lastly, it was imperative that each group's membership adequately represent the different disciplines and interests of the community in which they exist. Therefore, each group included representatives from local government, emergency responders, the business community, and non-governmental organizations. Through personal contacts,

networking, and searching on the Internet, a number of local-level emergency planning groups were identified that appeared to meet this criteria.

An e-mail was then sent out to those identified "points of contact" for each group under consideration. This message provided a summary concerning the research being conducted and that the accumulated data would be used in a thesis at the Naval Postgraduate School. It was explained that as part of this project, interviews would be conducted with certain individuals within their group. Once a response was received, further information and clarification was performed until the groups that would serve as the case studies for this research was decided upon. A brief description of each case is now provided.

1.   Case "A"

Case Study "A" focuses upon a homeland security group that was formulated shortly after the events of 9/11. Located in the Mid-Atlantic region, it was initiated by a representative from a multi-state transit authority. This person in turn contacted the fire chief and county emergency manager to discuss their local state of preparedness. Feeling they were capable of handling most local incidents, they questioned their ability to conduct an incident requiring the aid of agencies on a broader scale. What resources were available, who were the contacts, and how they would mobilize them were just some of the questions they sought answers to. The result was the desire to network with as many agencies as possible, identify resources, and develop memorandums of understanding and mutual aid agreements. This association's ongoing goals and objectives have changed very little since its inception. As one member states, "Our mission is to simply build as many relationships as possible with any agency that can bring something positive to the table during a disaster." What started as five or six people getting together to discuss their capabilities has grown to a group of almost 60 different organizations. This group incorporates all of the expected emergency response agencies and other organizations expected at the scene of a community emergency. Other regular participants include members of industry, health care facilities, transportation (airports, highways and

waterways), educational programs (from preschool through higher education), faith-based organizations, the National Guard, as well as representatives from city and county government.

This group does not have any formalized structure; there are no policies, officers, or committees. They meet on a certain day of the month and limit their meetings to one hour. Their agenda is very flexible, where they share information, ask questions, try to get answers and just generally network. Everyone who attends is an equal partner and is there by virtue of their job. Their motto is "Leave your ego at the door." Concerning future efforts, they center upon increasing the number of members within their group, broadening the training opportunities available to them, and raising awareness throughout their area concerning emergency preparedness and the role each one can fill to carry out that initiative.

2. Case "B"

Located on the West Coast, this group was initially formed to assist in meeting the requirements of the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) program. The goal of the MMRS is to support the integration of emergency management, health, and medical systems into a coordinated response to mass casualty incidents caused by any hazard. Therefore, it would be expected that all participants in this group would be health care related. That was true at its inception in 2003, and to a degree, still represents those who make up its core membership. This would include health care facilities, clinics, and emergency medical service providers. However, since that time, it has broadened its association to include other emergency response agencies, local government officials, the business community, as well as other disciplines such as education and transportation. This group's mission statement reflects its acknowledgement that a broad-based membership is needed to attain it.

> The mission of (Case "B") is to bring local public, private, and nonprofit organizations together for the purpose of collaborative disaster medical health planning. Collaterally, grant-funding streams that include the Metropolitan Medical Response System, CDC (bioterrorism and pan flu),

Homeland Security, Regional Disaster Medical Health, and the Hospital Preparedness Program, are represented in this venue to promote efficiency through inter-disciplinary coordination.[10]

Since the MMRS is a funding program conducted by the Department of Homeland Security, grant management and resource allocation is a primary activity of this group. Add to that, broad-based emergency management education, training, and associated exercises are routinely conducted.

Case Study "B" has a director that performs the majority of planning and related administrative functions associated with this effort, but is assisted by numerous committees and working groups that have been formulated. They have produced various presentations, exercise documents, training bulletins, as well as other collaborative policy statements concerning their collective efforts. This group has developed an impressive Web site that offers such information as their mission statement, membership roster, calendar of upcoming events, training and educational information, as well as minutes from the monthly meetings. Concerning future goals, one concerns increasing participation from regional educational facilities and institutions. Realizing the vital role they can play in a large-scale disaster response and recovery effort, this has become a primary objective. Another deals with the structure of this planning group, as some members feel there is a need to formalize it with a charter. It is felt that such an action would aid in decision-making as well as more responsible oversight of any funds allocated to the group.

3. Case "C"

Looking to formulate a public-private partnership to enhance emergency preparedness efforts within their Southwest jurisdiction, an introductory planning and educational workshop was held in March of 2005. Representatives from Michigan State University (MSU) conducted this event in conjunction with their Critical Incident

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[10] Source of quotation withheld to ensure anonymity.

Protocol (CIP)[11] program. This is an endeavor designed to formulate public-private partnerships in cities across the nation for joint critical incident management utilizing an all hazards approach. During the months that followed, efforts were made to provide fundamental training to participants and instill their responsibility concerning this community-wide initiative. Approximately one year after formation, personnel from MSU returned to review the status of the group and to offer their assistance in furthering this cause. Specifically, attention was focused upon enhancing relationships between the various sectors and disciplines of the affected area. To that end, a training session entitled "Can Your Business Recover from a Catastrophic Event?" was conducted with members of local government and business development organizations. Since that time, a number of table-top exercises have been conducted to test the various training conducted thus far.

The local fire chief serves as chair of this partnership, while a representative from a local utilities company serves as co-chair. Future initiatives include producing a 12-point program focused upon continuity planning for the business community, increasing the quantity and quality of training offerings, as well as increasing and broadening their current membership.

4.   Case "D"

This group, also located in the Mid-Atlantic region, has been in existence for approximately one year. Its origin was a byproduct of another jurisdictional milestone, the formulation of this community's first-ever emergency operations plan (EOP). Upon completion of this document, it was realized that a number of different agencies and disciplines would be needed to carry out the EOP's stated goals and objectives. To assist in this effort, the local fire chief also contacted Michigan State University (MSU) concerning the CIP program described earlier. MSU personnel conducted an on-site workshop that provided many of the fundamental tools and information needed of such a collaborative effort. An application was made to DHS for funding that would enable this

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[11] Developed by MSU's Criminal Justice program, it is was funded by the Training & Exercise Integration/Training Operations, National Integration Center, National Preparedness Directorate, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the US Department of Homeland Security. The CIP Program's funding was not renewed and was terminated in the first quarter of 2010. However, they continue to provide many of the same services in conjunction with the Security Executive Council.

group to provide requisite training and education to its members. This request was approved, which also allowed this partnership to conduct exercises and drills, as well as the formulation of a partnership Web site.

A six-person working group, consisting of equal numbers of public and private sector representatives, provides guidance for this preparedness partnership. They have in turn assigned various positions, such as chair, co-chair, and secretary, as well as committees and task forces to address specific initiatives. To provide focus for future endeavors, this partnership utilized the expertise of a consultant to conduct a strategic planning workshop. A number of short-term objectives were formulated which will focus efforts of this group in a more concerted manner. These objectives include the following:

- Identify and design the organization's formal structure.

- Create a marketing plan to educate the region so that the need and purpose of this organization is understood.

- Develop a sustainable, working model that can be implemented by county teams throughout the region.

- Make monthly meetings more effective by enhancing their focus and structure.

- Increase participation of certain sectors and disciplines (e.g., business community and media).

- Develop visibility and credibility with political leaders who can support partnership's effort through resources and policy change.

Over its one-year existence, this partnership has accomplished a great deal, in both number of participants and in preparedness activities conducted. However, its leadership recognizes the need to continually evolve to meet the dynamics of its participants and area served and is doing so in a progressive manner.

5. Case "E"

Located in the UK, this Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) was formulated in 2002. This group is somewhat different from the other cases studied, in that it sets out to make community improvements on a much broader scale. These include, but not limited

to, crime reduction, community cohesion, arson reduction, drug and substance abuse, as well as enhancements in the areas of employment, education, and health. However, safety, disaster planning, and related efforts are all responsibilities of this partnership. Specifically, their Emergency Planning Unit is responsible for the production, maintenance and development of plans for an integrated response to any major emergency. This involves working closely with emergency services, other council departments, local authorities, voluntary agencies and industry to ensure that any response to a major incident is carefully managed to ensure a return to normalcy as quickly as possible. In accordance with *UK's Civil Contingencies Act of 2004*, local authorities are required to provide generic advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organizations in respect to business continuity management. To that end, a range of resources have been developed including this partnership's on-line advice and training package, which is free of charge to all local businesses.

Providing leadership and direction is the Partnership Secretariat, made up of a partnership manager, support officers, a communications officer, as well as secretarial and clerical staff personnel. As stated on this partnership's Web site, its overall objectives are:

- To set the overall strategic vision for their city and to secure partnership commitment and action to deliver the vision.

- To consult, develop, implement and review the required Sustainable Community Strategy and it accompanying document, the Local Area Agreement.

- To bring about the strategic alignment and integration of plans, partnerships and initiatives within their jurisdiction.

- Conduct a full review of partnership efforts every three years.

C. CONCLUSION

Although these cases cannot possibly speak for all local preparedness groups in existence, they do offer a thumbnail sketch as to the efforts being made in this area. The summaries provided offer a representative view concerning this all-important component of homeland security.

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V.   DATA ACQUISITION AND ANALYSIS

Qualitative data are sexy. They are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts….Good qualitative data are more likely to lead to serendipitous findings and to new integrations.[12]

A.   INTRODUCTION

This chapter gets to the core of this particular study, as it shifts into the realm of action research. This entails transitioning from simply studying the work of others to formulating a new body of research in a real-world setting. Within this chapter, the manner in which individuals were selected to be interviewed will be discussed, as well as how these meetings were conducted. This includes the setting, the type of questions asked, as well as the interview guide that was developed for this project. The remainder of this section is devoted to the data compiled from these discussions; specifically, how it was analyzed and the themes that were borne from it. Lastly, the research questions posed at the outset of this thesis will be answered.

B.   INDIVIDUAL SELECTION

Crabtree and Miller (1999) state that in order to gather information efficiently, gain access to information that might be otherwise unavailable to the researcher, as well as gaining an understanding of a particular culture or setting, the researcher should focus upon interviewing "key informants." As it relates to this study, such individuals would need to be thoroughly involved and active within the group being focused upon and represent it accurately to the researcher. A concerted effort was made to select interviewees that embodied many of the issues discovered while reviewing the literature of previous researchers. They not only reflected certain traits deemed essential in most

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[12] From Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman's "Qualitative Data Analysis" (2nd Edition) p. 1.

group efforts, but would also represent the various segments found in any small-town community. For each case study reviewed, individuals were sought from the following categories to serve as participants:

- *Leadership*-Most local emergency planning groups do not have any single individual, at least not in a formalized manner. However, there are those who assume a leadership role, as well as that of coordinator, facilitator, or other similar function.

- *Emergency response community*-Since this entire research project centers up emergency preparedness, it was necessary to have an individual representing the emergency response community sector included. Obvious choices would be those that represent the fire service, law enforcement, or emergency medical services. However, emergency responders could also include those from public works organizations, specially trained hazardous materials units, as well as other similar agencies.

- *Local government*-"Buy in" of public-private partnerships and other similar ventures is paramount, especially concerning the policy makers of the affected jurisdiction. Whether it is a mayor or a county commissioner, their support, or lack thereof can make or break any program. Therefore, it was vital that they be included in this study.

- *Business community*-Not only do business owners and operators play a key role in a community's critical infrastructure; they also represent a vast supply of resources and expertise. It was paramount that this segment be represented.

- *Non-governmental organizations*-Traditionally, this sector has been represented by agencies such as the American Red Cross and Salvation Army concerning disaster response. Yet, there are others, such as a local ministerial association, in which representation was solicited.

Beyond these general requirements, it was desired that interviewees also meet the following criteria:

- Have been a member of their group since its inception, or at least, for an extended period of time. This would allow them to relay issues concerning the group that a novice member could not.

- Participates in the functions of the group (meetings, training, community events, etc.). Active participation concerning numerous facets of the group will assist in receiving responses that are all encompassing and multi-dimensional.

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- Individual is well respected in community and considered a decision-maker within their own organization/agency. Such an individual will be more likely to offer honest feedback concerning the group, including both positives and negatives concerning it.

These issues were relayed to the identified point of contact of each selected group. This person then provided the names and contact information of those he/she felt met these guidelines. The following e-mail was sent to each individual whose name had been submitted:

> I am a student at the Center for Homeland Defense and Security at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA. A major portion of my course requirements is to complete a thesis related to homeland security. The topic I am researching deals with community-based emergency preparedness efforts across our nation. I plan to focus upon a small number of these groups and interview individual participants from within them. Your name was forwarded to me as being one who might assist me with this effort. If you agree to do so, you will be asked a small number of questions aimed at determining what components you feel are vital to a community-level emergency preparedness group's success, as well as those barriers that impede it. This interview will be audio recorded so that it can be transcribed and better utilized for this research project. The group's name, as well as your own, will be kept confidential. If you agree to participate, I will send you the applicable informed consent and audio consent documents. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you require additional information or have any questions.

Once a response was received stating their willingness to participate, the applicable Institutional Review Board documents, as well as a list of proposed questions, was sent to each one. Exact date, location, and time of interview was confirmed and agreed upon. The majority of the interviews were conducted in a face-to face manner. However, based upon logistics, scheduling and other factors, others were conducted via telephone or electronic mail. Each interview was scheduled to last no more than one hour and was conducted in a manner that provided the necessary privacy. Findings from all of the interviews were then transcribed and analyzed, a process fully explained in a subsequent section of this chapter.

C.   PROPOSED INTERVIEWS

In contemplating the manner in which to conduct the interviews, the standardized open-ended approach was chosen. The reasons for doing so came primarily from *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*, where Patton (2002) offers the following rationale for considering this particular option:

- The exact instrument used in the evaluation is available for inspection by those who will use the findings of the study.

- The interview is highly focused so that time is used efficiently.

- Analysis is facilitated by making responses easy to find and compare (p. 346).

Asking open-ended questions will allow participants to talk about their experiences, feelings, and opinions, and to relay first-hand knowledge concerning their own particular group. By posing appropriate inquiries and utilizing applicable probes and follow-up questions, the overall goal of answering the research questions should be accomplished.

An interview guide was developed to direct the conversation toward those topics and issues the interviewer desired. It aided the researcher in knowing what to ask, in what sequence, as well as how to pose follow-up questions and appropriate probes. The interview guide provided in Table 1 was prepared to ensure that the same lines of inquiry were followed with each interviewee.

