

## Preparing for any Challenge

(Taken in part from Daily Press & Argus article April, 2005. Permission to reprint.)

*"We always have to remember Sept. 11. It's probably as important as the day of Pearl Harbor. It's a different type of enemy, obviously. The type of enemy we're facing now is more devious and has more technological advances that make us more vulnerable."*

*Richard Winsett*

### **HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDS**

Livingston County officials agree they are better prepared and better protected than before Sept. 11, 2001, due in large part to homeland security grants and increased cooperation among various agencies.

Livingston County has received just over \$1.1 million of the more than \$18 billion awarded to the state, county, and municipal governments to protect the homeland.

County emergency-response departments received about \$300,000 in grants in 2003 and an estimated \$826,000 was received in 2004.

### **GRANT-FUNDED PLANS**

Governments, emergency responders, school systems and others across the county have been taking steps to strengthen safety and security.

Plans include putting a radio transmitter from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration somewhere in the county. That would allow people with NOAA weather radios to have a better reception of transmissions of weather-related or other emergency warnings.

Grant money also helped fund equipment or training for the Livingston County Road Commission, Drain Commission, Department of Public Health, American Red Cross and hospital, as well as HAZMAT training, county emergency medical services, fire departments and medical services.

For the most part, local officials conduct "tabletop exercises" as opposed to regular full-scale mock situations that require a lot of resources and funding. The tabletop exercises call for officials to go over scenarios in smaller groups.

*"We're prepared enough to mitigate any incident until we get state or federal resources here to help us."*

*Richard Winsett, Director  
911 & Emergency Management*

Livingston County agencies have also signed the Michigan Emergency Management Assistance Compact, which sets out rules and reimbursement rates for government agencies to follow when lending or borrowing resources such as fire trucks or police cars during large-scale emergencies. Participating

agencies submit a list of equipment and resources they have available. This information is compiled into a database managed by the state police in Lansing. In the event of an emergency, the state police will coordinate which agencies contribute what resources. All municipalities are also part of a "mutual aid" agreement under which emergency resources are shared without cost.

### **SCHOOL SAFETY**

Livingston County school districts have made significant improvements in a continuing effort to ensure the safety of students and faculty.

Brighton Area Schools has implemented protocols and programs to help ensure student safety and positive attitudes. They also continually review the crisis plan it put into place after Sept. 11, 2001. They've modified it three times based on information received from conferences and workshops on homeland security. Also, they added protocol and procedures to deal with chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear events.

As for general school safety, Hartland Consolidated Schools said a "significant change" has been the addition of the school resource officer.

### **GRANTS TO SCHOOLS**

In 2004, four school districts – Brighton, Howell, Fowlerville, and the Livingston Educational Service Agency -- were awarded state grants amounting to about \$2,200 per building. The funds were spent doing practices, drills and lockdown procedures, "tabletop reviews", planning scenarios for each building's safety and response, and updating emergency response plans.

### **FIRE DEPARTMENTS**

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security issued grants in 2004 worth nearly \$750 million in direct assistance to firefighters throughout the country. Since 2002, Livingston County Fire Departments have received \$459,521. It has been used to purchase breathing apparatus equipment, anti-terror training programs, and turnout gear for firefighters.

### **EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Livingston County EMS has received about \$60,000 in homeland security grants since 2003. The grant is designated for emergency medical services. They

received equipment and training to protect us in the event of weapons of mass destruction and bioterrorism.

The department has purchases or will purchase radiation detectors, personal protection devices for paramedics and police officers, as well as triage kits and tents for hazardous material spills. Some of the funding has also been earmarked for training.

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*"We're one of the few districts in Michigan that has met federal standards of preparing EMS."*

*– Jeffrey Boyd  
Director, Livingston County EMS*

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#### **OTHER GRANTS**

The Livingston County Board of Commissioners approved purchasing about \$62,000 worth of specialized equipment to protect against terrorist attacks. Officials purchased a 400-square foot inflatable shelter; an enclosed trailer with an air compressor to fill firefighters' and dive teams' breathing tanks; a gas mask testing apparatus; a computer; and GIS system software.

Grant money will also allow the purchase of a mobile command communications vehicle. U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers helped procure a special allocation for the county through a Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grant to help purchase the vehicle. The vehicle is expected to carry about \$27,000 worth of medical equipment and communication equipment.

#### **FUTURE GRANTS**

On April 27, 2005 the State of Michigan announced that nearly \$50 million was awarded to Michigan communities for homeland security and emergency management efforts. Awards to the counties are based on a funding formula that takes into consideration the population and critical infrastructure at risk. The formula was developed by the Michigan Homeland Security Advisory Council which is made up of state and local representatives from the first responder disciplines that would be called upon to assist in a terrorist event.

For 2005, Livingston County will receive \$486,192 from the Statewide Homeland Security Grant Program and \$180,592 from the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program.

Additional homeland security grant information is available on the State of Michigan website at: [www.michigan.gov/emd](http://www.michigan.gov/emd)