Are we ready? Small town preparedness for large scale emergencies

David E. Eddins
Waycross Fire Department
Waycross, Georgia

October 2009
Certification Statement

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where languages of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: _____________________________________________
Abstract

The City of Waycross, Georgia, is no different than any other community in Georgia or the United States when it comes to potential large scale emergencies/events and preparing for them. The problem is that the plans in place to handle these emergencies are based on training methods geared towards medium to large communities that have personnel and equipment to handle larger scale emergencies. The purpose of this research was to determine if the current training methods and curriculum used to train emergency workers for large scale emergencies/events was adequately meeting the needs of the Waycross Fire Department and City of Waycross, Georgia. The descriptive method was used to answer the following questions: a) What training is available and required for emergency responders on large scale incidents? b) Do emergency responders feel that the training provided adequately prepares their local emergency responders for large scale emergencies? c) What funding is available for training? d) What resource options are available to other small towns in emergency situations? e) What changes, if any, should be made to current training to address small town preparedness? The procedures used in this research consisted of literature review, two surveys, internet search, emails, and interviews. The results clearly showed that Waycross needs to tailor the available training to meet the needs of its community.
# Table of Contents

Abstract --------------------------------------------------------------- 3

Table of Contents ------------------------------------------------------ 4

Introduction ------------------------------------------------------------- 5

Background and Significance --------------------------------------------- 6

Literature Review ------------------------------------------------------- 9

Procedures -------------------------------------------------------------- 32

Limitations and Assumptions -------------------------------------------- 33

Results ---------------------------------------------------------------- 35

Discussion -------------------------------------------------------------- 54

Recommendations -------------------------------------------------------- 60

References -------------------------------------------------------------- 62

Table 1 ---------------------------------------------------------------- 21

Table 2 ---------------------------------------------------------------- 42

Table 3 ---------------------------------------------------------------- 43

Table 4 ---------------------------------------------------------------- 44

Table 5 ---------------------------------------------------------------- 45

Table 6 ---------------------------------------------------------------- 45

Appendix A -------------------------------------------------------------- 70

Appendix B -------------------------------------------------------------- 74

Appendix C -------------------------------------------------------------- 76

Appendix D -------------------------------------------------------------- 78
The City of Waycross, Georgia, through the local Emergency Management Agency (EMA) has prepared emergency plans for handling large scale emergencies in the community. The problem is that these plans are based on training methods that are geared towards medium to large communities that have personnel and equipment to handle larger scale emergencies compared to small communities with very limited resources for large scale emergencies.

The purpose of this research is to determine if the current training methods and curriculum used to train emergency workers for large scale emergencies is adequately meeting the needs of the Waycross Fire Department and the City of Waycross, Georgia. The findings will be used to make recommendations to the local EMA Director and various local responding agencies.

In order to gain the information needed to develop recommendations, this research will seek to answer several questions: a) What training is available and required for emergency responders on large scale incidents? b) Do emergency responders feel that the training provided adequately prepares their local emergency responders for large scale emergencies? c) What funding is available for training? d) What resource options are available to other small towns in emergency situations? e) What changes, if any, should be made to current training to address small town preparedness?
Background and Significance

Waycross, Georgia, is the county seat of Ware County. The area is in the home of the Okefenokee Swamp, an approximately 438,000-acre shallow marsh (Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 2008). Ware County is the largest geographic county of the 159 counties that make up Georgia; and it comprises a land mass of 903 square miles (Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 2008). The City of Waycross covers 11.7 square miles of that area and is the only incorporated city in Ware County (Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 2008). What is now known as Waycross was first known as “Old Nine” or “Number Nine” in the 1820’s (Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 2008). The new town started out as a crossroads for those traveling to and from the southeastern part of the country. Established as a hub for stagecoach traffic, it made the transition as a hub for railroad traffic in the mid 1800’s (Waycross Tourism Bureau and Visitor Center, n.d.). It was the railroad and the highway network established that caused “Old Nine” to become known as Way Cross in 1874 (Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 2008). There are several stories of how the final name came to be. One story claims that a traveler named it because it was “where the ways crossed”. While another version credits the naming to the larger number of churches saying it was “the way of the cross” (Waycross Tourism Bureau and Visitor Center). The railroad lines still exist in Waycross but the stagecoach trails have been replaced with several major highways that converge on the City.

The City of Waycross is unique because it sits pretty much isolated from other cities of comparable or larger size. Any city of comparable size is approximately 60 miles away. This isolation works to the advantage of Waycross when it comes to retail sales and available workforce. The population of Waycross is 15,333 according to the 2000 census; however, this number grows to approximately 55,000 during normal work-day hours.
Like other cities, Waycross plans for large scale emergencies with the help of the local EMA Director and other community leaders and organizations. These emergencies include, but are not limited to, tornadoes, wildfires, hazardous material emergencies and other incidents that could require large scale responses.

Waycross is the home of the CSX Rice Yard. This is the largest CSX computerized rail hump yard on the East Coast. There are 2,500 to 3,000 rail cars per day that pass through the Rice Yard carrying all types of goods, including various hazardous materials. Recent upgrades improved rail capacity by changing from a single main line to double main lines allowing trains to increase in speed from 15 miles per hour to 40 miles per hour (Ice, 2007). Of the rail cars that pass through the Rice Yard on a daily basis, approximately 20 to 50 of these carry hazardous materials (CSX Transportation, Inc., 2002, p.2). The hazardous materials carried vary greatly and cover all hazard classifications (CSX Transportation, Inc., 2006).

The recent upgrades did not merely concentrate on changing the main lines from single to double, the upgrades also sought to improve grade crossing safety. A study conducted by the University of Louisville Center for Hazardous Research and Policy Development and the Citizens for Rail Safety ranked the railroad crossing in downtown Waycross at Isabelle Street and Plant Avenue as the second most dangerous railroad crossing in the country (Hawkins, 2007).

On April 16, 2007, Waycross and Ware County was the sight of the largest wildfire in the history of Georgia. The fire burned approximately 135 square miles of forest and swamp resulting in more than $65 million in timber loss. Firefighters from all over the United States responded to assist with the extinguishment. The estimated cost to fight the fire was $18 million. Fortunately no lives were lost but twenty-one homes were destroyed by the blaze (wsbtv, 2007).
Waycross is no different than any other city in America when it comes to being affected by large scale disasters whether natural or manmade. Waycross is approximately 75 miles from the nearest ocean coastline so the threat of a hurricane is very limited. However, the after effects of a hurricane, such as tropical storm winds, copious amounts of rain and tornadoes, could easily impact Waycross.

Waycross does however serve as a major evacuation hub and route for east and southeast of the City. In 1999 a major evacuation took place on the east coast of the United States caused by Hurricane Floyd, sending thousands of coastal residents fleeing. The mass exodus created a traffic nightmare for Waycross. The evacuation routes from the Georgia coast and eastern Florida coast created a bottle neck in the City as they temporarily merged in the center of town. Also adding to the congestion was the fact that fleeing citizens were trying to secure the first and closest available lodging.

Waycross, other neighboring communities, and the State of Georgia learned a valuable lesson from Floyd: traffic had to be kept moving. Waycross is not the furthermost evacuation point for the region although it is one of the first major shelter sites for those evacuating. However, because of the highway system, it became very clear that the shelters had to be opened as the outer areas filled up. This would allow traffic to flow better and thus improving the speed of the overall evacuation.

The Waycross Fire Department (WFD) runs three shifts of seventeen employees each that man four engines, a ladder truck and a air/light service truck. The WFD’s operating budget for fiscal year 2010 is $3,211,053 (City of Waycross, 2009, p 67). Recent economic downturns have caused reductions in all budget accounts with the exception of payroll and employee benefit related accounts. However, if the economy does not take a turn for the better, the City of
Waycross may have no option but to impose furloughs, layoffs or even terminations. The Waycross Fire Department was approved to hire three additional firefighters in the previous year’s budget. These were the first items removed to address the loss of tax generated revenue in the 2009 budget. Training, station supplies, and small equipment accounts were also reduced mid-year as a result of the economic downturn to help keep the budget balanced.

In the event of an emergency it is important that public safety respond with enough personnel and equipment to be able to bring the situation under control as soon as possible. The local EMA Director has worked with all entities that would be involved in the event that a large scale emergency took place in Waycross. The problem is that these plans are based on training methods that are geared towards medium to large communities that have personnel and equipment to handle larger scale emergencies as compared to a small community with very limited resources. The City of Waycross could easily see its public safety resources overtaxed by any emergency that could happen within the city limits. It is because of the limited resources in the City of Waycross available to deal with large scale emergencies that prompted this research.

This applied research project relates to the National Fire Academy’s *Executive Analysis of Fire Service Operation Emergency Management* in the area of community risk and capability assessment (National Fire Academy [NFA], 2009, p. v). This applied research project also relates to the United States Fire Administration’s operational objective of responding appropriately in a timely manner to emerging issues.