Table 1.   Interview Guide.

Primary Question 1	**How did you become involved in your community's emergency preparedness group?**
Follow-Up; probes	*Were you a part of it at its inception? If so, offer background (for what reason, anyone else involved, etc.)*
	Were you invited by someone to become a part of this program? By whom?
	Did you happen to "stumble upon" this community effort?

	Other?
Primary Question 2	**What efforts have been made to engage you concerning the efforts of this group?**
Follow-Up; probes	*Individually and as a group.* *Methods of engagement (e-mail, phone calls, personal contact, etc.).* *Frequency of engagement?* *Have they been effective, successful?* *Do you in turn engage others? How?*
Primary Question 3	**Based upon your experience with this group thus far, what would you say are its strengths?**
Follow-Up; probes	*Literature review findings: (strategic planning, leadership, interpersonal dynamics, action, results, training and education, etc.).* *Provide examples and background information.* *Why would you consider these as essential factors?*
Primary Question 4	**Based upon your experience with this group thus far, what would you say are its weaknesses?**
Follow-Up; probes	*Lack of previously mentioned positive components?* *Literature review-barriers: (competition for resources, territoriality, lack of trust, lack of engagement, insufficient resources, etc.).* *Provide examples and background information.* *Why would you consider these as detriments?*
Primary Question 5	**Concerning this group, what examples can you provide where it has made a positive impact on your community?**

Follow-Up; probes	*Emergency incidents? Relationships? Community pride?*
	Do you feel that these incidents equate to a better-prepared community?
Primary Question 6	**Concerning this group, what examples can you provide where it has made a positive impact on your company/organization or you personally?**
Follow-Up; probes	*Real-world accounts of enhanced personal/organizational preparedness, response to emergency situations, increased knowledge, relationships, etc*
	How will these examples/incidents impact your overall community in a positive fashion?
Primary Question 7	**What are your recommendations for this group in the future?**
Follow-Up; probes	*Goals and objectives for future?*
	Changes you would suggest.
	Overall, would you consider this effort a success? Why or why not?
	How do you define success as it relates to this community effort?

D.   THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Once all interviews were completed, attention was directed towards identifying any underlying themes within the transcribed text. Three broad categories presented themselves: leadership, diversity and impact of program. Each of these will be discussed at length, supported by the views and opinions of the respondents.

1.   Leadership

The issue of leadership was a predominant theme that permeated throughout each of the interviews conducted. A number of sub-components presented themselves, starting with the issue of how certain individuals assumed leadership roles. Starting with those

affiliated with the UK. partnership, its members relayed the manner in which their group is organized. One such participant, who serves as the emergency planning officer for their partnership's resilience team, referenced the *Local Government Act 2000*. He stated that this document places a duty to prepare community strategies on principal local authorities, and encourages them to consult and seek the participation of community organizations and individuals to formulate them. However, he stressed that there was no definitive approach to the way in which local strategic partnerships should be structured and that it was up to each individual partnership to determine how to do so. The "Leaders and Advisors Group," he explained, is the decision making body and is made up of a chairperson who oversees the day-to-day activities, and is assisted by numerous advisors from throughout his community. It was his opinion that they did a good job in soliciting the opinion of others, and for the most part, made appropriate decisions when required. It is interesting to note that this group's chairperson is a fully paid position, as are a few members of her staff. Concerning this particular issue, there was only one other fully paid leadership position of the cases under review. Concerning this person, the individual filling this role recounts that he was hired to work in his county EMS department to manage a particular preparedness grant. Once his responsibilities grew to include issues related to the Metro Medical Response System program, he was expected to work with other agencies and provide required oversight concerning their purchasing and reporting actions.

> I took over the group, and it wasn't a hostile takeover. In my grant planning, I needed subgroups to work on material items that were needed; graphing, surge plans, code calls, developing inventories. The group was very good to respond to the request, as the grant administrator. So, I eventually took over the group because I had so much of them working for me in little subcommittees.

The remaining three groups are made up entirely of those who freely volunteer their time, including those who find themselves in leadership roles. When asked how and why this occurred, the reasons varied. One individual relayed that when he retired in 2006 from a local fire department, be became the director of their training academy. His community preparedness group met there on a monthly basis, and since he hosted these events, "I guess you could say I became a co-chair with another individual. I basically work out the

logistics of the meeting each month, and put the notifications and all that, but it's not a formal position, it's just something we share." This was a common theme, as another individual does so because of his interest in community preparedness and the fact he started the overall initiative. "I was the one who located the initial grant and found out the info from MSU[13] providing this course. I solicited the aid of one of our private partners and was able to bring the grant to our city." He stated that he serves as the chair of his group and that a local business owner assists him as co-chair. Likewise, another group got its start with the help of MSU and has implemented measures that provide structure for the group's operations. The local fire chief serves as its current chair, but shares decision-making responsibilities with a six-person working group. "We have three individuals who represent the private sector and three who represent the public sector. In addition to our monthly partnership meetings, this working group meets monthly as well." He feels that such an arrangement has proved to be extremely beneficial, as it not only distributes the workload, but aids in ensuring that the needs of the entire partnership are adequately addressed. It was stressed that the opinions of other members is solicited before any major decision is made and that the entire partnership is kept fully informed of such matters.

Discussions were then directed towards those traits that the interviewees felt an effective leader should possess and if they were present within their particular group. A president of a city/county chamber of commerce offered the following:

> It's their willingness to give their time, efforts, and energy to something. It's not in name only. You can say you're the chairperson and put it on your resume, but you have to get out there and do the work. You have to be someone who is motivated, is a doer, well connected within the community. I think those are the characteristics going for us that other groups may not have. They fail because people at the top are really not engaged in the activities. I think a hands-on form of leadership is essential to make things work. Working with a lot of volunteers is difficult. So you have to have a person who is a driver and is out there, making sure things happen.

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[13] Michigan State University's Critical Incident Protocol program.

Members stressed that their local fire chief was already well known and respected throughout their community; therefore, his role as group leader was well received and supported. She felt it opened doors that might have otherwise been closed, as far as soliciting participation from various organizations and individuals. Another response centered upon the emotional aspect of the leadership position. As a local government official, this individual stated she knows what it is like to deal with people on a variety of issues, some positive and some negative. She felt her group's leader is one that breeds enthusiasm for their collective community effort. "Whether it's the manner in which he leads a meeting or proposes a training opportunity," she stated, "his excitement and passion are infectious."A local business owner simply stated, "Everyone needs a cheerleader." He acknowledged that even though everyone's schedule is overloaded, such individuals provide the continual motivation and encouragement needed by such grassroots-level initiatives.

Questions were then posed to solicit opinions as to what abilities their leaders possess and the impact they have on their particular local preparedness efforts. Many responses dealt with relationships and the environment they operate within. As one local law enforcement observed, "The leadership does allow an open atmosphere, but at the same time, keeping everything in perspective and on track. It's quite difficult to do, but done extremely well within this group. I think everyone is given full and fair credit for their ideas and input and their opinions are given equal weight." He continued, "I think that we need to be well grounded, and I believe our leadership has done everything that they can to provide a solid foundation." When pressed as to how a group should build upon this foundation, there were a variety of opinions offered. One was that there must be others to help shoulder the load. "No single person can or should be expected to be all things to all people," offered the head of a non-governmental organization. "Although we have a designated leader, there are others who make up a working group who are there to assist him, who are each very serious about the responsibilities they had taken on." A private business owner goes a step further and sees their group's strengths as the community's leadership as a whole. "The folks that attend these meetings are usually the agency or department heads for the organizations involved. If we need to know

something about a particular agency, these people can provide that information. We don't have to ferret out the answers; we go straight to the source which saves us a lot of time and lot of frustration and cuts out a lot of bureaucracy." Another member agreed, "It has never seemed to be a problem where things go undone. Maybe that's because those who attend are the decision makers and go-getters in their own organizations. They're the leaders where they work and it just carries over here as well." The consensus seemed to be that incorporating a broad representation of community leadership assisted the group's appointed leader in carrying out the group's agenda and objectives.

Finally, input was solicited from the leaders themselves. One shared some of the efforts he makes to spread the word about his group's efforts. "I do my own outreach. I have a traveling show, a disaster planning group power point, and I speak at community events, leadership luncheons with business people, I go to all the health care people luncheons to get more people involved." However, he admitted that he cannot or should not do it all. "I'm not shy about putting out a request for assistance if I feel overwhelmed or need additional information about a topic." Another sees the need to prepare for the future. "I think the group needs to formalize with a charter. So far, we simply take a vote to obtain consensus. If you are not there to vote then you don't contribute. I think we need a charter; we need a voting membership and share the leadership. I actually look at it as evolution." A local fire chief summed it up this way, "The relationships you build are what are most important. This isn't my group; we should develop leadership and share it."

In conclusion, it was obvious from the time spent with these individuals that there is no single definition for leadership. However, there are certain traits that must exist in those assuming such roles and expect to be effective. Good communication skills, the ability to encourage and motivate others, a belief in a just cause and leading by example were but a few of the qualities needed to incorporate individual talents into a collective force.

2.   Diversity

When asked what the interviewees felt were the strengths of their groups, another prevalent theme presented itself. This concerned the diversity of the individuals and organizations taking part in these community efforts. A listing could be provided consolidating the replies given, but suffice it to say, a variety of public and private entities were mentioned. A representative response comes from a county commissioner who admitted, "It would be hard to name every single agency." He did however state that his group includes emergency responders, governmental officials, the board of education, health care, the transit authority, and public works. In addition, their local university, utility companies, daycare centers, faith based, organizations, Salvation Army and Red Cross are all active as well. A local coordinator noted the benefits of such an eclectic mix by stating, "I think the diversity of the partnership is a strength. When I look around the room at our meetings, I have been able to meet and network with individuals that I would not otherwise be able to do. The diversity, the seriousness in which they approach this effort and the fact that they see a need in our community are all strengths." Another local politician views the variety of people involved from all walks of life as a tremendous asset. "I've been at training sessions where there was everybody from a guy who owns a taxi cab company to people from our local hospital. We found out that the taxis communicate on a system that's totally separate from others, such as 911 and police towers. We discovered that his system could be used as a back-up to our city's main method of emergency communication." A similar account was given by this local business owner, "It's not a closed-in program. I think one of the things is having…like the school board. Who would think of having the school board at a homeland security meeting? People that deal with animals and shelters for pets. Who would have thought? But we know that that's a part of the overall homeland security picture. So I think that is probably a strength; making sure they have all of the different facets of the community involved. Others focused upon what each one brings to the group as well, such as this county emergency medical director. "The strength of our group is the people that attend our meetings are the people that have their boots to the pavement. So when I talk about putting up search tents or implanting a mass fatality plan, I'm getting really good input."

Along this same line, a leader of a community citizen group remarked, "The people that are there are experts in their field; from hospitals to emergency services to police. There are also a lot of laymen that have their own ideas and suggestions, some that you would never have thought of."

Taking it a step further, the respondents were asked how such a diverse group of individuals can come together and work in such a positive manner. One lady simply stated it is due to the fact that there does not seem to be any hidden agendas or disagreements among the members as far as the direction the group should be going. "It's very cooperative and nobody is trying to take over the group for their own purposes. They know it's something we need to do for the entire county." This was a common theme echoed by many, as evidenced by the comments offered by this nurse, "I think the fact that the group's participants are respectful of one another and willing to share their best practices. I guess you would say it's 'real world' solutions to real problems. There's no competition concerning disaster preparedness, simply pooling together the best of what everyone has to offer." A local health care director values the collaboration and the teamwork of her emergency planning group. "No one looks down on any other's ideas or input. There is just tremendous respect shown one for another." Again, from a municipal fire chief, "Being able to work together and know who you're working with has opened up the lines of communications and cooperation to where you're not defensive when someone tells you that you could have done something this way. Now it's taken as constructive criticism and it's not resented, it's appreciated. So it's made for better emergency conditions in the area." This attitude of trust and respect was one that appeared to be present in most of these groups. A local emergency planning coordinator noted that it doesn't matter whether you're a politician, emergency responder or private citizen, your voice is equal. A fire service professional in his community saw this attitude of selflessness as a major strength. "Our community is one where it's a throwback to a simpler time where people really care about one another and will do anything they can to help one another out. Everyone is on a first name basis and will bend over backwards to help one another out." As one who serves as the leader of his local effort put forth, "I just try to reach out into the community. You would be surprised how many people want to

be involved. You have to engage them and make them feel a part of the group. A lot of times they feel they don't measure up to the standard of a first responder, but everyone has a very important part. It makes our community a lot safer and lot more efficient."

When asked what the weaknesses of their groups were, these interviewees highlighted many associated with this issue of diversity. Specifically, not getting representation and participation from certain sectors or disciplines. One member views this as a responsibility for everyone affiliated with the group, "The goal is to have as many different viewpoints and perspectives as can be. Initially, it may take a select group to reach out and get things started. But once that's done, it's imperative that every member be there and to encourage others to become involved as well. It comes down to 'what's in it for me' even though it shouldn't be, it's a true statement." So who is participating and who isn't? "For the most part, the emergency response community is by far the most represented segment," stated this fire chief. However, he felt this was understandable, since emergency preparedness and response is an issue they deal with on a daily basis. "They are more likely to embrace and support it." Conversely, there were a number of different responses that identified those that needed to become more involved. A local chamber of commerce official said, "The only weakness that I have seen is our inability to engage the business community. While I understand the reason why many aren't available to participate, I still think it's critical to the effort to get them educated and engaged where they need to be." On that note, a local merchant provided his views on how he and his associates might become more involved. "My time is very valuable and I cannot waste it on a meeting or event that doesn't apply to me or my company." Yet he added, "Having said that, if you could tell me what I can bring to the table and the role I can play, I would be more than willing to assist in any way that I can." Another sector whose participation was lacking in a certain jurisdiction was the local media. A government official stated the media were willing to provide coverage concerning partnership meetings or training events, but did not see themselves as active participants. Still another had a different position, "I don't think we have enough administrators and planners. I think it takes a mix; we've got the people that put their boots to the pavement that are actually doing the work. But there are a lot of times we actually need the planners

and administrators." To address these issues, one group leader put forth a number of a number of alternatives being implemented within his group. These include assigning representatives of government and business to various planning committees and task forces, tailoring educational opportunities towards these certain entities (e.g., business continuity/continuity of government training), focusing training exercises upon government and business properties, and taking advantage of local chambers of commerce and community civic groups to serve as liaisons between partnership and targeted groups.

