

**Report from the Workgroup on Contingency Planning and Emergency Response
to the U.S./Mexico National Coordinators
May 13, 1999**

On May 13, 1999, the Workgroup on Contingency Planning and Emergency Response convened to discuss the achievements and activities since the last Coordinator's meeting and future goals for the workgroup. Participants in the workgroup included representatives from the Federal, State, and Local levels of US and Mexico responsible for contingency planning and emergency response. In keeping of the overall goal of the National Coordinators meeting, public participation was solicited and received throughout the session.

Recommendations and Conclusions

The Workgroup discussions resulted in the following conclusions:

- ▶ The exchange of diplomatic notes which will provide for revision to Annex II of the *La Paz Agreement* and the related signing of the US/Mexico Joint Contingency Plan will occur at the Bi-National Commission Meeting on June 3-4, 1999 in Mexico City. These revisions will enable cross-border response, and will also facilitate timely changes to subsequent plans.
- ▶ Following the signing of the US/ Mexico JCP, the notification procedures within the plan will be tested at the Federal and State levels to ensure that all appropriate parties are informed and aware of the proper notification process.
- ▶ To date, three sister city plans have been completed: Brownsville, TX and Matamoros, Tamps., Laredo, TX and Nuevo Laredo, Tamps., and Eagle Pass, TX and Piedras Negras, Coah. By the end of the calendar year we expect to have two to three additional Sister City plans signed.
- ▶ Spanish CAMEO has been completed and distribution and training will be conducted throughout the remainder of the year.

Throughout the discussions, the following recommendations were reiterated several times:

- ▶ Encourage industry participation and support in all phases of planning and response;
- ▶ Transportation of hazardous materials should be addressed in Federal, State and Local planning efforts along the border;
- ▶ Y2K and counter-terrorism presentations will be included on the agenda at the upcoming Joint Response Team (JRT) meeting to be held in Guanajuato, Gto. Mexico in September 1999; and
- ▶ The lack of equipment and training continues to be identified as challenges for planning and response along the US/Mexico border.

Achievements since the last National Coordinators Meeting

- ▶ Two Sister City Planning Workshops were held in San Diego, CA and Sierra Vista, AZ. and another was scheduled for the Nogales/Nogales Sister Cities in Phoenix, AZ to be held on May 24, 1999.
- ▶ Spanish CAMEO was completed, and plans were made for distribution to begin at the first official training session which is part of the CAMEO99 conference the week of May 24 in Phoenix, AZ.
- ▶ The JRT Outreach SubWorkgroup has held two meetings which focused on organizing outreach efforts.

State and Local Activities

Representatives from the various US/Mexico border States and cities reported on activities which were accomplished since the last NCM and also highlighted planned binational activities. There were many examples of good binational working relationships which were exhibited through successful trainings, exercises, and technical assistance exchanges. The reports demonstrated the extensive amount of work which is being accomplished on a continuing basis and the collaborative vision by the local communities striving to ensure the safety of their citizens' health and environment.