**Literature Review**

The City of Waycross, Georgia, is a small town that has limited resources to include personnel and equipment. Normal emergencies that require response from emergency services will receive limited resources from the local fire and police departments due to daily shift
staffing numbers and the need to have some responders available for other potential emergencies during the same period. Where possible, emergency services generally are able to handle those calls deemed as normal. It is those times when large scale emergencies take place that community resources are pushed to their limits. The City of Waycross does not have the resources available to handle large scale emergencies even though plans are in place for such circumstances. These plans are based on training methods geared towards medium to large communities.

In order to gain an understanding of how other communities prepare for and handle large scale emergencies, a literature review took place. Review of the literature available found that there are other emergency responding agencies and communities in Georgia facing the same circumstances when it comes to large scale emergencies and limited resources.

There is no doubt that public safety has evolved since first being organized. Technology and events have helped create or demand change in emergency services. The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, on the World Trade Center Towers brought about a new age for America and public safety employees. Even though procedures for managing emergency scenes had been in place in the fire service for years, fire departments and fire officers chose whether they would use the information or not. One of the earliest systems used in the American Fire Service to help manage fire scenes came about in the 1970’s as a result of several large fires in southern California. Local, state, and federal agencies found themselves working together on the fires but each had different methods and procedures. FIRESCOPE (FIre RESources of California Organized for Potential Emergencies) was organized as a result. From this newly formed organization came the first standard called Incident Command System (ICS) that provided an organized method for all participating agencies working at future wildfires. As a result of the
success of ICS on large scale multijurisdictional incidents the system began to be used at structure fires and ultimately all emergency scenes (Fundamentals of Fire Fighter Skills, 2004).

Shortly after ICS began to reach popularity across America with federal and most state wildland firefighters, a new system was developed to address day-to-day fire department calls. Fireground Command (FGC) would gain popularity with fire departments across the country that did not have a lot of wildfires. NFPA 1561, Standard on Fire Department Incident Management System, was released in 1990 addressing the key components of a system that could be used on any emergency scene (Fundamentals of Fire Fighter Skills, 2004).

NFPA 1561 did not dictate which incident management system was to be used. However, because of the 2001 terrorist attacks public safety employees across the nation would now be required to use a single standard incident management system. The document came about as a result of Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) – 5 Management of Domestic Incidents and is known as the National Incident Management System (NIMS) (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2004).

The first question that the literature review sought to answer was: What training is available and required for emergency responders on large scale emergencies?

Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council is the firefighter certifying agency of for 25,253 Georgia firefighters. The Council is responsible for establishing minimum standards for certification and training of firefighters in the State of Georgia. Georgia has a total of 663 compliant fire departments that consists of 148 full-time/career, 47 combination, 461 volunteer and 7 airport departments (L. Pardue, personal communication, August 24, 2009).

Currently the only areas that require continuing education for annual recertification in the State of Georgia are firefighter, fire investigator, fire inspector, and fire and life safety educator.
This annual recertification only applies to full-time firefighters. Annual training hours to maintain certification in these areas depends on the exemption status of the employee. Non-exempt employees are required to have 24 hours of annual continuing education training in each area that they want to maintain state certification. Exempt employees, such as the Fire Chief and administrative staff, are required to have 40 hours of annual continuing education in the firefighter area and 24 hours of annual continuing education in each of the other areas they wish to maintain State certification (Georgia Firefighters Standards and Training Council, n.d.).

However, the Official Code of Georgia (O.C.G.A) Section 38-3-57 Establishment of standards, verifiable, performance based unified incident command system; utilization; training; implementation; funding requires local agencies to have established an ICS system by October 1, 2004, in order to be eligible for state reimbursement for any response or recovery related expenses (Official Code of Georgia, 2004-05).

There are no state requirements for fire officer or chief officer in Georgia. However, the literature review did find that seven classes relating to Incident Management were being offered at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC). Further investigation into these classes found alarming information. The GPSTC website provides the viewer with information on the classes, dates available and the number of seats available or number on a waiting list prior to registering. Each of the Incident Management classes currently offered at the GPSTC has 20 seats available for a full class. At the time of this literature review all of the seats in all seven classes were still available with some scheduled to begin in less than 30 days of the literature review (Georgia Public Safety Training Center, 2009).

This phenomenon can be blamed on the economic downturn of 2008 and 2009. As a result of the economic downturn, July 1, 2009, saw the first time that students attending GPSTC
had to pay for their meals (Georgia Public Safety Training Center, 2009). However, a closer inspection of the GPSTC website may shed further light on the reason for all available seats still being available in all seven Incident Command related classes. The prerequisite to all seven classes required the applicant to be a member of the All Hazards Incident Management Team (IMT). The GPSTC requirements further recommended members of the State’s Type 3 IMT’s to attend (Georgia Public Safety Training Center). Type 3 IMT’s are regional teams comprised of multiple agencies from various local governments (North Central Texas Type 3 Incident Management Team, 2008).

Participation on these teams requires the local governments support and agreement to allow employees to actively participate in training and actual incidents. Activation of the IMT requires those participating employees to be allowed to leave their job to travel with the team if available resources permit. Hurricane Katrina was an example of IMT’s being activated. Small fire departments would not be allowed to participate or would incur overtime in order to backfill the void created by an employee or employees being allowed to participate in the call up. Smaller communities have emergency workers that want to participate on IMT’s but the large number of training hours required and limited staffing prevents them (J. Pollock, personal communication, June, 2007).

Type 3 IMT’s in Georgia are established by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency. GEMA establishes the minimum requirements and standards for Type 3 teams and even decides what fire department will house any vehicles and equipment associated with the team. To be part of a Type 3 IMT in Georgia requires the participating employee to receive numerous hours of training. The amount of training required depends on the specific position that the individual is applying for.
Emails were sent to the GEMA Fire Services Coordinator, Ronnie Register, requesting information on training requirements for an individual to become part of a State Type 3 IMT. The basic requirements were ICS 100, *Introduction for Operational Fire Responders*; ICS 200, *Basic NIMS ICS for Operational Fire Responders*; ICS 300, *Intermediate All-Hazards NIMS ICS Review for Expanding Incidents*; ICS 400, *Fundamental Review for Command and General Staff*. Also required are an All Hazards IMT course, positional training and completion of a position task book for the specific IMT position selected. Mr. Register was not able to provide all of the specifics of training requirements but did provide contact information for other agencies (R. Register, personal communication, August 12, 2009).

Stephen Couch, an employee of the GPSTC, was contacted on the recommendation of Ronnie Register concerning the specific classes offered by GPSTC for IMT positions. Mr. Couch confirmed that the classes offered for specific IMT positions were designed primarily for those individuals that had completed the All-Hazards Incident Management Training course and will be assigned to a Type 3 team (S. Couch, personal communication, August 13, 2009).

The Federal Emergency Management Agency offers campus and online training to help prepare emergency workers for large scale emergencies through the National Fire Academy (NFA) in Emmitsburg, Maryland. One class offered on campus that is part of the Georgia Type 3 IMT is the 6-day 50 hours course called All Hazards IMT. The NFA also offers ICS 100, 200 and 300 online (U.S. Fire Administration, n.d.).

When it comes to the completion of the task book for the target IMT position the individual is applying for, the individual is required to go through a field mentoring process. This process requires the candidate to attend actual events in a “trainee” or “apprentice” position depending on his/her ability to meet training requirements and existing or predicted shortages of
required IMT personnel in his/her target position. The apprentice should be able to qualify for the target position in three to six years whereas the trainee is generally assigned for a period of one year in the target position (Georgia Emergency Management Agency, 2007). This is not a quick process and the individual has no control over the ability to complete the process in order to obtain the ability to become an assigned participant on the regional or state IMT position that he or she is seeking. A conversation with the Ware County EMA Director, Jonathan Daniel, makes this abundantly clear. He has spent the past three years trying to obtain Plans and Logistics IMT status. Mr. Daniel has met all the requirements with the exception of being able to go to actual events where an IMT has been activated in order to participate in the field mentoring phase of the requirements. When asked why he had not met the field mentoring requirement he stated that there have not been any incidents to occur to provide the opportunity (J. Daniel, personal communication, August 20, 2009).

The second question that the literature review looked to answer asked: Do emergency responders feel that the training provided adequately prepares their local emergency responders for large scale incidents?

Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) – 5 Management of Domestic Incidents adoption saw all emergency services personnel across the country taking NIMS related training in order to be compliant with the directive. Initial mandated NIMS training required ICS 100 – Introduction to NIMS; ICS 200 – Basic ICS; and ICS 700 – NIMS: An Introduction. Once departments became compliant additional classes were required. The year 2007 saw the addition of ICS 300 – Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents. ICS 400 – Advanced ICS for Complex Incidents and Multi-Agency Coordination Systems would be the most recent compliance requirement (Grainer, 2009).
The literature review found very little information that would address the second question of the literature review. However, a conversation with a member of the Georgia Firefighter’s Standard and Training Council, Matt Perry, shed some light on the concerns of the Council concerning state training requirements for Georgia career and volunteer firefighters.