3. Impact of Program

Questions were then directed to see what impact such a diverse membership had on their community at large, as well as the individuals involved within these particular groups. Many responses centered upon various programs that had been initiated or "success stories" directly attributed to their particular community efforts. A local fire service official in the UK. stated that they had recently launched what is called the "Personal Resilience Programme," which is to be delivered by local trainers. He describes this effort as a "one-half hour input on encouraging the community to be more able to look after themselves in the initial stages of an incident." Its impact will be being measured both before and after initiation of the program. Another official in the same Local Strategic Partnership stated that their community has seen progress made far beyond issues related to emergency preparedness. "We have seen a steady reduction in youth crime, arson, domestic violence, and burglaries, and I feel our partnership has played a key role in such progress." He went on to say that there has been marked improvement in working with third sector colleagues, such as charitable organizations and volunteer groups. Another interviewee, a nursing director at a local health care facility, stated that they have been able to put together a solid Strategic National Stockpile plan and location. She admits that they could not have done it as thoroughly or effectively without the assistance, participation, and expertise of her emergency planning group. One who heads a regional planning effort stated that some members have developed a hospital temporary medical shelter class, which will run in tandem with a decontamination class. These are offered like a traveling show, where they put them in a

trailer, go to various hospitals, and provide this training for them. Another member of a local fire service organization stated that his group's claim to fame was to prepare the way for a community-wide "disaster day" exercise. "It was a big earthquake exercise. It started out where the city fire department didn't want to break out the rescue equipment and do the same old thing. What would we do with a surge event? So we had 38 organizations in a full scale exercise. Together we planned and pulled it off." Similar accounts were offered to detail the progress being made in various planning, response, and recovery efforts. A participant in this exercise noted that because of the collaboration between the different agencies, it would have been difficult to get everybody together, and they would not have understood some of the issues that needed to be addressed. Nevertheless, by being able to do such community-wide exercises, it brought people together in a much more effective and comprehensive manner. A local nurse has witnessed where such events have had a positive, domino effect. "I think once the different partners became engaged and understood the direction the group was going, and as the individual partners took on a role for emergency preparedness, they would then make sure their organization or lead person had a interest in it. They kept their supervisors informed and then made sure they followed through on whatever activities the group was planning. Like if we were doing county wide drills, that participant would bring that back to their agency, build up interest and engage it." One woman, who serves as her organization's liaison in planning group activities, says, "It's brought the reality to me and my CEO concerning what we need to do to be adequately prepared for a disaster."

Yet, many responses dealt with impacts that were not so tangible, such as this remark from a local county sheriff. "I think it's (our partnership) greatest strength is that those who are on board are involved to better their community. That's the great thing about volunteers, because it's hard to suppress that feeling of doing something good." Concerning this same law enforcement official, a local member of the chamber of commerce remarked, "I could hear the sheriff talking to someone in another county discussing their needs and resources they could share. That is so important to build those relationships. I think the generosity of our hosts in providing a meeting place; no

questions asked, is also essential. The program has been well received from the community's side. People realize this is an important effort. The more we can educate people, the greater support we will receive from the community." This sense of sharing and generosity was a theme reiterated by a number of interviewees, such as this remark put forth by as local business owner. "The networking is a huge piece of it. Everyone is great about sharing, even though we could be considered competitors, it doesn't come out that way. You can put a face with a name and it's easier to ask for a favor if you need a class or some sort of training."

Oftentimes, simply making people aware of the situation at hand and the role they play within it is a tremendous achievement. "I feel that one of the most positive aspects for those that are involved in the partnership is simply seeing the need of preparing our community for disasters and other such events," stated one citizen's preparedness group coordinator. A local government official echoed this sentiment, but stressed that the actions being taken today will have long-term ramifications. "I have met a lot of people that I never knew before, but this group gave me the opportunity to realize all that this community has to offer. It's also gratifying to know that I have been involved since its inception and that we are involved in something that will have a positive impact on our area for the next 5, 10, or 20 years. I believe it has elevated community pride, where I want to make our city a better place to live. This is a major part of my role as council member, something I take very seriously." Sentiments like these focused attention upon the impact that such efforts were having upon various organizations and agencies. "One of the first things it did," recounted this head of a non-governmental organization, "was to make me look at our own organization and question how prepared we were for an emergency. Do we have a business continuity plan? Would it shut us down if we had something bad to happen to us? It made us stop and think about where we would operate if something happened to our building or records. We hadn't given it much thought before, but it makes you so much more aware of the potential dangers of a disaster and how you might react." Another member views the many benefits in relation to some events that occurred in her community, "Only by becoming involved did I see the value in the partnership. I think we need to do a better job of communicating the benefit of this

partnership to those who own a business or do not understand the value of it to the community. No one wants to think about a disaster or tragic event, such as the floods and snowstorms that we have experienced this year. But, I think we need to do more to get the word out concerning the need to prepare and how each one can make a positive difference." A nursing supervisor relayed how her planning group and its efforts affected her organization's working environment in a profound way, "It's brought the reality to me and my CEO what we need to do to be adequately prepared for a disaster. A lot of our staff are single moms, and they said if we knew we had child care provided, we could respond during an actual emergency. That got us to work on providing such a program. I am lucky in that I have a very supportive boss that allows me the time to be involved in this group." A firefighter stated that his involvement has elevated his department's presence throughout the community, "From a selfish point of view, our department has a much larger profile. We have led by example in a number of ways within this group that has allowed us to be seen in a very positive light within our community. People know that if they need something or have a question, they can call me and I will help them out." He went on to say that he can reach out for the same kind of assistance from others and receive it. His group has allowed him to work with those beyond his own agency. "I have been exposed to a much larger group of professionals which has in turn broadened my area of expertise as well." Benefits such as these, enjoyed on an individual basis, permeated throughout these interviews. "I realize that a year after 9/11, my personal plan had been forgotten. So this partnership has refocused my attention on the need to personally be prepared for an emergency." This community leader went on to talk about some objectives she has set because of her involvement in her local preparedness partnership. "One of my personal goals for the future is to touch base with the 29 agencies I work with to assist them and their organizations to be more aware of what I have been exposed to and make sure that they are as prepared as can be." Similarly, a local business operator found himself taking on more of a leadership role, solely because of his involvement in his planning group. "Personally, when the recent storms hit, I was much more aware of the potential impact it could have and the preparations I need to make personally. Where I live, we have a neighborhood group with scheduled meetings

and I am able to share much of the information that I have received from the partnership about being prepared." One of those who already occupy a leadership role in his community's effort states, "I simply want to be utilized in a way that takes advantage of my strengths. If you tell me that you would like to get this person or organization involved, I will go and touch base with them." However, there are often advantages that present themselves that go beyond those that might be expected. One such person relayed the fact that she had been dealing with some very difficult issues in her personal life. She was one who was quite active in her group's activities, and stated, "This effort has allowed me to stay busy and be involved in something that really matters and is worthwhile."

Although leadership, diversify and impact of program were the most predominant themes that came forth from this analysis, there were a number of sub-themes and patterns that presented themselves during this stage of research. Some were related solely to one of the three core issues, while others were interrelated with one another and common throughout. Figure 7 provides a map that represents how these concepts are linked to one another around the central ideas and topics.

E.   CONCLUSION

The information put forth in this chapter serves as but a snapshot of not only the five cases identified, but also similar efforts directed towards enhancing their community's emergency preparedness capabilities. Much of the data validated that which was discovered during the literature review, while other was found to be absent or irrelevant as they related to these particular groups. This summary section will utilize this information to offer responses to the research questions raised in the introductory chapter.

What factors contribute to successful community-level preparedness efforts?

As has been stated numerous times before, the role of leadership as it relates to a local-level effort cannot be stressed enough. Whether a single person or a core group of individuals provides such guidance, it is imperative that adequate direction, support, and motivation are offered on a continual basis. That does not mean that having such a person automatically equates to success, as there are many issues out of the leader's control.

However, it is this researcher's opinion that with strong leadership, such an effort has a chance of being successful, without it, the initiative will be lackluster at best. If those who are expected to embrace and carry out emergency preparedness, do not have such a positive example, a "champion" in which to follow, it is doomed to failure. If a community is fortunate enough to have such leaders, these men and women generally assume this role on a volunteer basis. They accept the many responsibilities that come with the position, which are above and beyond their "day" jobs. It is therefore imperative that they receive ample supplies of support and encouragement.
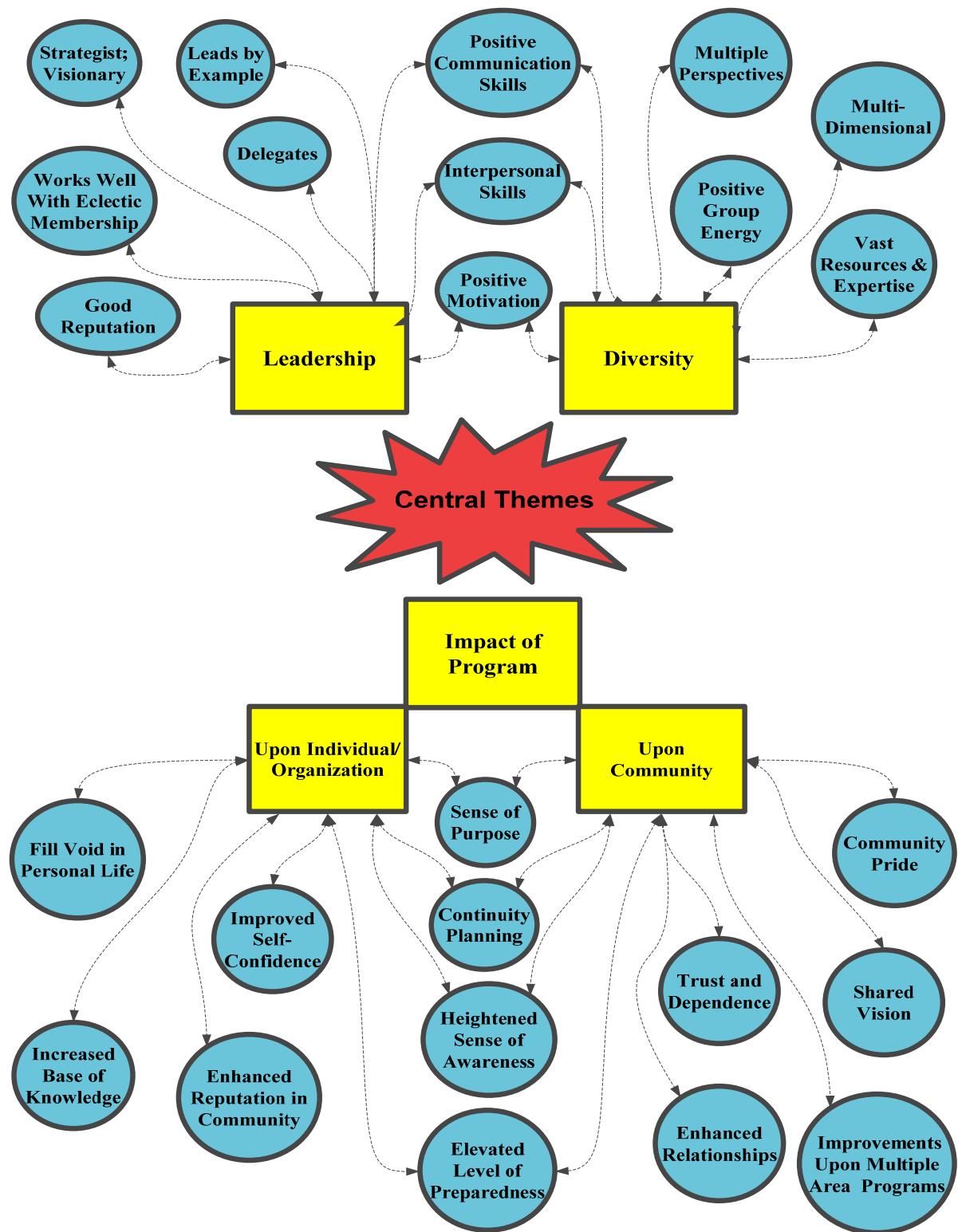
Strategist; Visionary

Leads by Example

Positive Communication Skills

Multiple Perspectives

Multi-Dimensional

Delegates

Interpersonal Skills

Works Well With Eclectic Membership

Positive Group Energy

Vast Resources & Expertise

Good Reputation

Positive Motivation

Leadership

Diversity

Central Themes

Impact of Program

Upon Individual/ Organization

Upon Community

Fill Void in Personal Life

Sense of Purpose

Community Pride

Improved Self-Confidence

Continuity Planning

Increased Base of Knowledge

Enhanced Reputation in Community

Heightened Sense of Awareness

Trust and Dependence

Shared Vision

Elevated Level of Preparedness

Enhanced Relationships

Improvements Upon Multiple Area Programs

Figure 7.   Interview-Based Concept Map

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Although an integral part of leadership, communications is a factor that is so important to overall success that it merits individual consideration. Communicating with one another takes on many different forms, and it can be accomplished in a variety of ways. Whether it is performed in a more traditional format such as a face-to-face conversation, telephone call or newsletter or by using more technological means such as a Web site, e-mail or blog, there are certain ingredients that are key to successful communication. First, communications must be *clear*. What a training session will cover, where a meeting will be held, and who can provide certain resources are but a few examples that require clarity. Oftentimes, if there is a misunderstanding concerning the contents or intent of a message or announcement, it can have a detrimental impact upon relationships and overall progress. Second, communications must be *concise*. For a great many people, life is more hectic and stressful than ever before. Because of this, time is of a premium, and anything that must be expressed should be done so in a brief and effective manner. A quick, "to the point" announcement or brief e-mail is oftentimes all that is needed to convey the intent of the message and generally very much appreciated. Third, communications must be *continual*. Change is a constant when dealing with these types of initiatives and as a community group grows and becomes established. As new members are added, goals are updated, and meetings are cancelled, frequent communication is a necessity. All require notification of the entire group in as expedient manner as possible. This should not be the sole responsibility of a single person; but rather, might be assigned to a "communications committee" or similar group. The bottom line is that if people are willing to give of their time to participate, they deserve up to date information.

