IPREM Bulletin

The Integrated Partnership for Regional Emergency Management in Metro Vancouver

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Issue 6

Message from the Co-Chair

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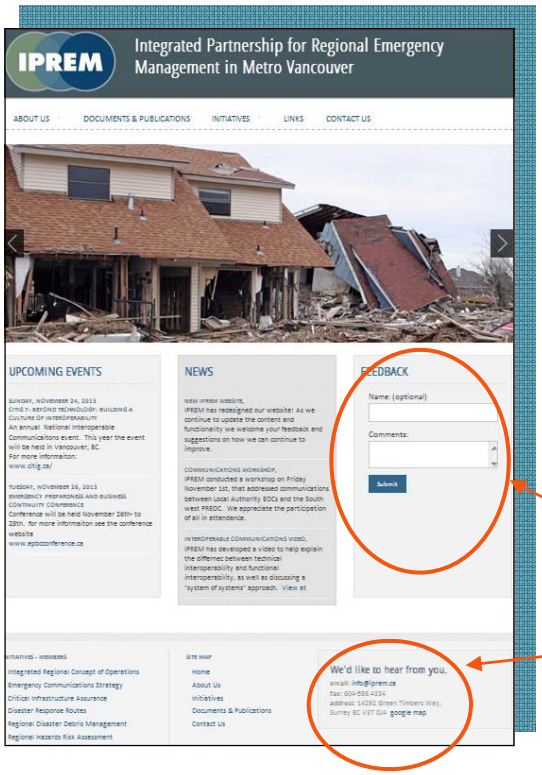
As you may know by now, Jake Rudolph, former CAO City of Pitt Meadows and IPREM Steering Committee Co-Chair, is the new Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) with the City of Abbotsford. Jake has been a member of the IPREM Steering Committee since its inception in 2009. He has been instrumental in providing guidance to the Steering Committee and to IPREM staff, especially on the All Hazard Integrated Regional Concept of Operations initiative. Jake's departure is a great loss for IPREM and Metro Vancouver, but a huge gain for Abbotsford. We wish him all the best in his new role.

I would like to welcome and introduce a new member to the IPREM Steering Committee, John Leeburn. John, CAO, City of Port Coquitlam, was nominated by the Regional Administrative Advisory Committee and will share the role of local/regional Co-Chair with Jim Rule, CAO District of Maple Ridge on the IPREM Steering Committee. John has over 25 years experience in municipal government, held many senior positions including Executive Director to the CAO, Director of Human Services, Director of Corporate Support, and is acknowledged for his leadership on continuous improvement projects. We look forward to John's participation on the Committee.

Re-Developed Website



In our ongoing efforts to improve communications to all of our stakeholders, IPREM has redeveloped its website. New features include sections for upcoming events, news, opportunities for feedback and a working group member areas to access minutes, work plans and agendas. Access to historical documents, past issues of the Bulletins, Strategic Plans and other publications remains.

There are a couple of options to provide feedback to the IPREM team:

-Anonymous and shared directly through our website

or

-By email (info@iprem.ca)

Visit www.IPREM.ca to view the updates

IPREM Vision

A disaster–resilient region where all levels of government and key stakeholders work together seamlessly

Inside This Issue:

The 4 Pillars of Emergency Management

- Mitigation
- Preparedness
- Response
- Recovery

Interoperability Video:

To view video, click **HERE** or visit: www.iprem.ca/initiatives/Pages/communications.aspx

Feel free to forward the link as you see fit.

Regional Hazard/Risk Assessment

In July, the IPREM Steering Committee received the draft report titled *Regional Hazards Impacting Metro Vancouver – An Analysis*, which includes a list of analyzed regional hazards that may cause the greatest impact to Metro Vancouver. The report documents the hazard risk assessment process used during the hazard rating workshops. Recommendations include that the list be: *referenced in all individual Local Authority's and stakeholder's emergency plans; used to support current and future regional emergency management initiatives applicable to all four pillars of emergency management; and collaboratively revisited every 3 to 5 years by an integrated group of emergency management stakeholders.*

In September, the draft report was presented to Local Authority Emergency Program Coordinators. They determined how the report could be used in support of their respective emergency plans and identified responsibilities for distribution of the report.

Regional Emergency Communications Strategy

Communications Workshop (November 1st, 2013)

IPREM conducted a workshop that focused on communications between Local Authority Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) and the South West Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre (PREOC). The participants were asked to clarify their assumptions and expectations regarding two-way information flow between these entities. Local Authorities, Emergency Management BC and Stakeholders (represented on the working group) provided input and recommendations towards regional communication processes and procedures. We appreciate the participation of all in attendance. IPREM is now reviewing the data and developing a simplified model that other stakeholders could follow.