Currently the Official Code of Georgia (O.C.G.A.) Section 25-4-8 requires that only career “full-time” firefighters in Georgia be certified firefighters. To obtain this certification status the candidate must meet the following guidelines:

- At least 18 years of age.
- Not have been convicted of a felony within 10 years prior to employment. There is an exception: Firefighters who have been convicted of a felony and have participated in the Georgia Department of Corrections Firefighter program may be state certified providing that certain provisions have been met.
- Have good moral character as determined by investigation under procedure approved by Council.
- Be fingerprinted and a search made of local, state, and national fingerprint files to disclose any criminal record.
- Be in good physical condition as determined by a medical examination and successfully pass the minimum physical agility requirements as established by the Council.
- Posses, or achieve within 12 months after employment, a high school diploma or a general education development equivalency.
- Complete the Georgia Basic Firefighter Training Course approved by the Council and verified by successful completion of the State Firefighter Certification Test.
Georgia requirements are far less for a volunteer firefighter. In order to be a volunteer firefighter in the State of Georgia an individual simply has to be registered. This requires an individual to complete a 95-hour course called Registered Volunteer Firefighter with Live Fire (Module One Basic Firefighter) (Georgia Public Safety Training Center, n.d.). This training can be done in-house by the local fire department or at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center.

Candidates to become volunteer firefighters in Georgia are not subjected to physicals, background checks, fingerprinting, physical agility tests, or minimum education requirements. Furthermore, the State of Georgia does not require any annual training for volunteer firefighters once they have meet their initial 95 hours of training. Full-time career firefighters have been and continue to be held to higher standards to do the same job. According to Lyn Pardue, Director of Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council, this very subject was a topic in a recent meeting of the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council as they met to review rules and regulations for Georgia’s firefighting force (L. Pardue, personal communication, August 24, 2009).

Matt Perry, an employee of the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council, expressed concerns over requiring Georgia volunteer firefighters to have less training requirements in order to perform firefighting duties as compared to career firefighters. His concerns were: a) that an emergency did not know the difference between career and volunteer; b) citizens expected the same level of service and protection regardless of career or volunteer firefighter; and finally c) with less training requirements, are career fire departments receiving equal assistance during mutual aid situations when volunteers responded (M. Perry, personal communication, August 19, 2009).
So where do volunteer firefighters and other emergency workers stand when it comes to training requirements for large scale emergencies? It is easily conceivable that many of the emergency workers that met the compliance standard for NIMS training by taking ICS 100, ICS 200, and ICS 700 have had no other training or review. The mandate for compliance did not and to this day does not require annual training or refresher training at any NIMS training level. In light of this, two questions become very important:

1) How much of their [previous] training can actually be applied effectively? 2) If a major incident (or event) were to occur tomorrow, will there be adequate number of appropriately trained personnel available to implement a functional incident command system – even for a short time (i.e., until more experienced and qualified resources can be deployed to assist)? (Grainer, 2009, p. 3).

Clare, Iowa, held a mock disaster drill with a local business. The drill simulated a grain dust explosion. Chief Brian Foster of the Barnum Fire Department explained that one of the valuable lessons that can be learned through multi-agency mock drills is finding out what other departments can offer to help his own department. Tony Jorgenson, from the Webster County EMA, expressed his admiration for volunteer fire chiefs due to them being held to the same training standards as full-time career departments. He went on to say that in most cases the small town volunteer fire departments are held to the same standard as full-time fire department with much fewer resources (Madsen, 2009).

State and Federal assistance can be summons during severe weather emergencies when local resources are used up and additional help will be required. However, local officials must understand that this is going to take time. State and Federal assistance requests must go through the proper procedures. Recent disasters like Hurricane Katrina showed just how important it is
for residents and communities to prepare in advance. Both need to be ready to handle the circumstances associated with identified large scale emergencies for at least three days or more before help can arrive from State and Federal agencies (Stambaugh & Sensenig, 2008).

The best made plans can be easily unraveled by the nature of the large scale emergency. When assessing staff requirements for potential emergencies it may be realistic to plan on mutual aid response from neighboring communities when the event is isolated to a specific area. It is during those times that the emergency affects neighboring communities that the anticipated mutual aid response will not be possible. It is during these times that communities find out just how vulnerable they really are (Stambaugh & Sensenig, 2008).

Georgia has worked to prepare for emergencies that overwhelm communities through regional response teams. A difference that communities will see when they are required to call for regional assistance because the emergency has spread to a point that it affects their neighboring communities is lack of familiarization with the incoming crews. NIMS was designed to have all emergency responders operating on the same page. However, due to differences in tactical operations used by departments from different regions of the state and country operational procedures can be hampered.

The wildfires in Ware County, Georgia, required assistance from Georgia regional groups as well as Federal response teams. According to a letter release from the Georgia’s Governor’s office, the Ware County fires had 82 fire departments respond to assist with firefighting efforts as well as 11 Federal Mutual Aid Groups (Office of the Governor of the State of Georgia, 2008). When talking with the local emergency responders concerning the incoming assistance the major theme was how chaotic the situation became as State and Federal officials began to show up. They mentioned that the transition to unified command took some time to settle between the
agencies. The local emergency responders had not seen an emergency of the magnitude that the wildfires brought (M. Clark & J. Blackburn, personal communication, Summer, 2008).

The third question that the literature review looked to answer asked: *What funding is available for training?*

According to records found on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) website, funding through grants for the fire service began in 2001 with the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG). The program was extremely popular with the fire service across the country. FEMA received 31,295 grant applications from 18,915 fire departments in the first year of the program. The initial requests totaled $2.99 billion. Grants were awarded to 1,855 local fire departments and 31 fire service organizations across the United States for a total of $96,586,668 (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 2001).

The 2001 AFG program limited funding to six categories: 1) fire prevention; 2) firefighting equipment; 3) personal protective equipment; 4) training; 5) firefighting vehicles; and 6) wellness and fitness. Fire departments were allowed to apply for grants in up to two categories. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the number of grants awarded in the 2001 AFG Program showing that 31 career fire departments and 129 volunteer and/or combination fire departments received funding for the training category (FEMA, 2001). The State of Georgia received four training grants for a total of $167,928 (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], n.d.).
The 2001 AFG annual report would be the only annual report that identified grants for training and award amounts for individual fire departments. AFG statistical reports for FY 2002 and 2003 do not provide any information on how much money went specifically to training. Amounts awarded for training is available in the award announcements on the FEMA website for the years 2004 to 2008 but requires going through the thousands of recipients awarded grants each year (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], n.d.). The literature review did seek to determine the amounts awarded to fire departments in Georgia and determine what training was provided with the money provided.

The official website of FEMA provided a breakdown by year, state and department of those that were successful in receiving Federal grants (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 2009). Email contact made with several of the fire departments in Georgia that received AFG money for training showed that this money was used for a variety of training needs. Clayton County Fire and Emergency Services in Clayton County, Georgia, received $7,500 for training from the 2004 AFG program. These funds were used to send four of the employees to Louisville, Kentucky, for a National Fire Staff and Command class. The same

---

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Grants to Local Career Departments</th>
<th>Grants to Fire Service Organizations</th>
<th>Grants to Fire Service Organizations</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>Amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Prevention</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>$4,053,961</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>$5,017,524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firefighting Equipment</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>$6,431,688</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>$8,487,776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Protective Equipment</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>$14,566,894</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>$19,569,915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>$2,019,768</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>$3,179,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firefighting Vehicles</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>$6,507,451</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>$13,905,155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellness and Fitness</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>$4,327,181</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>$3,929,539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>$37,906,943</td>
<td>1,375</td>
<td>$54,089,497</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 2001)
department also received $6,514 from the 2005 AFG program and used the money to send four employees to Dallas, Texas, to attend the International Association of Fire Chief’s Convention. Then again in 2006 the Clayton County Fire Department and Emergency Services received $18,000 for training from the AFG program. This grant funded a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosive (CBRNE) exercise at the Clayton County Judicial Complex (J. Maloy, personal communication, August 17, 2009).

Bryan County Fire Department received $31,700 for training from the 2005 AFG program. This money was used to hire an outside instructor to teach the different levels of Hazardous Materials. The instructor taught the National Professional Qualifications (NPQ) Hazmat Awareness, Operations and Technician classes to members of the department. This training was able to provide the Bryan County Fire Department with Hazmat Technician Certified employees (J. Anderson, personal communication, July 24, 2009).

The Gainesville Fire Department in Gainesville, Georgia, received $84,000 from the 2005 AFG program. The grant provided training in Technical Rescue covering areas like confined space, trench, and high and low angle rescue (J. Canada, personal communication, July 23, 2009).

The Colquitt-Miller County Fire Department in Colquitt County, Georgia, received $81,900 from the 2006 AFG program. This grant award went to fund a regional project for a Methamphetamine Lab Safe Operations pilot program. The grant funded three classes in the 2nd GEMA District that included all public safety agencies. The classes included experts in the field of methamphetamine labs who taught public safety officials how to safely handle calls to meth labs. As a result of the popularity of the training and the valuable information given a compact disc was produced to distribution (C. Tully, personal communication, July 24, 2009).
West Point Fire Department in West Point, Georgia, received $1,940 from the 2008 AFG program that went towards training communications officers. The communications system was completely overhauled for the fire service and training was required for those officers that would staff the radio system. West Point Fire Department also received a grant through the Department of Human Resources (DHR) in 2004 to host an Advanced Burn Life Support class (M. Smith, personal communication, July 24, 2009).