Resources, of the proper kind and adequate quantity, are crucial to any local-level effort. Rare is the community that has an over-abundance of resources; in fact, most are found deficient. Such resources come in the form of people, finances, facilities, and equipment. Concerning the people involved; without exception, each case studied mentioned that they would like to enlarge its membership. Although this is important, it is imperative that the *right* people participate for the *right* reasons. Those who take part should include the decision-makers of the community or the organizations involved;

those that are well respected and bring to the table a level of expertise that benefits the overall effort. These individuals willingly participate because they foresee a greater good through the collaboration of many rather than the self-seeking actions of a select few. However, even with such a competent and dynamic membership, other resources are needed to support their effort. An adequate meeting place, refreshments for attendees, speakers and instructors for educational training sessions, and the equipment needed to carry out these activities are oftentimes overlooked or taken for granted. As was determined through the course of this research, fully funded preparedness groups that can provide these items are rare. Financial support might be located in corporate sponsorships or grant funding, and steps should be taken to secure funding streams that would ensure long-term sustainability. However, there will always be a dependence on the contributions and generosity of those who are intimately involved and must be acknowledged.

The last proposed factor that contributes to successful efforts is that steady progress must be made towards the accomplishment of the group's mission. Many community efforts of this type begin with a flurry of activities and excitement, but these can quickly wane once the "newness" wears off. It is imperative that decisions are made and steps taken that ensure steady growth and improvement. Progress can be seen in a number of ways, some quite evident. These would include items such as number of members in the group, training classes held, or emergency plans developed. Others might be harder to gauge, such as level of involvement, resiliency, and overall state of preparedness. Still, for those intimately involved, it should be quite apparent if advancements are being made. When they occur, no matter how trivial, they must be recognized and well publicized. Such actions will serve as the fuel that will propel the group to meeting its established goals and objectives.

What are the barriers that impede such initiatives?

It would be simple to say that many of the barriers discussed in this section are merely the converse of those factors cited concerning the first question. The absence of strong leadership, inadequate resources, weak communications, and lack of progress will

all prove to be hindrances for these types of initiatives. However, other issues will equally serve as obstacles and worthy of consideration.

One is simply a lack of awareness concerning the community effort itself. A properly planned marketing campaign must be conducted that will publicize the endeavor throughout the affected area. Not only that, but this operation must be directed towards the proper audience. It is imperative that group leaders go to where these individuals are, whether that is a county commission meeting, chamber of commerce function or school outing. To do so requires a great investment of time and effort, a barrier in and of itself. Nevertheless, if emergency preparedness is to be realized, a vital step is to get the word out about what the group's mission is, how it is to be accomplished, and who is needed to carry it out.

As important as it is to publicize and inform, involvement and participation must equate to a "win-win" proposition. In other words, there must be a reason for a mayor, business leader, fire chief, or school principal to give of their precious time and become involved in yet another activity. "What's in it for me?" is a question often posed but seldom satisfactorily answered. To the emergency responder, preparedness is second nature and an easy sell. This is not the case for those who are not familiar with or have not been involved in such efforts before. Time must be directed towards formulating a "business model" that allows members to profit from their participation. Neglecting to do so equates to a lack of involvement and essential support.

Although involvement from all sectors and disciplines is desired, this in and of itself can present significant challenges. It should be expected that there would be a lack of familiarity between the entities involved, their various missions and resources. Time spent networking and conversing with one another can educate participants and improve this situation. Still, differences in perspectives and agendas can oftentimes lead to competing interests and a lack of trust. There is certainly strength in numbers, but such group dynamics can also multiply difficulties. It is an issue that must be recognized and addressed accordingly.

A related issue that can prove troublesome concerns the organization of the group, or lack thereof. There are those partnerships that take on a very ordered approach concerning their activities; yet, some view them as being overly bureaucratic. Others operate in a much more casual atmosphere, leaving some thirsting for more structure. There is no single right way to formulate and conduct business in groups such as these. What is successful for one might prove detrimental to another. Through open discussion and interaction, a working environment must be developed that is both productive and inviting.

This brings this chapter to a close, one that has focused upon how data was acquired and analyzed. Attention is now directed towards the final chapter of this document, one that will offer some concluding remarks and recommendations concerning this all-important component of our country's homeland security efforts.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As you begin to take action toward the fulfillment of your goals and dreams, you must realize that not every action will be perfect. Not every action will produce the desired result. Not every action will work. Making mistakes, getting it almost right, and experimenting to see what happens are all part of the process of eventually getting it right.[14]

A. INTRODUCTION

This final section represents the culmination of a great deal of time and effort devoted to a crucial issue within our country's overall homeland security mission. Some brief concluding remarks will be offered followed by some recommendations that can be implemented. Secondly, recommendations will be presented concerning a program that can be implemented at the local level, one that will elevate the preparedness capabilities of the affected locale.

B. CONCLUSION

The collective opinions and evidences offered throughout this paper have been quite clear; the local community and all that it represents can have a tremendous impact upon our nation's levels of vigilance and resilience. Numerous government programs have been developed to address this issue and incorporate the participation of those at the local level. These have been embraced and implemented to various degrees, but measuring their level of success is proving to be problematic. This was noted in a General Accountability Office (2010) report that stated a number of these programs face challenges measuring performance because they are not positioned to control the delivery of its preparedness message and measure whether its message affects individual behavior. In addition, this report makes the following assessment:

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[14] Quote made by Jack Canfield and retrieved from the Web site, "Inspire the Planet." Retrieved June 1, 2010 from http://www.inspiretheplanet.com/authors/jack-canfield/.

While DHS's and FEMA's strategic plans have incorporated efforts to promote community preparedness, FEMA has not developed a strategy encompassing how Citizen Corps, its partner programs, and the Ready Campaign are to operate within the context of the National Preparedness System. (p. 16)

Although such a strategy may have yet to be developed, the capability and duty that resides within our country's neighborhoods cannot be dismissed. As was stated on page one of this document, "The responsibility for responding to incidents, both natural and manmade, begins at the local level-with individuals and public officials in the county, city or town affected by the incident." (DHS, p. 15) The ability to prepare for, take action upon, and recover from such local-level occurrences defines the foundation, or core, of what constitutes homeland security success. Thus, the Community Oriented Readiness Effort (CORE) is put forth as a means of attaining this sought after end result. The Strategy Canvas depicted in Figure 8 illustrates a number of advantages that this proposed program has over existing initiatives currently offered at the federal level. Although the government programs mentioned earlier provides valuable information and services, they do so at a distance and lack the needed customized and personal approach.
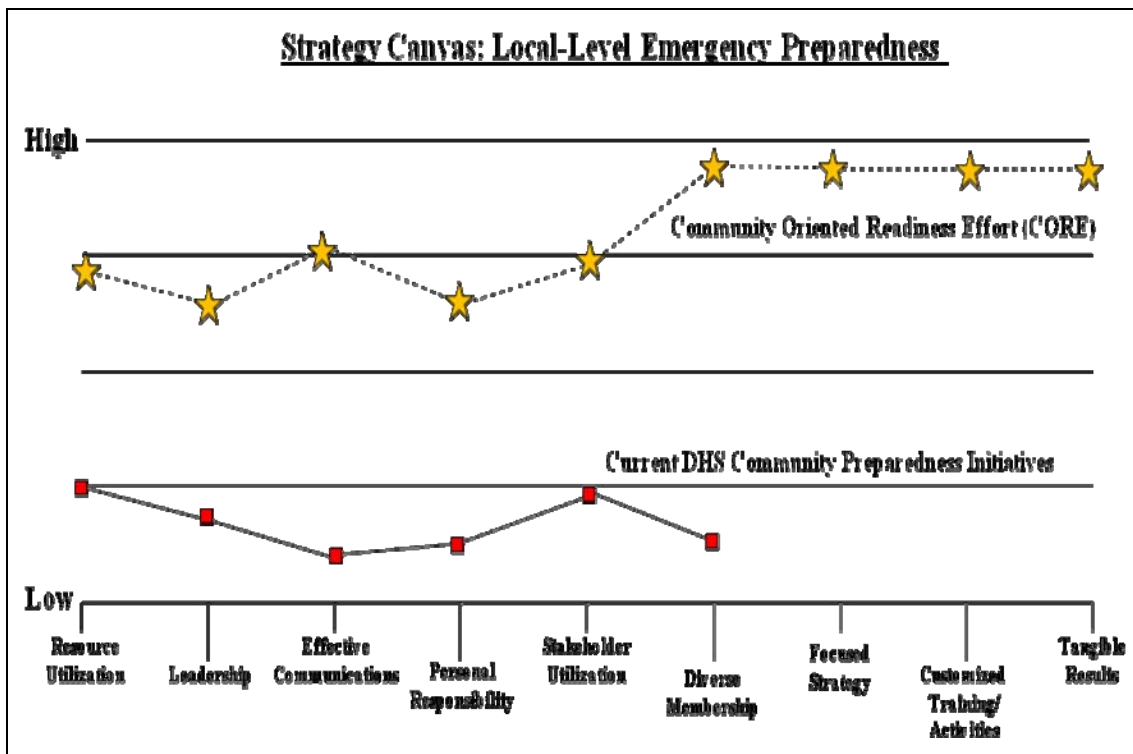
Figure 8.   Strategy Canvas: Local-Level Emergency Preparedness

Utilizing CORE concepts offers a number of advantages that include effective leadership, clear and continual communications, progress that is both evident and steady, and strategic planning and programs tailored to the individual community.   Perhaps the greatest benefit concerns the utilization of scarce resources, primarily, a diverse membership that represents a variety of sectors and disciplines. The Eliminate-Reduce-Raise-Create Grid shown in Figure 9 further demonstrates how a community-focused approach can take advantage of those issues that can elevate levels of preparedness while removing or lessening the effects of those issues that impede it.
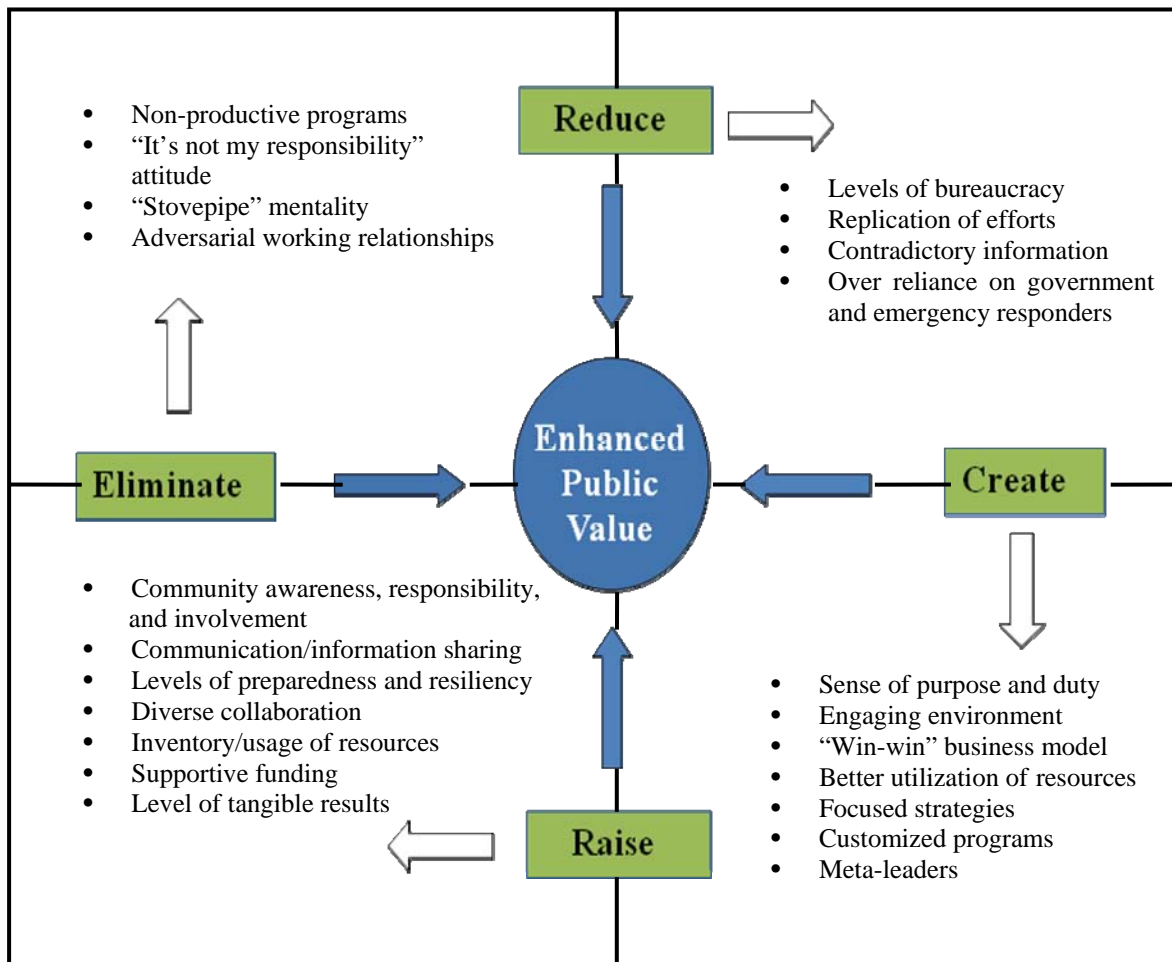
Reduce
- Levels of bureaucracy
- Replication of efforts
- Contradictory information
- Over reliance on government and emergency responders

Eliminate
- Non-productive programs
- "It's not my responsibility" attitude
- "Stovepipe" mentality
- Adversarial working relationships

Enhanced Public Value

Create
- Sense of purpose and duty
- Engaging environment
- "Win-win" business model
- Better utilization of resources
- Focused strategies
- Customized programs
- Meta-leaders

Raise
- Community awareness, responsibility, and involvement
- Communication/information sharing
- Levels of preparedness and resiliency
- Diverse collaboration
- Inventory/usage of resources
- Supportive funding
- Level of tangible results

Figure 9.   Eliminate-Reduce-Raise-Create Grid

C.   RECOMMENDATIONS

There is simply no way to construct a "one size-fits all" program that will meet all needs for every community across our nation. Differences in population, demographics, geographic locations, and other variables preclude such from occurring. However, the CORE includes those components this writer considers essential if any local-level preparedness initiative is to be successful. How one defines such success is another matter; nevertheless, any effort that leads to progress in critical incident preparedness should be deemed a great achievement. The CORE is made up of five separate, yet interrelated pieces. These recommended elements will be introduced in the following section and further explained in the CORE handbook found in Appendix C.