This workshop is one step towards increasing functional interoperability and is an important element in the development of the regional emergency communications strategy.

Interoperability Video Released

The workshop began with IPREM releasing its new interoperability video. Through the various means of outreach that IPREM has conducted on this initiative, we have found that there are a wide variety of definitions and uses of the word interoperability. This has caused some confusion and mixed expectations regarding regional communications and IPREM's current role. In response, IPREM developed an introductory video on interoperability. It discusses topics such as the difference between technical and functional interoperability and "*system of systems*". This video is accessible and can be used for informing and educating a variety of stakeholders.

Regional Emergency Communications Strategy

Communication Flow

In a simplified model, communication and the flow of information can be described as having an origin, a destination, a pipeline to travel along and two metaphorical control valves. When examining communication, a series of questions should be asked. One must first determine what information is required, its origin, and its destination. Next, the control valves must be set– what causes the sender and receiver to open their respective valves so that the information will flow?

A valve may be:

Automatically opening, meaning that it will open as soon as information is present. An example of an automatic opening valve could include a cell phone receiving a text message: as soon as the telephone carrier sends the message, the user is alerted.

Time based, where at predetermined intervals a device or a user will search for new messages. For example, email software can be set to send/ or receive messages at preset time intervals.

Threshold based, this type of valve requires a minimum quantity (threshold) of information before it will open. An example could include personnel waiting to distribute information until 6 of 10 responses are received.

Condition based, this type of valve requires a predetermined condition to be met prior to distributing information. For example, an event notification system for a specific hazard - A message will not be sent unless the parameters of the hazards are reached or exceeded.

The above descriptions relate to the sender's valve. A similar set of valves exist for the recipient– when will they retrieve information: automatically or based on time, threshold or conditions?

Having addressed communication processes and procedures (origin, destination and control valves), one can now address the means of communication– the pipeline. Stakeholders can make informed decisions on which technology best addresses their needs while supporting interoperability with partners as required and authorized– a *System of Systems*.

The above is a simplified model of communications. To achieve functional interoperability one needs to maintain standard operating procedures, training, exercises and strive for regular usage to ensure that communications systems will be implemented in a predictable manner.

In the next issue of the Bulletin we will discuss the concept of a "*System of Systems*"

Functional Interoperability

The effective interaction of governance (authority), standard operating procedures, technology, training, exercises and regular usage to support the predictable exchange of information.

Technical Interoperability

The ability for devices to communicate with each other. For example, radio's ability to send and receive voice or data information from each other.

All Hazard Integrated Regional Concept of Operations

Over the last few months, the working group has achieved significant progress in the development of the proposed model:

- Utilizing the nine Guiding Principles as a foundation, the working group researched 11 models (International, National, Provincial, Regional and Local) and selected three for further review: New Zealand, Los Angeles County and San Francisco Bay Area. Concurrently, broader research on Memorandum of Understandings, roles and responsibilities and collaborative decision making models is underway.
- Developed the draft framework for a Regional Concept of Operations. Key foundation elements include: purpose, membership, roles and responsibilities, activation criteria and operating procedures.
- In July, IPREM hosted a special meeting with the Deputy Solicitor General, Emergency Management BC's Acting Assistant Deputy Minister and nine CAOs from across the Metro Vancouver region to review the draft framework. Collectively, they endorsed the initiative, recommended CAOs as the initial membership for the Regional Advisory Group and agreed to participate in future workshops and exercises.

Foundation Elements of

- The working group expanded to include senior decision makers from Vancouver, Surrey and Delta.
- Introduced and provided updates on the proposed model to RAAC (October 23) and Metro Vancouver Board's Intergovernmental and Administration Committee (November 15). The presentations emphasized the value of the project including:
  - Works within the existing BC Emergency Response Management Structure
  - Provides a forum for CAOs to plan for regional emergency events
  - Optimizes regional coordination and prioritization of resources
  - Enhances regional emergency situational awareness
  - Facilitates collaborative decision making between Local Authorities and the Province

Proposed Model as of December 2013

What is a Concept of Operations?

A description of how a set of capabilities may be employed to achieve desired objectives or end state

Project Purpose:

To develop a model on how local authorities in Metro Vancouver will share information and collaborate on decision making in events of regional emergency significance