Statesboro Fire Department in Statesboro, Georgia, received $256,000 from the 2008 AFG program for training and used the funds to purchase a mobile live fire simulator. The mobile simulator would allow the Statesboro Fire Department to meet the live fire training requirement for State of Georgia firefighter certification of new hires. The mobile simulator also helps meet the annual 12-hour live fire training requirement set forth by the Insurance Services Office (ISO) (D. J. Merrifield, personal communication, July 24, 2009).

Officers of the Waycross Fire Department have attended ICS 300 and ICS 400 classes in Waycross, Georgia, that were sponsored by the Southeast Health District which is located in Waycross. The district training coordinator of the Southeast Health District stated that due to the large numbers of employees employed by the district that were required to have NIMS related training it only made since for the Southeast Health District to host the training (M. B. Burke, personal communication, August 13, 2009).

The Southeast Health District does not receive any grant funding in order to sponsor regional training. Money that is used for this type of training comes from funds in the State of Georgia’s emergency preparedness budget or from funds available from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The District office does not have a training budget. Employees of the District office attend training and bring the information back to the county and district levels. By having
local staff members’ providing the instruction helps to keep cost down (M. B. Burke, personal communication, August 13, 2009).

Janet Napolitano, Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, reported that input from firefighters was a major reason for requested budget cuts by President Obama in the AFG program. The proposed budget cuts would reduce the AFG funding from $565 million to $170 million. Secretary Napolitano told the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee and the Homeland Security Committee that she had received feedback from fire departments and local governments that staffing was more pressing than equipment and training (DHS Secretary cites firefighter input in reducing AFG funding, 2009). Secretary Napolitano would state two primary justifications for the reduction in the AFG program in hearings before Congress. The initial justification for the reduction was to provide additional money for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program. SAFER would receive double the funding from the previous year to retain or rehire firefighters. The second reason given was that $210 million would be made available for the fire station construction grant that was part of the economic stimulus legislation passed in 2009 (The Big Red Guide, n.d.).

The House of Representatives and Senate both passed bills that would increase that amount of funding for the AFG program for FY 2010. Both bills provided for the AFG to be funded at $390 million instead of the initial request from President Obama of $170 million (The Big Red Guide, n.d.).

The initial funding for the AFG program in 2001 was $100 million (U.S. Fire Administration’s Grants Program Office, 2001). Funding for the 2002 AFG increased more than three times the amount of the 2001 program to $360 million (U.S. Fire Administration’s Grants Program Office, 2002). The AFG program for 2003 saw the funding more than double from the
previous year to $750 million (Department of Homeland Security, Office of State & Local Government Coordination & Preparedness’ Fire Grants Program Office, 2005). The level of funding made the AFG program the largest financial assistance program for the fire service in the United States. The level of funding did not diminish any with the funding budgeted for the 2004 AFG program keeping it at the 2003 level of $750 million (Department of Homeland Security, Preparedness Directorate Office of Grants and Training, n.d.). However, FY 2005 saw the AFG program have a reduction of $100 million bringing the funding to $650 million (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d.). The AFG program continued to see a reduction in funding when Congress only approved $648,450,000 for the FY 2006 period (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d.). The 2007 AFG program would see even deeper cuts with the approval of $490 million to fund the program another year (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], n.d.). The AFG program funding appeared to be returning to the previous year funding with the approval of the FY 2008 Congressional budget that had appropriated $560 million (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2008). Then again with the approval of the FY 2009 budget Congress grant the AFG program another increase in funding by approving $565 million (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2009).

In a letter written to President Obama, Jerry Brant expressed his concerns over the drastic cuts proposed by the President. Mr. Brant explained that he had 40 years of service as a volunteer firefighter and described the importance of the fire service receiving much needed funding over the past 10 years through the AFG program, especially volunteer fire departments. He mentioned that the funding made available allowed fire departments to be able to purchase equipment and receive training that made it possible for them to respond to a variety of calls that they were not previously trained or equipped for. He offered the annual large number of requests
for funding as proof of the AFG program’s importance to the fire service by stating that each year requests for funding are four to five times more than money available (Fire Grants Help, 2009).

Jerry Brant also discussed results from a survey performed by the Fireman’s Fund Insurance Company that showed one fourth of the nation’s fire departments do not have the proper equipment to perform automobile extrications. Also identified in the survey was that 76 percent of the 9,500 fire departments surveyed did not feel that they were adequately trained to respond to emergencies like terrorism and Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) (Fire Grants Help, 2009).

Michael Docterman, Analyst with the Incident Management Systems Integration Division at the National Integration Center, stated that there are Federal Preparedness grants available to those jurisdictions and/or organizations that meet the NIMS implementation requirements. These funds are to be used strictly for those activities that would prepare an agency or jurisdiction to respond to an incident. The grants are available through different government organizations including the Department of Education, Department of Energy and the Department of Health and Human Services. Funding is also available through FEMA under the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) specifically through the State Homeland Security Program (M. Docterman, personal communication, August 13, 2009).

The fourth question that the literature review sought to answer is: *What resource options are available to other small towns in emergency situations?*

The term *resources* can have a variety of meanings depending on the emergency situation at hand. Small communities have limited resources when compared to medium and large
communities. Two methods used to overcome the limited resources have been 1) mutual aid or 2) automatic aid.

The two terms have become prevalent over the past few years as the number of organizations across the United States have developed aid agreements. The trend is not limited to emergency services providers. State and local governments, as well as for-profit and nonprofit organizations, are joining in on aid agreements for times of emergencies (Suburban Emergency Management Project, 2002).

An early example of mutual aid was the early years of the fire service with the use of bucket brigades. There was a time when a gentleman’s agreement or handshake was all it took for an agreement. Since that time more formal written agreements have become common practice that requires legal language and scrutiny along with approval of elected officials or boards. The absence of a legal written agreement may find the parties in court answering to a lawsuit (Riordan & Moye, 2007).

In 1950 California Governor Earl Warren signed a Civil Defense Act for the state. This Act was to ensure that California was prepared in case the Soviet Union attacked. The original focus was geared towards the health and safety of citizens and how hospitals, firefighters, and police would manage the needs. In 1952 the Utility Policy Committee was created in order to address the importance of maintaining utilities in the event of an attack or emergency situation. Both of these created mutual aid agreements throughout California among fire, police, hospitals, and water and power companies (Riordan & Moye, 2007).

Hurricane Floyd helped to bring about mutual aid agreements in North Carolina. The American Water Works Association (AWWA) of North Carolina and the Water Environment Association formed a disaster preparedness committee in 1999 following the hurricane. The
committee established a mutual aid coordinator, developed mutual aid response teams, developed a checklist for mutual aid responders and established a statewide mutual aid website (Riordan & Moye, 2007).

Police departments have also seen the advantages of having mutual aid agreements with other police departments. One particular area that mutual aid has seen benefits for police agencies is in the development of bomb squads. High costs and training requirements for bomb squads make it impossible for smaller communities to have these units. In 1994 the projected cost to provide a bomb squad of two trained technicians with the minimum equipment was $25,000. In order to provide or have access to bomb disposal equipment small communities would have to rely on mutual aid agreements with larger communities that could better afford the squads (Jernigan & LaBrusciano, 1994).

In 1981 Florida activated the Florida Mutual Aid Act that was designed to establish a standard mutual aid agreement for law enforcement agencies in Florida. The Mutual Aid Act provided for voluntary agreements as well as clearing the way for law enforcement agencies to cross jurisdictional lines. This Act enabled small communities access to equipment, personnel, and specialized teams or units that otherwise would not be available to them (Jernigan & LaBrusciano, 1994).

There are some sticking points with mutual aid agreements in the form of frequent responses, long-term deployments, damaged or expended equipment, injuries, maintenance and any of the other costs related items. Another item that may hinder mutual aid agreements is the ability of other departments to be able to reciprocate with equal equipment and staffing. Reciprocation was a major concern of Albany Fire Chief James Arrowood with a neighboring county to Albany, Georgia. The Albany Fire Department is a career department with 11 fire
stations and 156 firefighters split across three shifts. Lee County was a combination department that has seven fire stations. Only four of the seven stations are manned 24 hours a day. Each of the three shifts for the Lee County Fire Department has eight firefighters. Anytime talk of a mutual aid agreement would surface the ability of Lee County to offer equal services in return would be brought up and end the talks of a mutual aid agreement between the two departments (J. Arrowood, personal communication, Summer, 2004).

When emergencies grow to the point that local resources are overwhelmed and the emergency has the potential to last several days, local mutual aid agreements are likely to be overwhelmed as well. It is because of those large scale emergencies that regional mutual aid groups have emerged. Georgia has one such group known as Georgia Mutual Aid Group (GMAG). GMAG started in 1994 in the Metro Atlanta area and has since grown state wide. GMAG uses the State of Georgia’s GEMA eight regional districts to identify geographic response areas (Georgia Mutual Aid Group [GMAG], n.d.).