Figure 10 touches upon an issue that is often overlooked, which is to simply provide an answer to the question, "What is the organizational purpose of the proposed program or group effort?" Will it be an effort that stands on its own or will it operate in conjunction with an existing program? Will it focus solely upon emergency preparedness or include other community issues, as in the UK example? Although this may seem to be apparent, attention must be directed to this issue early in the group's development.
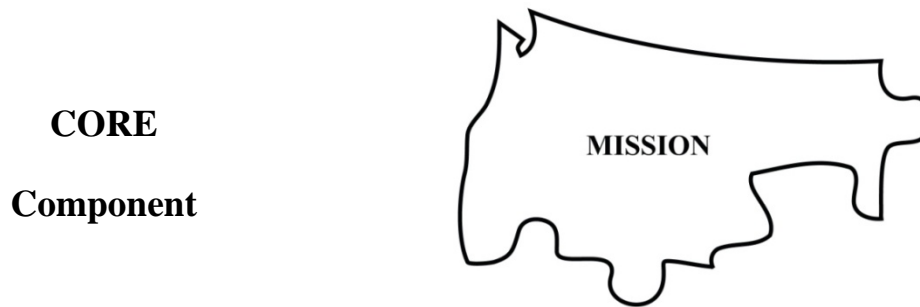
CORE

Component

Figure 10.   CORE Component – Mission

To incorporate those who need to be a part of this effort, and to focus their energies in a coordinated manner, a determination of what defines this undertaking must be accomplished. A series of questions are listed in Appendix C that can serve as an aid in this regard. These questions will assist in formulating the identity of the newly formed community preparedness group; establish the basic needs it is intended to address, and to provide clarity as to what makes this particular partnership distinctive and unique. Simply put, determining whom you are, why you exist, and what you hope to accomplish can play a major role in a local efforts success or lack thereof.

At its very essence, a local-level readiness initiative is made up of people; individuals coming together in order to accomplish a certain goal. Consequently, a great deal of effort must be directed towards the issue of those that make up the membership of any local-level emergency preparedness effort. Figure 11 labels these individuals as "stakeholders," and recognizes them as another key ingredient within the CORE.

CORE

Component

Figure 11.   CORE Component - Stakeholders

Various definitions have been applied to this term, but the following addresses the essence of all that the word represents:

> Stakeholders are an integral part of a project. They are the end-users or clients, the people from whom requirements will be drawn, the people who will influence the design and, ultimately, the people who will reap the benefits of your completed project.[15] (Alexandrou, 2010)

This definition gets to the heart of who should be considered as stakeholders; both what they can offer to the project as well as what they expect in return for their participation. To this end, Bryson (2004) proposes that a stakeholder analysis be conducted, a basic technique that consists of three steps. The first is to identify exactly who the group's stakeholders are. As has been discussed throughout this document, emergency preparedness must include representatives from the public, private, and third (non-governmental organizations) sectors. The second step is to specify the criteria the participants use to evaluate the community effort's performance. The third step is to judge how well the group performs against the criteria set forth by these participants. Each is deemed essential and recommended for consideration and implementation. Appendix C offers additional information concerning how to solicit, incorporate, and maintain the necessary participation of a community group's membership.

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[15] From the Web site: "marioalexandrous.com: Web Strategist & Project Manager." Retrieved June 6, 2010 from http://www.mariosalexandrou.com/definition/stakeholder.asp.

Once a mission has been established and stakeholders identified, it is recommended that a "plan of action" be formulated that is conducive to attaining that shared purpose. This plan of action, as seen in Figure 12, is to develop a strategy.

CORE

Component

STRATEGY

Figure 12.   CORE Component – Strategy

Charting this type of course is labor intensive, time consuming, and must be re-evaluated on an ongoing basis. Because of this, many choose not to expend the required time and energy. Unfortunately, as Yogi Berra once stated, "If you don't know where you are going, you will wind up somewhere else." There is much truth in this simple statement, as the lack of strategic planning has been the demise of many well-intended community efforts. This component is made up of a number of individual parts that include creating ideas, building a winning coalition, organizing participation, and implanting various strategies. Each is important in their own right, but all are all intended to accomplish a single overarching goal; to create public value. This is accomplished in ways such as community pride, self-reliance, continuity of operations and overall resiliency in the midst of a disaster. If a local emergency preparedness group intends to provide such public value, it must plan to do so in a deliberate manner. Strategic planning will serve as a guide in strengthening and sustaining group achievement and cannot be discounted.

Figure 13 focuses attention towards securing the resources needed to support and sustain the activities of the local-level endeavor.

CORE

Component

Figure 13.   CORE Component - Resources

These resources come in different forms and serve a variety of purposes. The first to be considered is finances, and although some groups receive a continual stream of funding, they are the minority. There are a number of alternatives available to secure financial support. One is to look within one's own group and community. Charging a nominal membership fee is one option, while soliciting the financial aid of local government or a corporate partner is another. There are also a number of grants available through various governmental programs and private foundations. Fund-raising activities are yet another way in which a group can obtain this resource. Although financial support is important and can assist in emergency preparedness activities, there are other alternatives that can be pursued. The essence of volunteering is one that can have a tremendous impact on the group's overall sense of effectiveness and well-being. Here are just a few examples discovered during the interviews conducted for this research:

- A local non-governmental organization providing space for monthly meetings.
- A local emergency shelter being used for training classes and exercises.
- Group members sharing their expertise and conducting partnership training.
- Refreshments being donated on a rotating basis, or better yet, lunch prepared by a group member.
- Local university offering assistance concerning grant funding applications.
- Local media providing free advertisement of group activities.

These illustrate both the ingenuity and opportunities that exist within one's community. Free services can also be found beyond the confines of the community itself. These come in the form of various training courses, the formulation of a web-site, as well as numerous options for communicating and updating community and program participants.

Figure 14 addresses the issue of leadership, the component that serves as the basis of the CORE and is the coordinating component for the entire program.

CORE

Component

LEADERSHIP

Figure 14.   CORE Component - Leadership

Simply put, there must be a person or group of individuals who truly embraces the essence of community preparedness and carries that charge. Whether known as catalysts, initiators, champions, or simply "concerned citizens," they recognize the need for their community to attain a higher level of readiness and genuinely feel that they can make a positive difference in that effort. Although the best-case scenario would be for this person to occupy a fully paid position devoted to this cause, this would be the exception rather than the rule. Most who take on this type of responsibility do so in addition to their normal "day-to-day" duties, volunteering their time and adding to their already over-burdened schedule. Although this can be the mayor or fire chief of a local jurisdiction, it can equally be a member of the chamber of commerce or a citizen action group. As has been discussed at length, a leader must possess an array of traits and capabilities in assuming this role. A crucial skill is the ability to communicate and collaborate with others and then to delegate accordingly. Community preparedness will never be achieved by any single person, but it will fail miserably if that key person is not part of the equation.

D.   SUMMARY

Numerous federal and state programs have been implemented in order to enhance emergency preparedness at the local level. While some of these have enjoyed varying degrees of success, there remains a great void concerning this capability on a national basis. If this goal is ever realized, it will not be because of a federal or state mandate; but rather, a focused approach occurring one community at a time. The proposed CORE can be implemented in any local setting, and if adhered to, can make a positive difference in the readiness capabilities of that area. Appendix D provides one such example where this program has been implemented. Although this community effort is still in its infancy, it has made steady progress thus far.

Figure 15 incorporates the five CORE components covered and proposed as recommendations in the previous section. Although considered significant in their own right; independently, they cannot accomplish the overarching objective of adequately preparing a community for all phases of a disaster. Collectively though, they are truly a force to be reckoned with. As Margaret Mead stated, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."[16] Planning for, participating in and leading the local efforts described throughout this document is a pain-staking and arduous process. Yet, if broad-based preparedness, resiliency, and sustainability are to be realized, it is a course of action that cannot be ignored. It is the engaged and empowered community that is truly an essential ingredient of homeland security.

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[16] Quote taken from article entitled, "Where have all the leaders gone?" Retrieved October 17, 2009 from www.businessweek.com/managing/content/oct2007/ca20071018_468928.htm.
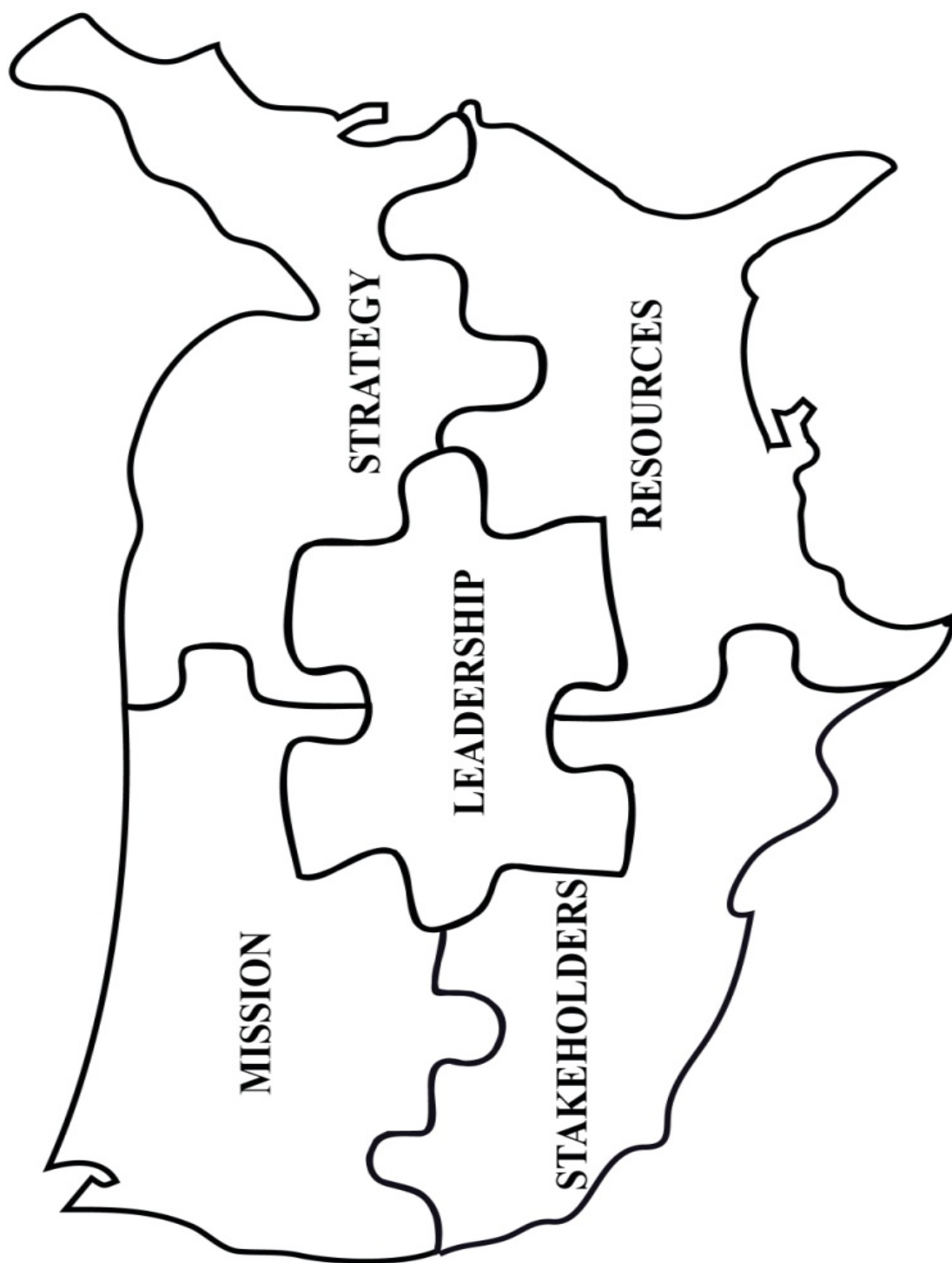
Figure 15. Completed CORE Component Map

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APPENDIX A: COMPONENTS FOR SUCCESS

Resource	Components
Engaging the Private Sector To Promote Homeland Security: Law Enforcement-Private Security Partnerships	• Common goals. • Common tasks. • Knowledge of participating agencies' capabilities and missions. • Well-defined projected outcomes. • A timetable. • Education for all involved. • A tangible purpose. • Clearly identified leaders. • Operational planning. • Agreement by all partners as to how the partnership will proceed. • Mutual commitment to providing necessary resources. • Assessment and reporting.
Ready, Set, Go: Recruitment, Training, Coordination, and Retention Values for All-Hazard Partnerships	• Fundamental training. • Coordination between involved individuals and entities. • Keeping people interested and engaged.
Regional Public-Private Partnerships: The Next Wave in Homeland Security	• Make partnership regional. • Get political and business leaders on board. • Build a local institutional base. • Engage other partners and avoid duplication. • Put partners to work. • Write a plan. • Deliver results, fast. • Practice, practice, practice.
Public-Private Partnerships in the 21st Century	• Determine and fill gaps in areas of planning training, exercising, personnel, and equipment. • Determine where shared interest lie and strengthen them.
Business and public health collaboration for emergency preparedness in Georgia: a case study	• Identify partners' needs and assets. • Initiate projects that can be tested and measurably evaluated. • Develop focused priorities and project concepts that are consistent with overall mission.
Competing interests: the challenge to collaboration in the public sector	• Organic formation; allowing alliances to emerge instead of orchestrating their development. • Organizational trust. • Narrow focus with reciprocal results • Catalytic leadership; "meta-leadership".
Success factors: public works and public-private partnerships	• Unifying specific vision. • Commitment. • Open communication, trust, and respect. • Willingness to compromise/collaborate. • Community outreach. • Political support. • Consensual decision-making. • Risk awareness.

	•	Clear roles and responsibilities.
Effective partnerships: building a sub-regional network of reflective practitioners	•	Leadership.
	•	Engaging the commitment of private and community sectors.
	•	Develop guidelines on how to empower and support partners.
	•	Development of appropriate skills, competencies, and behaviors.
Successful joint venture partnerships: public-private partnerships	•	Openness and trust.
	•	Strategic planning.
	•	Establishing direction.
	•	Leadership.
	•	Ethos; developing characteristic spirit and attitude of community.
Leveraging public-private partnerships to improve community resilience in times of disaster	•	Trust.
	•	Information exchange.
Multi-Jurisdictional, Network Alliances and Emergency Preparedness	•	Develop compelling focus on essential activities.
	•	Leadership.
	•	Reciprocal benefits.
	•	Building, repairing, and sustaining trust.
Multi-Organizational and Networked Alliances Executive Session Report	•	Leadership.
	•	Trust.
Collaboration and Homeland Security Preparedness: A Survey of U.S. City Managers	•	Articulate a common outcome.
	•	Establish a mutually reinforced, joint strategy.
	•	Identify and address needs by leveraging resources.
	•	Agree on roles and responsibilities.
	•	Establish compatible policies to operate across agencies.
	•	Create a means to evaluate efforts.
Building Collaborative Capacity: An Innovative Strategy for Homeland Security Preparedness	•	Determine common purpose and strategy.
	•	Develop structure to determine roles and authority of participants.
	•	Effective communication and information exchange.
	•	Leadership support and commitment.
	•	Trust.
	•	Commitment and motivation.
Basic Practices Aiding High-Performance Homeland Security Regional Partnerships	•	Leadership.
	•	A clear, concise mission.
	•	Setting strategic goals, objectives, and outcomes.
	•	Sharing authority, ownership, and joint\ accountability for results.
Emergency Management: Implications from a Strategic Management Perspective	•	Forward thinking; strategic planning.
	•	Goal identification and achievement.
	•	Professionalism; through training and education.
	•	Participant support and accountability.
Powering the Future: High Performance Partnerships	•	Leadership.
	•	Achieving results.
	•	Establish clear purpose through mission statement and strategic planning.
	•	Obtaining sufficient resources.
	•	Exchange of information; communication.
	•	Organizational infrastructure; trust, decision-making capabilities.

Charter for Community Engagement	• Including all participants. • Reaching out to local government and community for input and support. • Mutual respect. • Integrity of all involved. • Incorporate diverse ideas and values.
Learning from Exemplary Practices in International Disaster Management: A Fresh Avenue to Inform U.S. Policy?	• Effective leadership. • Active information exchange. • Appropriate level of coordination.
Megacommunities	• Engagement between local government, private sector, and non-governmental organizations. • Develop overlap in vital interests. • Convergence of commitment toward mutual action. • Values diversity.

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APPENDIX B: BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

Resource	Barriers
Engaging the Private Sector To Promote Homeland Security: Law Enforcement-Private Security Partnerships	• Lack of trust. • Misinformation and misunderstanding.
Business and public health collaboration for emergency preparedness in Georgia: a case study	• Differences in culture between government and business. • Lack of familiarity with one another's values, resources, management styles, and modes of operation.
Competing interests: the challenge to collaboration in the public sector	• Competing interests. • Lack of resources; time.
Understanding and advancing cross‐sector collaboration in homeland security and emergency management	• Formalizing too soon. • Integrating private and civic society members. • Misunderstanding the mission and capabilities of alliance members. • Overcoming sectoral boundaries.
Effective partnerships: building a sub-regional network of reflective practitioners	• Engaging the commitment of private and community sectors. • Lack of skill in working in small groups. • Lack of communication. • Defensiveness on part of participants. • Self-indulgence.
Successful joint venture partnerships: public-private partnerships	• Loss of control; inability to take action. • Multiple goals; particular goals not related to overall mission. • Tension between autonomy and accountability.
Multi-Jurisdictional, Network Alliances and Emergency Preparedness	• Lack of participation from local organizations and private citizens. • Starting too formally. • Institutionalizing too quickly. • Duplicating effort. • Tension between alliance participants.
Multi-Organizational and Networked Alliances Executive Session Report	• Fostering sustainability and staying relevant. • Lack of neutral party that would ensure divergent viewpoints are represented.
Building Collaborative Capacity: An Innovative Strategy for Homeland Security Preparedness	• Conflicting goals and incentives. • Lack of goal clarity. • Impeding rules or policies. • Inadequate authority of participants. • Inadequate resources. • Lack of accountability. • Lack of familiarity with other organizations. • Inadequate communications/information sharing. • Competition for resources. • Territoriality. • Apathy. • Lack of competency. • History of distrust between agencies. • Leaders not supporting collaborative efforts. • Arrogance, hostility, animosity.

A Public-Private Partnership for Joint Critical Incident Management	- Apathy or indifference. - Accountability. - Denial of need to prepare. - Misunderstanding. "Turf" battles. - Lack of resources. - Decision-making in political arena.
Megacommunities	- Lack of initiator to spearhead effort. - Failure to sufficiently analyze internal and external factors. - Excluding opposition (business community) - Not developing "weak ties". - Not developing a clear, complete, and compelling mission statement. - Lack of leadership.

C.O.R.E.

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Handbook
Version 1.1
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Table of Contents

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Introduction

If the United States is to attain comprehensive homeland security, it will not be the result of a presidential directive or a mandate originating from the halls of a state capital. Rather, it will come as a result of an all-encompassing, collaborative effort occurring at the grassroots level across our nation. The individual community has been identified as an integral part of this overall mission; and thus, it must embrace this challenge and responsibility. It is the local community that serves as the foundation, the very core of our nation's homeland security project. It is for that reason that the Community Oriented Readiness Effort (CORE) was established.

The CORE however is not a panacea, in that it will not prevent a terrorist cell from locating in one's jurisdiction or keep flood waters at bay. Yet; if applied and adhered to, it can make substantial improvements in how a community prepares for, responds to, and recovers from a disaster. To do so, our local governments, business communities, non-governmental organizations, and citizen groups must be empowered and engaged in a manner that will allow them to be an active participant in this ambitious initiative. This program is made up of five separate, but interrelated components. Each one is vital in their own right and incorporates a number of underlying principles and practices essential to overall success. Collectively though, the sum of these components is truly greater than their original parts. They represent all that is possible through the collaborative efforts found at the local level. As Margaret Mead stated, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

The CORE components can be implemented in any community; regardless of size, population, geographic location, or any other distinguishing factors. For those

locales desiring to make improvements in their emergency preparedness capabilities, the pages that follow can serve as an aid in accomplishing this worthwhile goal.

CORE Component

MISSION
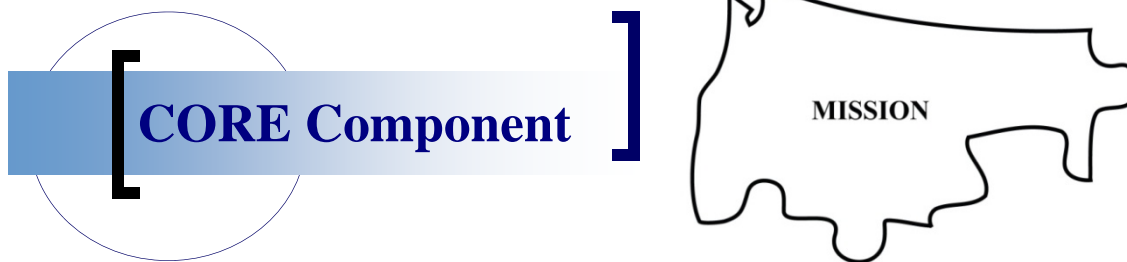
Oftentimes, there are issues that seem so obvious that no one ever takes the time to address them. Therefore, it is with formulating a new local-level emergency readiness effort or enhancing an existing one. Some very basic questions are never asked because "everyone" assumes that "everyone" already knows the answers. Such questions include:

- What is the organizational intent of the proposed or existing group effort?

- What are the opportunities or needs that exist that we hope to address?

- What do we hope to accomplish as a result of our efforts?

- How do we plan to accomplish these goals?

- Who benefits from our organization's existence?

- Who and what is needed to accomplish these goals?

- What principles or beliefs will guide our efforts?

- What makes our group distinctive or unique?

Taken together, these represent the purpose, or mission of the overall initiative. If sufficient time and attention are not invested in regards to these issues, achieving true community preparedness will be difficult if not impossible. However, if valid answers are derived in a collaborative manner, the opportunity to make a positive impact in this area is greatly enhanced. The reasons for this are many. As will be discussed throughout this document, a variety of individuals and organizations will be needed to participate in and support this effort. Who are they? What can they bring to the table? Why should they become involved in the midst of an already overloaded schedule? How will they know if

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we are making progress? Can we consolidate this effort into an existing one? Should we? Without establishing a mission, valid and credible responses cannot be offered.

To accomplish this task, company reports, Web sites, and other sources can provide endless examples of mission statements. Likewise, there is no shortage of books and magazines that can offer guidance, templates, questionnaires, and other aids regarding this effort. In fact, the questions asked at the outset of this section can sufficiently meet this need. However, there is a foundational truth that must be adhered to concerning this concept. Although the mission statement might be the end result, it is the overall process of formulating it that must be focused upon. Answering all of the who, what, when, where, why, and how questions is the essence of any undertaking. When that mission deals with the protection and preservation of people, property, and the environment, it cannot be overlooked.

CORE Component

STAKEHOLDERS
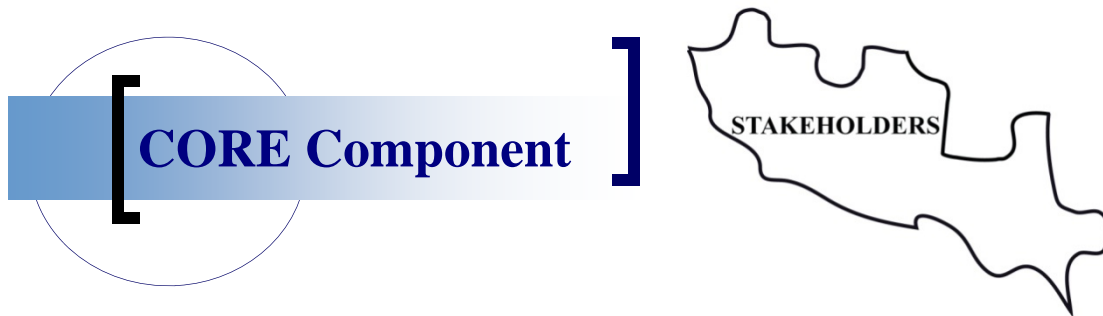
Whatever form a mission may take, it will never be realized without the hard work of dedicated individuals. It is these committed men and women that breathe life into a CORE; therefore, a great deal of time and attention must be directed towards this particular component. Labeled as stakeholders, various definitions have been applied to this particular term. For the purpose of this guide, the following addresses the essence of all that the word represents:

> Stakeholders are an integral part of a project. They are the end-users or clients, the people from whom requirements will be drawn, the people who will influence the design and, ultimately, the people who will reap the benefits of your completed project.

From this definition (obtained from: marioalexandrous.com: Web Strategist & Project Manager) it is conveyed that stakeholders are both contributors and consumers. They offer valuable resources, experience and expertise; but rightly expect to profit from their involvement. In determining who should be considered as stakeholders, one has to first determine who might play a role in an emergency and then solicit their participation and support. Such individuals will generally come from the public, private, or third sectors (more commonly known as non-governmental organizations or NGO's). These sectors will include, but not limited to, the following:

- ☐ Local government
- ☐ State and federal agencies within affected area (government agencies, corporate offices, etc. located remotely can still be considered stakeholders).

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- Emergency response agencies (law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services)

- Emergency management

- Financial community

- School system (city/county schools, universities, etc.)

- Health care

- Information Technology

- Utilities

- Industrial/Manufacturing

- Media

- Business community

- Religious groups

- Public works

- Sanitary board

- Transportation

- Non-governmental organizations (Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc.)

- Citizen groups

This list simply scratches the surface of who could or should be involved in a local-level preparedness program. Every community is unique in it needs and its membership will reflect that diversity. Although broad-based representation should be sought, care must be taken to solicit involvement from those who will make a positive impact on the overall effort. In other words, participants should share a genuine desire for improving the readiness levels of their community and bring something of value to the group. Such individuals are generally the "movers and shakers" within their own organization; and thus, can bring the same energy to this effort as well. Conversely, one must be wary of those whose involvement might be considered divisive or disruptive. Individuals who must be in control or bring with them a hidden agenda can oftentimes do more harm than good to the overall working environment.

CORE Component

STRATEGY
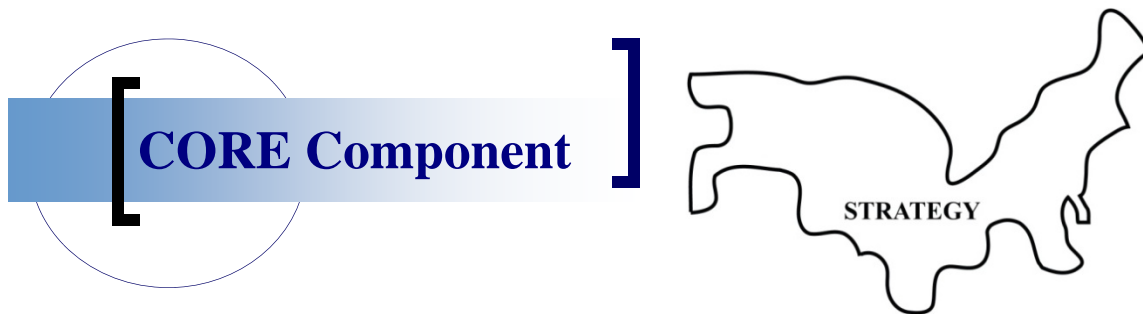
Charting the type of course needed by a community group is labor intensive, time consuming, and must be re-evaluated on an ongoing basis. Because of this, many choose not to expend the required resources. Unfortunately, as Yogi Berra once stated, "If you don't know where you are going, you will wind up somewhere else." There is much truth in this simple statement, as the lack of strategic planning has been the demise of many well-intended community efforts. This component is made up of a number of individual parts that include creating ideas, building a winning coalition, organizing participation, and implanting various approaches. Each is important in their own right, but all are all intended to accomplish a single overarching goal; that is, to create public value. This is realized in ways such as community pride, self-reliance, continuation of operations and overall resiliency in the midst of a disaster. If a local emergency preparedness group intends to provide such public value, it must plan to do so in a deliberate manner.

Strategic planning is an activity that incorporates the participation of a number of people, attempting to accomplish a variety of issues over an extended period. It is impossible to sufficiently address all of these topics within this guide. Numerous books have been written concerning this topic and research should be conducted to determine those that can serve as a viable resource. However, one particular book will be drawn upon to address this particular CORE component. John Bryson's, *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*, proposes the following steps in regards to the overall strategic planning process.