When GMAG expanded outside of the Metro Atlanta area, responding fire departments would not be reimbursed. This limited the number of fire departments that signed up as members. In recent years GMAG has joined forces with GEMA in order to better serve communities throughout the State of Georgia. However, a call from GMAG for mutual aid assistance does not guarantee the responding department any reimbursement. For that matter a call from GEMA does not guarantee reimbursement either (J. Daniel, personal communication, September 4, 2009).

Automatic aid is the least used form of aid in South Georgia. Because of the costs associated with fuel, increased maintenance, and simply having equipment and personnel out of the community have been the downfall of automatic aid agreements in the area. Reimbursement
has been a major issue affecting automatic aid as well as level of services being provided. The Albany Fire Department can provide fully staffed fire trucks to neighboring cities and counties but would not receive the same in return under any kind of aid agreement with these communities. Under these circumstances how are the tax payers of Dougherty County receiving equal value for the taxes they pay (J. Arrowood, 2004)?

A resource that has come about in recent years has been Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Teams. A 1985 earthquake in Mexico City, Mexico, where over 400 buildings collapsed and caused the deaths of 9,500 people made international search and rescue teams realize the importance for specialized training. In 1989 an earthquake in Loma Prieta, California, prompted the State of California to develop eight USAR teams. Each team consisted of 56 members. The USAR teams were coordinated and received funding from FEMA. The California USAR teams would become the model for future USAR teams in America (New Zealand Urban Search and Rescue, n.d.).

In an article published in Fire Engineering, John “Skip” Coleman asked, “If a disaster occurred in your community, would you be able to call on your department’s USAR team/capabilities, or would you have to rely on mutual aid?” The larger departments that responded to the question either had USAR teams locally or access to teams in a relatively short time. Some smaller departments that responded to the question had quick access to local USAR teams while others stated that they would be on their own for the duration of the emergency (Coleman, 2009).

Floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, plane crashes, hazardous material spills and catastrophic building collapses are the situations considered as urban disasters and are eligible for response from the 25 FEMA sponsored USAR teams (Bryant, n.d.).
Georgia has established Georgia Search and Rescue (GSAR) Teams throughout the state. Governor Sonny Perdue announced in February 2004 that Georgia would establish its own heavy search and rescue teams. The teams would be funded by $9 million received from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Domestic Preparedness (Office of the Governor of Georgia, 2004). The number of GSAR teams has grown to 10.

The final question that the literature review looked to answer was: *What changes, if any, should be made to the current training to address small town preparedness?*

The Office of Rural Health Policy, Health Resources and Services Administration, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services prepared a report addressing rural communities and emergency preparedness. The report looked at rural health preparedness and recognized that rural communities would not be able to handle unusual spikes in their health care services due to unusual emergencies. A questionnaire send to State Offices of Rural Health was returned by two-thirds of the participants with some important information. Items of interests were areas that were addressed as needing improvement. The following are some of those areas mentioned:

- The lack of funding was listed as the main barrier to preparedness.
- Lack of communications and coordination were considered the greatest barrier next to lack of funding.
- Rural providers and hospitals lack training to respond to mass casualty events.
- Limited number of health care providers available in rural communities.

The report determined that rural communities are most vulnerable and in turn least capable to respond to large scale disasters (Office of Rural Health Policy, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2002).
The literature review did not find any information to answer this question from any of the emergency services organizations.

Procedures

The initial research for this applied research project began during the Executive Analysis of Fire Service Operations in Emergency Management class held at the National Fire Academy (NFA) April 20 through May 1, 2009. The researcher searched for information on small communities and their training for large scale emergencies only to discover that no information was available on the subject in the Learning Resource Center at the National Fire Academy.

After leaving the NFA the researcher developed and sent out two surveys using the online survey group Survey Monkey. The first survey consisting of 25 questions was sent via email to 159 Emergency Management Directors in the State of Georgia that are assigned to each of the 159 Georgia counties on May 27, 2009 (Appendix A). The email addresses were obtained from the GEMA website (Georgia Emergency Management Agency [GEMA], 2009). A total of 163 emails were sent to EMA Directors due to four individuals having two email addresses listed. Of the 159 EMA Directors sent surveys only 28 or 17.6% returned responses.

The second survey consisting of 33 questions was sent via email to 44 Fire Chiefs in the State of Georgia on May 28, 2009. The Fire Chiefs were selected at random with 16 or 36.3% returning a response (Appendix B). A list of Georgia fire departments was obtained from the Georgia Firefighters Standards and Training Council’s website (Georgia Firefighters Standards and Training Council, 2009). The email addresses were obtained through emails sent to the Southwest Georgia Fire Chiefs Association and South Central Fire Chiefs Association. These two associations cover 44 of the State’s 159 counties. Other email addresses for Georgia fire chiefs was obtained through an internet search of city and county websites.
Emails were also sent to nine Georgia fire chiefs because their fire departments had received AFG funding listed under “Training” according to the FEMA website (FEMA, n.d.). The purpose of the emails was to find out exactly what the funds were spent on. Of the 9 emails sent, 7 or 77% returned responses.

The researcher also used the internet to search for any books that may be found on small communities and their preparedness for large scale emergencies and none were found. However, the internet search for the same information did find articles and information on various websites. Most of the information found through the internet search was from agencies outside of the fire service. The information found through the surveys and internet search provided the bulk of the information needed to address the research questions.

The researcher performed personal interviews and email correspondences with the Ware County EMA Director and Ware County Public Health Department employees. The purpose of these contacts was to gain information on their local training requirements and to find out how they had handled past incidents considered to be large scale for their community. Emails were also sent to the Ronnie Register, the Fire Services Program Coordinator for Georgia’s EMA, to obtain information of Georgia’s IMT Type 3 teams.

The researcher also had personal conversations with various individuals from different agencies concerning their role and view concerning preparedness for large scale emergencies.

Limitations and Assumption

This research project was met with several limitations. First was the lack of printed material. A lot of time was spent by the researcher trying to find material that addressed small communities and their preparedness for large scale emergencies. The researcher visited libraries, book stores and searched the internet for information for this applied research project. The fire
service had very little information available that addressed small communities and their preparedness for large scale emergencies.

Another limitation was the lack of email contact information available for Georgia fire chiefs in order to send the surveys. This reduced the amount of surveys sent to Georgia fire chiefs as well as limited a cross section of Georgia communities by population. This is especially important since Georgia has 148 full-time/career, 47 combination, and 461 volunteer fire departments.

The researcher asked both the Georgia EMA Directors and Georgia fire chiefs in their surveys if their assigned areas had received any funding for large scale emergency/event training. Once the responses to the surveys had been collected the researcher realized that no question was asked regarding if any funding for training had been applied for; and if not, was there a reason for not submitting a request.

The low number of responses to the two surveys provided a limited picture. Additional responses could have changed the overall results.

The researcher did not include the results of both surveys due to the size of the material received. However, the complete results of both surveys area available upon request.

With the recent increase in large scale disasters that have taken place in the United States along with the push from the Federal Government for preparedness, the researcher assumed that there would be plenty of material available.

Finally, the research found that no single source or point of contact existed for obtaining information on training requirements for Georgia Type 3 IMT’S. It was not uncommon for the researcher to be sent to several people from various agencies to find answers concerning Type 3 IMT’s by those that are members, coordinators or instructors of classes associated them.
Definitions of Terms

**Automatic Aid:** is assistance dispatched automatically by contractual agreement between two communities or fire districts. This differs from mutual aid or assistance arranged on case by case basis (Insurance Services Office [ISO], 1996).

**Emergency:** An emergency is an unplanned event that can cause death or significant injuries to individuals, or that can shut down businesses, disrupt operations, cause physical or environmental damage (Ithaca College, n.d.).

**Large Scale:** an event, managed by NIMS, including, but not limited to:
- Multiple alarm fire incident
- Evacuation
- Major HAZMAT / public safety incident (bomb)
- Search and rescue operation
- Major accident/road closures
- Rail / air accident

(West Whiteland Fire Police, n.d., p. 1)

**Mutual Aid:** an intergovernmental or interagency agreement providing for shared and common assistance when requested by one of the member agencies (URBANA CODE & Municipal Code Corporation, 1998).

Results

The information gathered in the literature review, internet search, interviews, emails, and surveys sent to Georgia Fire Chiefs and Georgia EMA Directors provided the data necessary to answer the research questions.

Research question number one asked: *What training is available and required for emergency responders on large scale incidents?*

An extensive literature review was done in order to answer this question only to find that no major requirements were in place for the everyday emergency responder dealing with large
scale emergencies. However, the internet search did find that there is training available for multi-agency responses to emergency situations.

The Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC) listed seven classes related to Incident Management on their website but upon further investigation the researcher discovered that these classes limited participation. The classes were for those that were part of the State’s Regional All Hazards Type 3 IMT teams (Georgia Public Safety Training Center, 2009).

The requirement could have a negative impact on small community fire departments and an even greater negative impact on volunteer fire departments. This is because of the amount of training and time required to be away from the job (J. Pollock, 2007). For the volunteer firefighter the time away from the job would be his or her employment other than the fire department.

Other classes were offered at the GPSTC concerning different aspects of large scale emergencies:

- Disaster Response and Recovery Operations
- Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Management and Operations
- Mass Fatality Incident Response
- Command and General Staff for Local IMT’s
- Incident Safety Officer: ISO
- NIMS: Advanced ICS Command and General Staff – Complex Incidents (IS400)
- NIMS – Basic Incident Command System (IS200)
- NIMS – Intermediate Incident Command System for Expanding Incidents (IS 300) (Georgia Public Safety Training Center, 2009).
Training for multi-agency responses was also found on the website of the National Fire Academy (NFA) that is offered through on-campus courses and online training. The following classes were listed on the NFA website as on-campus courses at the time of this research.

- Command and Control Decision Making at Multiple Alarm Incidents (6 day class)
- Command and Control of Fire Department Operations at Natural and Man-Made Disasters (10 day class)
- Command and Control of Fire Department Operations at Target Hazards (6 day class)
- Command and Control of Incident Operations (6 day class)
- NIMS – Incident Command System for the Fire Service (2 day class)
- Incident Safety Officer (2 day class)
- Command and Control of Wildland/Urban Interface Operations for the Structural Chief Officer (2 day class)
- Incident Command System for Structural Collapse Incidents (2 day class)
- Incident Command System for High-rise Operations (2 day class)
- Introduction to Unified Command for Multi-Agency and Catastrophic Incidents (2 day class)

Several of these classes are offered off-campus through State training academies (U.S.Fire Administration, n.d.).

The following classes are offered online through the NFA online website. Student registration is required in order to take the following classes:

- Awareness of Command and Control Decision Making at Multiple Alarm Incidents (Q297)
- ICS-100, Introduction to ICS for Operational First Responders (Q-462)
• ICS-200, Basic NIMS ICS for Operational First Responders (Q-463)

• ICS-300, Intermediate All-Hazard NIMS ICS Review for Expanding Incidents (Q-464)

• ICS-400, Fundamental Review for Command and General Staff (Q-466)

NFA online also offers an ICS Simulation Series for the following structure fire:

• Casper Hall Dorm Fire (Q-327)

• Ranch House Fire (Q-324)

• Mansion Fire (Q-326)

• Nursing Home Fire (Q-424)

• Strip Mall Hostage/Arson Fire (Q-328)

• Townhouse Fire (Q-325)

• Wildland Fire (Q-616)

(U.S. Fire Administration, n.d.)

Training has also been offered in the Waycross, Georgia, area through the Southeast Health District. Through email exchanges with Mary Beth Burke, Training Coordinator of the Southeast Health District, the researcher discovered that they were offering the training due to the large number of their own employees that are required to have the training. Mrs. Burke stated that having the training within the district saved on travel expenses as well. A problem that has occurred in the past has been that emergency agencies have held NIMS training but failed to notify her office (M. B. Burke, personal communication, August 13, 2009).

President George W. Bush, through his Presidential Directive issued after the terrorist’s attacks on September 11, 2001, was the beginning of an attempt to standardize public safety responders on emergency scenes. The National Incident Management System (NIMS) would be
the basic element permitting all Federal, State, and local, private-sector and nongovernmental agencies to work together on emergency scenes. NIMS is not designed to be an operational incident management tool or to be used as a plan for resource allocation. The Presidential Directive required State and local agencies to adopt NIMS in order to remain eligible for Federal assistance (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2004). Compliance to the directive was secured by requiring members of State and local governments and public safety employees to take specific NIMS training. The initial training required all emergency responders to receive training in ICS-100 (Introduction to ICS); ICS-200 (Basic ICS); and ICS-700 (NIMS-An Introduction). This was followed by requiring those emergency responders with supervisory roles to take additional training through ICS-300 (Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents) and ICS-400 (Advanced ICS for Complex Incidents and Multi-Agency Coordination Systems) (Grainer, 2009).

The State of Georgia sought compliance to the Presidential Directive by State code. The O.C.G.A. Section 38-3-57 (e) states: Local agencies that have not established such system by October 1, 2004, shall not be eligible for state reimbursement for any response or recovery related expenses (Official Code of Georgia, 2004-05).

Conversations with Lyn Pardue, the Executive Director of Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council, concerning training requirements for Georgia firefighters provided interesting information. Georgia currently has a set of requirements to register volunteer firefighters and a different set of requirements to certify career firefighters. The Official Code of Georgia (O.C.G.A.) Section 25-4-8 allows for this difference by requiring only career firefighters to be certified. The difference between being “certified” or “registered” in the level of training required. Mr. Pardue stated that an emergency scene does not know the difference between a
certified firefighter and a registered firefighter (L. Pardue, 2009). A similar conversation took place with Matt Perry who is also an employee of the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council (M. Perry, 2009).

The Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council are currently looking at requiring all firefighters in the Georgia to have the same minimum requirements. Mr. Pardue stated in a meeting with the South Central Georgia Fire Chiefs Association that career firefighter requirements would either have to be reduced or volunteer firefighter requirements would have to be raised.

The South Central Georgia Fire Chiefs Association represents the fire departments in GEMA Region 8. The Region is made up of 21 counties. According to the Charles Wasdin, Vice President of the South Central Georgia Fire Chiefs Association, Region 8 has 3 career fire departments, 9 combination departments and up to 175 volunteer fire departments (C. Wasdin, personal communication, August 10, 2009).

The comments made by Mr. Pardue brought great concern from members of the Association present that represented combination and volunteer departments in Region 8. Their biggest concern was that any additional training requirements would put their departments out of business. Several members speaking up stated that they were having difficulty recruiting volunteers as it is and any additional training requirements would hinder those efforts even more.

The current requirement for an individual that wants to become a registered volunteer firefighter in Georgia is to complete a 95-hour training course and participate in a live fire drill. Because most individuals that volunteer as firefighters have other jobs, their training has to come during off time which limits their training time (C. Wasdin, personal communication, August 24, 2009). No other requirements are imposed on volunteer firefighters. Whereas, career firefighters
are required to testing, physicals, physical agility requirements, background checks, minimum education requirements, as well as, annual recertification through continuing education requirements (L. Pardue, 2009).

No specific training is required for emergency workers in order to participate in large scale emergencies outside the required ICS classes for eligibility compliance for funding through grants. In an article written by Stephen Grainer, he raises the question of the effectiveness of the mandated ICS training requirements. Mr. Grainer points out that there was a rush to be compliant but those individuals have not received any additional training in the area because the mandate did not require annual refresher training. He also points out that most of those that received the training have not had the opportunity to apply it which results in a loss of the knowledge and skills developed through the training. This in turn results in a lack of knowledge and skill on a scene when that time does come (Grainer, 2009).

Research question number two asked: Do emergency responders feel that the training provided adequately prepares their local emergency responders for large scale incidents?

Question number 17 of the survey sent to Georgia EMA Directors (Appendix C) asked: Do you think that adequate training is available to meet the needs of a community the size of your assigned area to prepare the various agencies for a large scale emergency/event? Of the 28 EMA Directors that responded the results were 50% yes and 50% no.

Question number 18 asked the Georgia EMA Directors (Appendix C) answering no: If no, what training would you recommend or like to see? Fourteen responses were received and are listed in Table 2.
Table 2

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>You can never have enough training, but time limitations and personnel are also issues. Need money for back feel pay in order to conduct the exercises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>All aspects to include planning, communications and obtaining further resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Specialty training, many large event exercises need to be held and evaluated by outside agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Wilderness SAR; large scale event training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mass casualties, mass sheltering, mass feeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Funding for exercise design and management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Field delivery training from NETC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>In the face of a declining economy most local governments cannot afford to send personnel to out of town training anymore. If they do they can only send one or two people at the most. I would like to see more field delivery courses to allow a larger number of responders to attend training without having to travel overnight. I think it would also be good to develop a cadre of instructors regionally that can go through the train the trainer courses and deliver the needed training to local communities in a manner that is more convenient to the local jurisdictions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Smaller agencies are rarely given funds for training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I would like to see more practical training on the incident command structure. The NIMS classroom training is not enough to put these roles into action in a real life situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Additional ICS, specialized training, Ha/Mat, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Like to see the state come down and help put something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>More multi-jurisdictional coordination training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Incident command, EOC activation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A survey was also sent to 44 Georgia Fire Chiefs (Appendix D). Question number 23 of the Georgia Fire Chiefs survey asked: *Do you think that adequate training is available to meet the needs of a community the size of your assigned area to prepare the various agencies for a large scale emergency/event?* Of the 16 fire chiefs that responded to the survey 8 answered yes and 8 answered no.

Question number 24 (Appendix D) asked the Georgia Fire Chiefs responding to question number 23 with no: *If no, what training would you recommend or like to see?* Eight responses were received and are listed in Table 3.
Table 3

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>terrorist, wmd events, hazmat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Technical Rescue. Hazardous Materials, Multiagency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hazard Analysis and Contingency Planning, Managing Hazard Material Incidents, Recognition of incidents associated with terrorist attacks associated with Biological, Chemical &amp; Improvised Explosive Devices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Large scale storm damage incidents that seem to be a larger needs for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Wildland fire suppression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>More GSAR, haz-mat, communication, training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Real world actual training to incorporate multi discipline and multi jurisdictional input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Regional training for partnerships with the area to deal with and contain large scale incidents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question number 21 of the Georgia EMA Directors (Appendix C) asked the respondents:

*Do you believe that the various agencies in your assigned area that would respond/participate during a large scale emergency/event are adequately trained and prepared?*

Of the 28 Georgia EMA Directors that responded to the survey the response to this question again was 50% yes and 50% no (Appendix C).