- Step 1: Initiate and Agree on a Strategic Planning Process
    - Purpose of the effort
    - Role, functions, and membership of:

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- ▪ Those empowered to oversee the effort
- ▪ The strategic planning team

- ☐ Step 2: Identify Organizational Mandates
    - o Consists of the various "musts" a group confronts
    - o Identify these requirements, restrictions, expectations, pressures, and constraints

- ☐ Step 3: Clarify Organizational Mission and Values
    - o Identify collaborative advantage to be gained by working together
    - o Must reach basic consensus among stakeholders on an inspiring mission
    - o Group must always see itself as a means to an end

- ☐ Step 4: Assess the External and Internal Environments
    - o Identify opportunities and challenges group will face
    - o Explore environment to identify group strengths and weaknesses
    - o Monitor forces and trends that impact operation of group (political, economic, social, educational, technological, physical, etc.)

- ☐ Step 5: Identify the Strategic Issues Facing the Organization
    - o Identify conflicts that may exist:
        - ▪ Ends (what is to be accomplished)
        - ▪ Means (how or how much)
        - ▪ Philosophy (why)
        - ▪ Location (where)
        - ▪ Timing (when)
        - ▪ Entities advantaged or disadvantaged (who)

    - o Produce statement of strategic change
        - ▪ Described concisely
        - ▪ List factors that makes it a challenge
        - ▪ List consequences of not addressing challenge

- ☐ Step 6: Formulate Strategies to Manage the Issues
    - o Identify practical alternatives for resolving strategic issues
    - o Specify barriers to achieving overall objectives
    - o Develop proposals to achieve objectives
    - o Identify actions to be taken over next 2-3 years concerning major proposals
    - o Produce detailed work program for next 6-12 months to implement these actions

- ☐ Step 7: Review and Adopt the Strategies or Strategic Plan
    - o Officially adopt and proceed with implementation
    - o Continually monitor goals, concerns, and interest of key stakeholders

- Step 8: Establish an Effective Organizational Vision
  - Description of what group will look like when strategies are successfully achieved
  - Widely circulated and discussed within group
- Step 9: Develop an Effective Implementation Process
  - Roles and responsibilities of teams, task forces, and individuals
  - Expected results and specific objectives and milestones
  - Specific action steps and applicable details
  - Resource requirements and sources
  - Establish communication process
  - Monitor and implement midcourse correction procedures

- Step 10: Reassess Strategies and the Strategic Planning Process
  - Ask if current strategies should be maintained, replaced, or terminated
  - This review serves as a prelude to a new round of strategic planning

These steps provide a framework for a robust and productive strategic planning program. For those about to embark on such a journey, Bryson offer some words of advice. First, tailor the process to the affected group, community, and situation. Second, remember that there is no substitute for strong leadership throughout this process. Third, be aware that the resource most needed to undertake this project is not money, but the attention and commitment of your stakeholders. Lastly, when the going gets tough, concentrate on the perceived benefits and keep them in the forefront.

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CORE Component
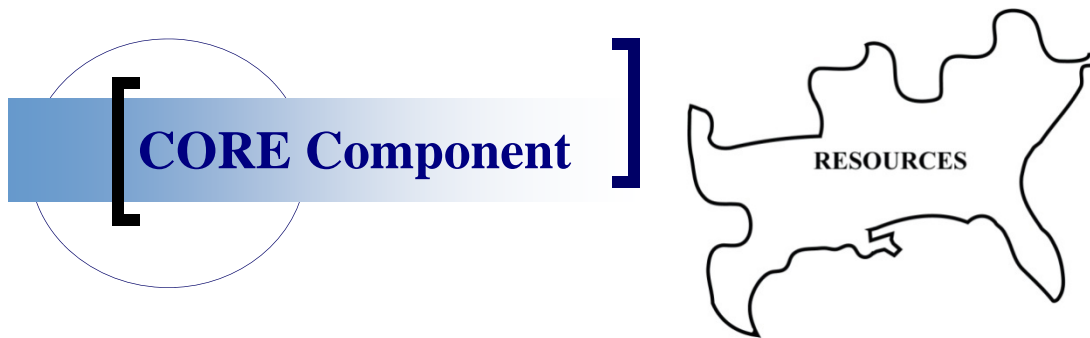
RESOURCES

All programs and projects require resources to meet their objectives, and a CORE is no different. When addressing the issue of resources, some fundamental questions must be answered:

- What do we need to prepare for, respond to, and recover from a disaster?
- Where can these various types of resources be located?
- How can they be obtained?

As has been stated before, every community is different and unique. Therefore, precise information will need to be obtained by those responsible for these particular tasks. In considering what resources are needed, they will generally fall within one of the following categories: financial support, structures and facilities, training and expertise, people, and time. The following table addresses these categories, proposes a few examples of the various needs and functions of each, and then offers suggestions on how to attend to those needs.

Financial Support

Need/Function	Sources/Suggestions
☐ Rent	☐ Budget/Continual funding stream
☐ Web site	☐ Corporate sponsorship
☐ Advertisement	☐ Membership fees
☐ Speakers/Instructors	☐ Fund raising efforts
☐ Educational/Training Material	☐ Grant funding sources

Structures and Facilities

Need/Function	Sources/Suggestions
☐ Group meetings	☐ Local government facility
☐ Administrative duties	☐ School/university
☐ Conferences	☐ Business property
☐ Training sessions	☐ Church
☐ Table-top exercises	☐ Emergency shelter location

Training and Expertise

Need/Function	Sources/Suggestions
☐ Group dynamics	☐ Utilize expertise within membership
☐ Incident management	☐ Free web-based training
☐ Citizen preparedness	☐ Free on-site training
☐ Continuity planning	☐ Free regional/state/federal offerings
☐ Mass care	☐ Fee-based training

People

Need/Function	Sources/Suggestions
☐ Leadership	☐ Local government
☐ Administration duties	☐ Business community
☐ Hosting group activities	☐ Non-governmental organizations
☐ Oversees group communications	☐ Citizen groups
☐ General participants and supporters	☐ Local university/internship

Time

Need/Function	Sources/Suggestions
☐ All group functions	☐ Group meetings
	o Prepare/distribute agenda
	o Focused and expedient

	o Tele-conferencing
	o Alternate meeting locations
	☐ Communicate through:
	  o Newsletter
	  o Mass e-mail
	  o Web site
	  o Social networking
	    technology

This table offers but an overview concerning the all-important issue of resources. It should be noted concerning the issue of financial support, many feel that funding is considered to be the "deciding factor" in whether a community preparedness group will be successful or not. Although having a continual funding stream is desirable, it is not a necessity nor is it feasible for most communities. There are countless examples where individuals and groups have used their ingenuity to meet many of these demands. The search for resources must first start within the group, where many are surprised to discover the vast amount of equipment, talent, and expertise that already exists. The process then moves outward; searching, networking, and partnering on a regional, state, and national level.

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CORE Component
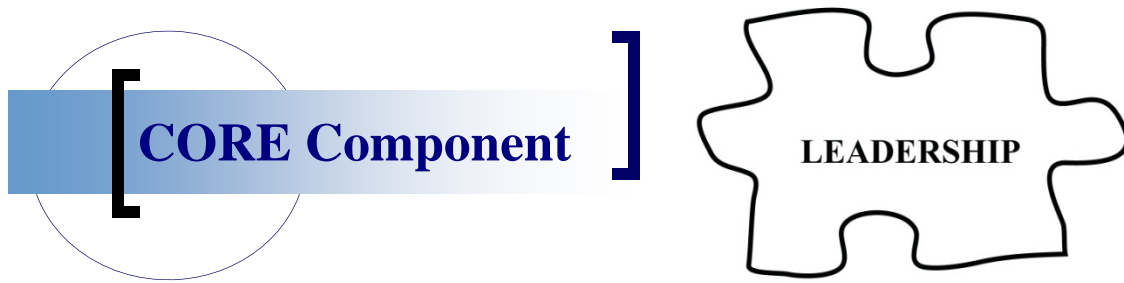
LEADERSHIP

Countless books have been written concerning the issue of leadership, and with good reason. Leadership, or lack thereof, can be the defining factor in whether a government, corporation, or any other entity reaches its full potential. The same holds true for the local community and the CORE views leadership as the coordinating component for the overall program. Simply put, there must be a person or group of individuals who truly embraces the essence of community preparedness and carries that charge. Whether known as catalysts, initiators or champions, they recognize the need for their community to attain a higher level of readiness and genuinely feel that they can make a positive difference in that effort.

There are a number of ways in which individuals might find themselves occupying a leadership position within the CORE. These include, but not limited to:

- *Fully-paid position*. This would be considered the "best case" scenario, but is the exception and not the rule. This position is solely devoted to community emergency preparedness, and the individual occupying it would possess the expertise needed to carry out its various duties. Because it is a full-time position, he/she would be allowed to fully devote their time and attention towards it.

- *Part of job description.* Oftentimes carried out by a county emergency management director or city fire chief, community preparedness is listed among the responsibilities of their current position.

- *Assigned*. This situation is when an individual is assigned emergency preparedness duties in addition to their normal "day-to-day" responsibilities. This person would be expected to have a background in emergency management or response; therefore, has some levels of experience and expertise.

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- *Volunteer*. This individual recognizes the need to improve their community's emergency preparedness capabilities and volunteers to be a part of the solution. This person could come in the form of a local politician, business owner, emergency responder or simply a concerned citizen.

Whatever scenario applies to a particular community, the important thing is that individuals must be identified who will be leading this effort.

Although such persons cannot be "all things to all people," they must possess an array of traits and capabilities. These are needed to effectively channel the efforts of the various sectors and disciplines they will be expected to work with. Although not considered all-inclusive, the following list can serve as an aid concerning many of the qualities deemed essential for those occupying positions of leadership.

- Believes in and is passionate about community preparedness
- Leads by example
- Respected and supported by own organization
- Respected throughout community (considered dependable, honest, reliable, etc.)
- Works well with other agencies and disciplines
- Fosters collaboration
- Engages and empowers others
- Aligns differing missions, perspectives, and agendas
- Manages conflict
- Persistent
- Patient
- Visionary – "Big Thinker"
- Results oriented
- Facilitates "team approach"
- Empathetic
- Motivates and encourages others
- Multi-tasker
- Embraces new ideas, technology, etc.
- Works well with others
- Good communication skills
- Delegates accordingly and effectively

Although all are important, the last point deserves some additional attention. No single person can, nor should they, conduct the operations of a community group themselves. Not only will it be physically and mentally draining, but other members of the partnership will not be utilized in the most advantageous manner. It is suggested that

some sense of group "structure" be implemented. This will not only help shoulder the work load, but will also offer equal representation from the various sectors represented. Such structure can come in the form of a working group or planning committee, or the appointment of certain positions, such as a chairperson, secretary, etc. However, a word of caution. Although some semblance of structure is warranted, a balance must be struck. An abundance of rules, regulations, and procedures can be considered overly bureaucratic; therefore, they should be used in a judicious manner.

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Conclusion

Throughout this guide, the individual components that make up the Community Oriented Readiness Effort have been focused upon, stressing their importance to the overall program. The graphic below illustrates how they are not only interrelated to one another, but dependent on one another as well. Remove a single piece and a tremendous void is created. And so it is with the neighborhoods, towns, and regions that exist across our nation. If true preparedness, resiliency and sustainability are to be realized to any great degree, business owners, government officials, public servants, and private citizens must likewise become interconnected and reliant upon one another. It is the engaged and empowered community that is truly an essential ingredient of homeland security.

The Community Oriented Readiness Effort (CORE)

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Community Preparedness

American Red Cross.
www.redcross.org

Business Executives for National Security.
http://www.bens.org/home.html

Chicago First.
https://www.chicagofirst.org/

Citizens Corps.
http://www.citizencorps.gov/

Communicating Emergency Preparedness: Strategies for Creating a Disaster Resilient Public. Damon P. Coppola & Erin K. Maloney.   CRC Press ISBN # 978-1-4200-6510-7

Critical Incident Protocol. Michigan State University. *http://www.cip.msu.edu/*

Federal Emergency Management Agency's Ready Campaign. *www.ready.gov*

Funding

Federal grant opportunities.
www.grants.gov

DHS grant information.
http://www.dhs.gov/xopnbiz/grants/

Foundation funding opportunities.
www.foundationcenter.org

Leadership

Lincoln on Leadership: Executive Strategies for Tough Times by Donald T. Phillips
Publisher: Warner Books, Inc. ISBN-10: 0446394599

The Leadership Challenge, 4th edition by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner
Publisher: Pfeiffer; ISBN-10: 047055972

Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading by Martin Linsky
and Ronald A. Heifetz Publisher: Harvard Business Press; ISBN-10: 1578514371

Mission

The Fieldstone Alliance Guide to Crafting Effective Mission and Vision Statements by
Emil Angelica. Publisher: Fieldstone Alliance; ISBN-10: 094006927X

*The Mission-Driven Organization: From Mission Statement to a Thriving Enterprise,
Here's Your Blueprint for Building an Inspired, Cohesive, Customer-Oriented Team* by
Bob Wall, Mark Sobol, and Robert Solum. Publisher: Prima Lifestyles; ISBN-10:
0761518819

The Mission Primer: Four Steps to an Effective Mission Statement by Richard O'Hallaron
and David O'Hallaron. Publisher: Mission Incorporated; ISBN-10: 0967663504

Resources

Department of Homeland Security
http://www.dhs.gov/files/resources/prepresprecovery.shtm

Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations, Second Edition by Michael Allison
Publisher**:** Jude Kaye Wiley; ISBN-10: 0471445819

*Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening
and Sustaining Organizational Achievement*, 3rd Edition by John M. Bryson. Publisher:
Jossey-Bass; ISBN-10**:** 0787967556

*Team-Based Strategic Planning: A Complete Guide to Structuring, Facilitating and
Implementing the Process* by C. Davis Fogg. Publisher: AMACOM; ISBN-10:
0814451276

Training

American Red Cross
www.redcross.org/

Department of Homeland Security.
www.training.fema.gov/

Emergency Management Institute
www.dhs.gov/xfrstresp/training/

Ready America, Business, Kids
www.ready.gov/

Rural Domestic Preparedness Training Center
www. ruraltraining.org

Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) Training Information System
www.firstrespondertraining.gov/odp_webforms/

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APPENDIX D: SOUTHERN WV PREPAREDNESS PARTNERSHIP

Introduction

Homeland security has been defined in various ways; and likewise, addressing it can take on many different forms as well. What presents a security threat to our nation, how are these threats to be countered, and what is needed to carry out this mission are just a few of the questions that need to be answered. Technology, equipment, and finances would all be considered necessary components of this overall initiative, yet, it is people who are the most integral. From the President of the United States to those who serve in our military, various individuals have embraced the challenge of homeland security and their role within it. Unfortunately, there are those who are considered to be "missing in action" when it comes to assuming their rightful responsibility. These are the individual communities and small groups of people that are present in every area across our country. In the 2010 Department of Homeland Security document, *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review Report: A Strategic Framework for a Secure Homeland*, the following directive is offered:

> Foster communities that have information, capabilities, and resources to prevent threats, respond to disruptions, and ensure their own well-being. Individuals, families, and communities are essential partners in the homeland security enterprise. Building and sustaining capability at the community level is essential to meeting homeland security strategic aims and realizing our vision for a secure homeland.