Question number 22 of the Georgia EMA Directors survey (Appendix C) asked: *If no, is there an area that you believe needs the most attention?* Fifteen responses were received and are listed in Table 4.
Sixteen Georgia Fire Chiefs responded to question number 27 (Appendix D) that asked: *Do you believe that the various agencies in your assigned area that would respond/participate during a large scale emergency/event are adequately trained and prepared?* Again they answered with 50% yes and 50% no.

Question number 28 of the Georgia Fire Chief’s survey (Appendix D) asked those that answered no to question number 27: *If no, is there an area that you believe needs the most attention?* Eight responses were received and are listed in Table 5.

### Table 4

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>There are always areas that need improvement but I believe they are ADEQUATELY trained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Incident communications – command structure information sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>All areas continued education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>All areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>There needs to be mandated training to make sure that all agencies participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>More attention to group training involving all disciplines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Same areas as number 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>All areas, I do not believe they have a grasp of what is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>I think the leaders of the agencies need EOC training and drills to improve the coordination during a large scale event. I think the knowledge is there, but we are failing when it comes to implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>NIMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Some agencies do not realize the importance of their role if they are not the primary role. We must learn that it takes all of the agencies “willing” involvement to be successful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>ICS, coordination, system building…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Haz mat, communications, staging areas, training for public officials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Even though we are a career department we are surrounded primarily by volunteer departments of who we are subject to be called on to assist them. More training needs to be available for the rural departments.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Probably all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Most all areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>accountability, communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>TEAMWORK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gema Area 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1. Better understanding of what the duties and responsibilities of each agency are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Better cooperation on both small and large scales in the completeness of the drill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Total commitment from start to finish and input into incident critique without emotional/territorial response.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey sent to the Georgia Fire Chiefs (Appendix D) also asked in question number 29: *Do you believe that the current available training for large scale emergencies/events equally addresses the needs for large, medium and small communities?* Eight respondents or 53.3% answered yes while seven respondents or 46.7% answered no. One respondent skipped this question.

Question number 30 (Appendix D) asked those answering no to question number 29: *If no, why not?* To which 6 of the 16 respondents replied. Their responses are listed in Table 6.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Most of the large scale event training is centered around large cities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Training tends to focus on the larger cities where there are more opportunity for large scale emergencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Larger city’s always seem to take the front seat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>there are not really any available classes in our area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Because there are no current classes being offered locally or at the state level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>In the pass the small communities have been overlooked and those are the resources that will have to respond to assist the larger areas in time of need!!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mary Beth Burke of the Southeast Health District was asked: *Do you think the training that is available is adequate for the needs of the community she represents should an event take place?* Her reply was direct and to the point, “Definitely not” (M. B. Burke, personal communication, August 13, 2009).

Research question number three asked: *What funding is available for training?*

The first funding through the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program came in 2001 when Congress appropriated $100 million. Applications for the grant money were limited to six priority categories:

- Fire Prevention
- Firefighting Equipment
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Training
- Firefighting Vehicles
- Wellness and Fitness

Table 1 shows that out of the 1,886 grants that were awarded in 2001 that only 160 were for training. The bulk of the requests for funding went to personal protective equipment with 706 grants funded and firefighting equipment received 404 grants (U.S. Fire Administration’s Grants Program Office, 2001). Georgia received 46 AFG grants in 2001 with only four of these going towards training. The total training funding received for Georgia in 2001 was $167,928 (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], n.d.).

In 2002, the AFG program changed its format by combining eligible activities which created four categories instead of the six available in the 2001 AFG program. The four eligible areas were:
• Fire Operations and Firefighter Safety Program
• Fire Prevention Program
• Emergency Medical Services Program
• Firefighter Vehicles Acquisition Program

Training, wellness and fitness, firefighting equipment, and personal protective equipment were bundled under Fire Operations and Firefighter Safety Program.

Congress appropriated $360 million to fund the 2002 AFG program. There were 19,529 applications submitted with only 5,316 requests being funded (U.S. Fire Administration’s Grants Program Office, 2003). Georgia received 87 AFG grants to which four went to firefighting vehicles, four to fire prevention, and one to emergency medical services (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], n.d.). The data provided did not specify how many grants were awarded to training.

The 2003 AFG program was funded to an all-time of $750 million. There were 22,298 applications submitted with 8,766 awarded to “fire” grants and 467 awarded to Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S). The eligible program areas remained the same as the 2002 AFG program (Department of Homeland Security, Office of State & Local Government Coordination & Preparedness’ Fire Grants Program Office, 2005). Georgia received 158 AFG grants in 2003. Firefighting vehicle accounted for 27 for the grants funded with fire prevention receiving 10 grants (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], n.d.). Just as with the 2002 AFG program training was not specified as receiving any funding.

The 2004 AFG program saw the same funding that occurred in 2003. A total of 23,596 applications were submitted with 8,412 grants awarded. “Fire” grants received 7,880 and FP&S received 532 grants. The 2004 AFG program saw program areas reduced to three:
• Operations and Firefighter Safety Program
• Fire Prevention Program
• Firefighting Vehicles Acquisition Program.


Training still remained under the Operations and Firefighter Safety Program. However, the 2004 data collected from the FEMA website for AGF grants received by State does identify the fire departments that received funding for training. Georgia received a total of 100 AFG grants for 2004 with 10 grants funding training (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], n.d.).

The 2005 AFG program was reduced to $650 million. The eligible programs were reduced to only two categories:

• Operations and Firefighter Safety
• Firefighting Vehicles Acquisition


There were 20,972 applications received with a total of 6,277 grants being awarded. “Fire” Grants received 5,966 grants and FP&S received 311 (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d.). Training remained a sub-category under Operations and Firefighter Safety. Georgia received 92 grants with 11 of the grants specified for training (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], n.d.).

The 2006 AFG program was funded at $648,450,000. There were 18,171 applications submitted with 4,969 grants being awarded. The eligible areas stayed at the two of the 2005 AFG program (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d.). Georgia received 74 grants through the
2006 AFG program of which 12 were specified for training (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], n.d.).

There were no reports available for FY 2007 to present showing a breakdown of the AFG grants awarded. However, an internet search was able to find that the 2007 AFG program was funded at $490 million. Georgia received 69 grants through the program to which seven of the grants awarded were specified for training (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], n.d.). Then in 2008 Georgia received 83 AFG grants with 10 being designated for training (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], n.d.).

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant has become the largest source of funding for many fire departments throughout the country. The program has allowed fire departments to get vehicles, gear and equipment that otherwise would have relied on department budgets. In all of the AFG programs Fire Operations and Firefighter Safety received the most applications and awards.

The very first year of the AFG program training received a total of 160 grants being funded which was the least funded category of the six eligible (U.S. Fire Administration’s Grants Program Office, 2001). This trend of training receiving less funding has continued each year thereafter according to reports obtained from the FEMA fire grant support website.

The AFG program does not require that any funding awarded for training be used towards preparing communities for large scale emergencies. Out of the nine emails sent to Georgia Fire Chiefs that were shown to have received AFG funding for training Clayton County Fire and Emergency Services, Bryan County Fire Department and Colquitt-Miller County Fire Department used their funding to prepare employees for large scale emergencies.
Mary Beth Burke, Training Coordinator of the Southeast Health District, stated that she had no budget for the training provided through her division nor do they receive any grant funding. Employees of the health department are credited for the success of many training programs put on in the district because of their willingness to go to training and bring the information back. However, for those times when money is needed to put on training Mrs. Burke stated that money could be requested from the State or Center for Disease Control (CDC). Planning training in advance becomes challenging when there is not a training budget (M. B. Burke, personal communication, August 13, 2009).

Research question number four asked: *What resource options are available to other small towns in emergency situations?*

The answer to this question depends on the emergency at hand. USAR teams are deployed to large scale emergencies that have exceeded local and State resources. Floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, plane crashes, hazardous material spills and catastrophic building collapses are the specialties of the USAR teams (Bryant, n.d.).

Georgia has established GSAR teams throughout the State in order to be able to handle emergencies better at the State level (Office of the Governor of Georgia, 2004). The Valdosta Fire Department in Valdosta, Georgia, is home to one of the State’s 10 GSAR teams. This team specializes in building collapse. When deployed they are required to send a team of 35 trained responders (K. Gallagher, personal communication, September 21, 2009).

Question number 31 of the Georgia Fire Chiefs survey (Appendix D) asked: *What is the maximum emergency/event that your department and local multi-agency responders/participants can handle, while maintaining minimum protection for the remainder of your community, before calling on other departments or agencies from outside your assigned area?* Three of the 16
respondents skipped this question. The 13 Georgia Fire Chiefs that did respond several replied that a residential fire would be the maximum emergency they could handle without having to call for outside help.