There is no single "right way" in which to accomplish such efforts, as each community is different and will approach it in their own unique way. The following serves as but one example of how a single community is attempting to meet this challenge.

Background

In the summer of 2007, the chief of the Beckley, West Virginia Fire Department approached his mayor, other members of city administration, and other department heads concerning the need to formulate an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) for their city. They all agreed concerning its necessity and offered their full support. Over the next year, representatives of all city departments, with the assistance of certain county agencies and private organizations, worked tirelessly towards attaining this goal. It was realized when

this jurisdiction's first-ever EOP was officially adopted and implemented in the fall of 2008. Finalizing this document was a great accomplishment; however, this fire chief knew that the resources needed to carry it out were far more than his city could offer alone. It would require the participation and support of a host of different organizations and individuals.

In conducting research concerning this issue, the fire chief came across the Critical Incident Protocol (CIP), a program conducted by Michigan State University's School of Criminal Justice. The CIP was formulated in 1998 with federal funding[17] and focused upon how government and business organizations could enhance joint collaboration. Specifically, on how they would jointly prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impact of emergencies, critical incidents, disasters, terrorism, and weapons of mass destruction events. This chief contacted CIP's coordinator about the possibility of working with him and other interested stakeholders to establish an emergency preparedness public/private partnership. This and future discussions resulted in a workshop conducted in May of 2009, an event that formed the basis for the Southern WV Preparedness Partnership (SWVPP).

In accordance with direction offered by the CIP program, a task force was formulated that provided equal representation from both the public and private sectors. Consisting of six members, this group is made up of representatives from the following disciplines:

- Emergency response
- City government
- Public health
- Business
- Tourism
- Insurance

This task force meets on a regular basis, discusses matters related to the partnership, and serves as a liaison for the membership as a whole.

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[17] As of 2010 when federal funding ceased, MSU was working with 50 cities, counties, and regions in 24 states with over 4,200 public and private sector practitioners and stakeholders participating.

Attention will now be directed towards the five CORE[18] components and how the SWVPP has addressed them.

Application of CORE components

Mission

From the initial workshop, it was established that this partnership's primary focus would be to enhance its collective ability to adequately prepare for all aspects of a critical incident. It was imperative that this focus be all-inclusive as far as sectors and disciplines are concerned, as well as addressing community risks in an all-hazard manner. To that end, the task force researched various sources in order to obtain mission statements developed by similar groups. A number of these were forwarded to the membership at large, where input was solicited and discussed at length. Working drafts were formulated and included as part of a strategic planning workshop conducted by the group. At the conclusion of this process, the agreed upon mission statement for the SWVPP is as follows:

> *Our mission is to create a sustainable public/private partnership that gives our region the ability to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.*

As can be seen, the finished product is concise; yet, it is clear in its intent. The objective of this group is to assist members in becoming more proficient in all areas of emergency management. This includes decreasing the impact of known hazards, enhancing levels of readiness, properly responding to a disaster, as well as ensuring the continuation of government and business. These can be achieved through educational offerings, training exercises, or a host of other activities. However, the underlying theme is that if this mission is to be accomplished on a regional basis, all members are expected to be an avid participant and wholeheartedly support it.

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[18] CORE is an acronym that stands for Community Oriented Readiness Effort, a program developed by a graduate student of the Center for Homeland Defense and Security at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School. This program is directed towards enhancing disaster preparedness at the local level and consists of the following components: mission, stakeholders, strategy, resources, and leadership.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are an integral part of any project. They are the end-users, the people from whom requirements will be solicited, the people who will influence the plan and, ultimately, those who will reap the benefits of the overall venture. It was imperative that the SWVPP be comprised of members that represent the culture, demographics, economy, and risk profile in the region in which it resides. As mentioned earlier, the task force is made up of six members split evenly between the public and private sectors. These individuals serve as ambassadors on behalf of the partnership, touting its mission through any means available in order to solicit membership and participation from their colleagues. In determining who should be considered as stakeholders, the task force determined who might play a role in an emergency and who would bring something of value to the group. Targeted individuals were considered the "movers and shakers" within their own organization; and thus, would bring the same energy to the SWVPP.

Membership is made up from individuals from the following broad categories: local government, the business community, emergency response, and non-governmental organizations. The following is a representative of list of those entities that make up the SWVPP.

City and county government	County emergency operation centers
Local, county & state law enforcement	American Red Cross
City & county fire service	Salvation Army
Sanitary board	Faith-based organizations
Board of public works	Private EMS providers
Information technology	Hotels & motels
Utilities (water, gas, electricity, etc.)	Hospitals
All media outlets	Emergency shelters
Code enforcement	Convention and visitors bureau

Health department	Insurance
Board of education	Business owners and operators
Transportation services	Financial institutions
Department of highways	Airport
Chamber of commerce	Jails and prison
United Way	National Weather Service
Realtors	Communications
National Guard	National Park Service
County jail & Federal Correctional Institute	University
Residential properties	Miscellaneous State & Federal agencies

This list is one that is ever changing; as are the individuals who represent these agencies and organizations. Interest, time constraints and other factors will affect the stakeholders that take part in this effort. However, the focus will always be to maintain a partnership that is representative of the region in which the SWVPP serves. In addition, it must do so with individuals who are energetic, competent, and embrace the mission of the partnership.

Strategy

During the first six months of the partnership's existence, meetings were held on a regular basis and a number of educational and training sessions were conducted. Although such interactions proved worthwhile in forming a basis for future activities and building camaraderie among its members, the group had not performed any structured strategic planning. This was a major concern for the task force, as they felt that such actions were integral to long term effectiveness and sustainability. After a great deal of discussion, it was decided that a consultant with whom the co-chair had worked with would conduct a strategic planning workshop for the group. In preparation for this event,

questionnaires were filled out, phone calls were made, and interim meetings were held to determine the desired focus and outcome of the workshop. After it was conducted, the following eight objectives were established:

- Identify the best organizational structure for the group. Weigh benefits and mandatory requirements for certain legal entities, such as 501(c)(3) status.

- Develop ways to sell the need for such emergency planning to the business community.

- Develop, or collaborate with another organization to create a database of regional resources to make locating and deploying them easier and faster.

- Create a marketing plan to educate the region about the purpose and need for the partnership.

- Improve visibility and credibility with political leaders who can support our efforts through resources and possible legislative changes.

- Increase participation/ownership of the plan among the business community.

- Make monthly meetings more effective by enhancing preparation, focus and structure.

- Develop a Web site that becomes a clearinghouse for all partnership resources.

"Champions" were recruited to head these individual efforts, where each of these individuals developed the action steps needed to achieve them, as well as a deadline to work towards. These remain a "work in progress" and will be revisited and modified on an ongoing basis.

Resources

Supporting an effort like the SWVPP requires a great deal of different types of resources. Since this initiative was not mandated, but created in a voluntary manner, it does not enjoy an established, continual funding stream. However, knowing that financial support would enhance its capabilities, the chair of the partnership researched and applied to a DHS run grant program administered through the state of WV. Those who oversee

this program were impressed by the make-up of the partnership, its mission, and the pro-active approach it was taking to address community level homeland security needs. The application was approved and funding was awarded in the amount of $50,000. It was stipulated that these funds could be used for any planning, education and training related activities, as well as those dealing with publicizing and informing others of the program. Some of the events and projects managed by the SWVPP have included:

- Incident management training class conducted by the Rural Domestic Preparedness Training Center.

- NFPA 1600, *Standard on Disaster/Emergency Management and Business Continuity Program,* workshop.

- Sponsored regional meetings with various state and federal officials to promote the following initiatives:
    - Credentialing
    - Critical infrastructure
    - Intelligence and information sharing
    - Bomb threat management

- Development of partnership logo, informational pamphlet, and Web site.

- Table-top exercises focused upon community facilities.

Structures are another resource that is required to conduct various partnership activities. The SWVPP is fortunate to have a number of members who gladly offer the use of their facilities. Regional emergency response agencies conduct training sessions in their classrooms, a county commission on aging activity room hosts monthly meetings, and an emergency shelter site is routinely used for regional conferences. These are but a few examples that illustrate the generosity of those that make up this group and their willingness to support it in any way that they can. This leads to what is perhaps the most vital resource of all, those that make up the membership.

The various stakeholders were listed in a previous section and represent a wealth of experience and expertise. They willingly attend and participate in partnership functions, provide credible input when requested and respectfully critique when needed. They do so in addition to already over-burdened schedules, so time is another resource

that is not only required, but must be respected. Even the most enthusiastic member cannot, nor should be expected to attend every activity. Some will be more interesting or applicable to some than to others. Some have been involved in emergency planning efforts before, while the vast majority has not. It is therefore the responsibility of leadership to channel this interest and energy in a focused and collaborative manner.

Leadership

It was imperative that members embrace this emergency planning effort and be willing to lead others in accomplishing its goals. To that end, a great deal of time and discussion was devoted to towards the proposed structure of the partnership, or lack thereof. Some enjoyed the casual, small-town feel of the group and did not want it hindered by unnecessary policies and bureaucracy. Others felt that unless officers were appointed and operating guidelines established, nothing would really get accomplished. A balance was struck when a chair was appointed, as well as a co-chair to serve in his absence. Essentially, their role was to coordinate activities, speak on behalf of the partnership at regional functions, and other such administrative duties. A secretary was also named who recorded minutes of meetings and distributed them throughout the partnership. However, it was the fire chief who initially started this initiative, as well as the other members of the task force, who truly led by example. Their focus was upon addressing the following issues:

- Ensuring that the SWVPP was well-publicized throughout the region.

- Ensuring that all sectors and disciplines were represented and that their ideas and input were solicited, considered, and implemented as determined feasible.

- Delegating accordingly in order to involve as many members as possible. This included instilling a culture of leadership and individual responsibility throughout the partnership.

- Ensuring that steady progress was being made to fulfill mission and accomplish stated objectives.

- Results and progress were well-publicized.

- Communicating with all members in a clear, concise, and continual manner.

- Attempting to meet all member's specific interests and needs.

- Creating a climate of excitement, enthusiasm, and encouragement.
- Engaging and empowering members so that they can lead by example in their own family, organization, or community.
- Keeping an eye on continual growth and taking steps to ensure long-term sustainability.

Leading this type of effort is time-consuming and demanding. Dealing with an eclectic group that presents diverse interests, perspectives and agendas to the effort can certainly be challenging. However, the SWVPP is fortunate to have a number of professionals who are passionate about this cause and willingly accept this responsibility.

Summary

The SWVPP started out as an initiative focused up a single jurisdiction, but now incorporates nine counties in the southern region of the state. In its short existence, it has experienced a great deal of growth and enjoyed a certain measure of success. This partnership recognizes the challenges that lie ahead, drawing upon its past to guide its future. A number of "lessons learned" will aid in that effort, advice that might serve as an aid for similar efforts. These lessons include the following:

- Be patient. The pace at which progress is made will never match the expectations of some, but it is still progress nonetheless.

- Formulate a small, broadly represented "working group" that will meet, discuss, and make decisions on behalf of the overall partnership. However, it is imperative that this work be delegated to other willing and capable individuals.

- Ensure that membership is a diverse one, incorporating the views, needs, and expertise of all facets of one's community.

- Solicit the input and participation of each member. It is crucial that every individual is engaged and feels empowered to make choices concerning emergency preparedness and response in a competent manner.

- Maintain constant communication. This can accomplished through electronic means, newsletters, face-to-face conversations, or a host of other such mediums. Constant communication among members is paramount to growth, inclusiveness, participation, and support.

- Develop a "plan of action" for present and future actions. This must start with the formulation of an agreed upon mission, progressing to the establishment of the goals and objectives needed to achieve it. Progress attainted concerning these objectives must be well publicized and touted on a continual basis.

- Concerning partnership meetings:
  - Conduct meetings on a regular basis in order to maintain interest and participation. The SWVPP meets on the same day each and every month, so that members can make plans well ahead of time.
  - Be respectful of member's time. This group limits regular monthly meetings to one hour.
  - Provide focus. Other than regular announcements and brief discussion, meetings focus upon a certain topic of interest to the group as a whole. These topics are solicited from the members and they are publicized well ahead of time.
  - Provide refreshments. This may seem very trivial, but is very important in the grand scheme of things.

- Concerning training:
  - Utilize partnership members to conduct training whenever possible. There is generally a wealth of experience and expertise located within each and every community.
  - Be mindful of the many topics available and that what might be of interest to one may not be to another. Also, even though certain subject matters might be fundamental to certain members (e.g., incident command for emergency responders), it may be new and challenging to others.

- Aim for constant growth all areas. This concerns number of members, types of members, level of involvement, training opportunities, and other such examples. A dynamic and productive group is one that continues to develop, expand, and re-invent itself in accordance with the surroundings it finds itself in and the ever-changing demands of the day.

- Be patient. This is reiterated because it must be embraced and acknowledged by those intimately involved in these types of efforts. Rome was not built in a day, nor will groups such as the SWVPP accomplish their ambitious missions in a short period either. It must be recognized that community level preparedness efforts will be a permanent, long-lasting effort that will never be fully realized, but will always be a work in progress.

This brief summary of the SWVPP serves to illustrate the manner in which it was formulated, some of the activities it has been involved in, and a few of the many lessons it has learned during its brief history. It is hoped that this information will assist other communities who want to either start an emergency preparedness initiative or enhance an existing one.

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