Mutual aid is not new to emergency services organizations and is the most utilized resource in South Georgia. Georgia has a state wide mutual aid agreement in place between the fire departments. This was mandated by the Governor as a requirement for departments to remain eligible for funding through grants. Under the state wide mutual aid agreement fire departments are not required to send manpower or equipment if called upon. The agreement is not designed to add a burden onto city and/or county governments that the request is being made of (J. Arrowood, 2004).

Agencies other than fire, police and EMS also play a major role in large scale communities and should not be left out of the planning process. The agencies include but are not limited to:

- The American Red Cross
- Local Hospitals
- Power Companies
- Media
- Local Churches
- Public Works
- State Department of Transportation
- Mental Health
- Water Department
- Department of Natural Resources
The final research question asked: *What changes, if any, should be made to the current training to address small town preparedness?*

Survey question number 4 to the Georgia EMA Directors (Appendix C) asked: *How many large scale emergencies/events have taken place in your assigned area in the past 5 years that required multi-agency responses?* One respondent replied “none” while another reported 25 large scale emergencies/events had occurred in his/her assigned area in the past 5 years. Averaging the total number of responses from the 28 received came to 5.6 large scale emergencies during the past 5 years.

Question number 5 to the Georgia EMA Directors (Appendix C) asked: *Were the multi-agency responders/participants in your assigned area able to handle the emergency/event without having to seek help from outside agencies?* One skipped answering this question while 14 or 51.9% responded “yes” and 13 or 48.1% responded “no”.

Question number 6 of the Georgia EMA Directors survey (Appendix C) asked: *Were any areas identified as needing improvement?* Twenty-three respondents or 85.2% answered “yes” compared to two or 7.4% of the respondents answering “no”. There was one respondent that skipped this question.

Even though 51.9% of the respondents reported that the multi-agency responders were able to handle the emergency/event without having to seek help from outside agencies 85.2% of the Georgia EMA Directors identified areas of improvement.

Question number 7 of the Georgia EMA Director survey (Appendix C) asked those responding yes to survey question number 6: *If yes, what were they?* Only 22 responses were received with most giving at least two areas identified as needing improvement. Of the 22
responses, 15 or 68% replied that communications needed improvement. Training was the second most identified area that needed improvement receiving 7 or 32% recognition of the respondents. Equipment was the third most identified area identified as needing improvement receiving 6 or 27% recognition of the respondents.

The same series of questions were asked in a survey sent to Georgia Fire Chiefs. Question number 10 (Appendix D) asked: How many large scale emergencies/events have taken place in your assigned area in the past 5 years that required multi-agency responses? The question received 16 responses that ranged from zero to 15 large scale emergencies/events in the past 5 years. The average of the total number of responses was 3.3 large scale emergencies/events for the past 5 years.

Question number 11 of the Georgia Fire Chiefs survey (Appendix D) asked: Were the multi-agency responders/participants in your assigned area able to handle the emergency/event without having to seek help from outside agencies? (i.e. another city or county) Two responded with Not Applicable (N/A) while 6 or 37.5% responded “yes” and 8 or 50% responded “no”.

Question number 12 of the Georgia Fire Chiefs survey (Appendix D) asked: Were any areas identified as needing improvement? One respondent skipped this question while 8 or 53.3% answered “yes” and 2 or 13.3% answered “no”.

Finally, question number 13 (Appendix D) asked the Georgia Fire Chiefs that answered yes: If yes, what were they? Most of the eight respondents identified as least two areas that needed improvements. The resounding area identified was communications which received 7 or 87.5% recognition of the respondents. Manpower and training were tied for second being identified two times each.
These results seem to be in sharp contrast to the claim made by the Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano when she said that input from firefighters was a major reason for cutting the AFG program from $565 million to $170 million. She stated that she had received feedback from fire departments saying that staffing was more pressing than training and equipment (DHS Secretary cites firefighter input in reducing AFG funding, 2009).

No specific answer to this research question was found in the literature review or internet search that addressed small town preparedness when it came to fire, police, and EMS. However, the internet search did find a report that addressed rural communities and emergency preparedness from the Health Services.

The report identified some of the same areas that needed improvement as did the Georgia EMA Directors and Georgia Fire Chiefs in the surveys sent to them. Lack of funding was the number area identified followed by lack of communications then training and number of health care providers in rural areas (Office of Rural Health Policy, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2002).

Mary Beth Burke, Training Coordinator of the Southeast Health District, was asked what changes she would recommend to improve training and she responded, “more staff, more money, more community ownership” (M. B. Burke, personal communication, August 13, 2009).

Discussion

The results of interviews, literature review, emails, internet search, and surveys found that training is available through multiple sources for firefighters in Georgia to deal with large scale emergencies/events. However, the availability, quality, and training retention come into question concerning the training found when it comes to small communities.
The size of the community and its public safety services dictates what a large scale emergency/event will be. For some communities a single family residential structure fire may be considered as a large scale emergency/event requiring mutual aid assistance. Whereas, larger communities may be able to handle multiple single family residential structure fires at one time while still able to provide emergency personnel for the community without having to depend on outside help.

Training for large scale emergencies/events was found through the internet search. The Georgia Public Safety Training Center website listed several classes designed for large scale emergencies. However, several of the classes listed required potential students to be a member of a State Type 3 IMT. This one requirement eliminated many potential students. The amount of training required to be a member of a State Type 3 IMT in itself reduces the number of potential members. Close to 175 fire departments in GEMA Area 8 that surround the Waycross Fire Department are volunteer fire departments. The individuals associated with these volunteer departments hold jobs outside of the fire service. Training requirements that involve the volunteer firefighter to take time away from his or her job means that the firefighter goes without pay in order to attend that training.

Small career fire departments are also affected by extensive lengthy requirements imposed on individuals that would like to become part of State Type 3 IMT’s. Fire department minimum staffing requirements limit firefighter’s ability the large amount of training required to be a member of a State Type 3 IMT. The Waycross Fire Department has 17 firefighters per shift. Due to the trucks operated as first line response vehicles the minimum staffing is 14 firefighters per shift. Fourteen firefighters means that each pumper will have three firefighters for a total of twelve, one battalion chief and a driver for the ladder truck.
An email received from Ken Gallagher, Captain of Special Operations with the Valdosta Fire Department in Valdosta, Georgia, stated that members of the regional collapse team that he is over are required to take 200 hours of initial training. The team consists of 67 members from fire departments throughout GEMA Area 2 (K. Gallagher).

An item that the researcher found especially disturbing is that there was no single source or contact that could answer questions concerning Type 3 IMT training requirements for the State of Georgia. Contact was made with GEMA’s Fire Service Coordinator, Ronnie Register, who is responsible for overseeing the formation of GEMA Type 3 IMT’s and even he referred the researcher to another individual at a different agency for information on Type 3 IMT’s.

GPSTC classes related to incident management or large scale emergencies require the student to travel to the GPSTC campus in Forsyth, Georgia. The facility is approximately three and a half hours from Waycross, Georgia. However, training classes are offered by the U.S. Fire Administration and the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) online and through on-campus training that are related to incident management and large scale emergencies. Attendance to the on-campus training for either agency requires the student to submit an application. If accepted the student must travel to Emmitsburg, Maryland. Even though the travel expenses are reimbursable and lodging is free the student is still responsible for meals. The same obstacles remain for the volunteer firefighter and the firefighter that works at a small department with minimum staffing requirements.

It would appear on the surface then that online training would be the most efficient and economical way to go for those firefighters in smaller communities. That is only on the surface. There has to be something said for face-to-face interaction with an instructor and other students when it comes to learning, especially when training for large scale emergencies that involve
multi-agency response and unified command. Stephen Grainer raised two major questions concerning the firefighter training received under NIMS;

1) How much of their training can actually be applied effectively? 2) If a major incident (or event) were to occur tomorrow, will there be an adequate number of appropriately trained personnel available to implement a functional incident command system – even for a short time (i.e., until more experienced and qualified resources can be deployed to assist)? (Grainer, 2009, p. 3).

The internet search of the U.S. Fire Administration turned up an interesting training item that seems to give validity to this research project. NFA offers six online ICS Simulation Series courses. The smallest of the structure fires is a simulation of a Ranch House Fire (Q-324). The initial alarm for this simulation consists of three engine companies with four personnel assigned to each engine, one truck company with four personnel assigned to it, one Battalion Chief and a medic unit with two personnel assigned to it. The total of fire personnel initially responding to this fire is 19. The Waycross Fire Department does not run medic units so if the two medics are removed from the scenario the total would be 17 fire personnel responding which is a full shift for the Waycross Fire Department. That is if no one was off on any type of leave. The simulator has sent more manpower and equipment than many volunteer fire departments and some combination and career departments can send to a structure fire.

With the current training requirements in Georgia being different for career and volunteer firefighters one has to wonder if departments receiving mutual aid from volunteer fire departments are receiving equal assistance. Conversations with the Executive Director of Georgia Firefighters Standards and Training Council, Lyn Pardue, and Matt Perry, a member of the GFSTC, found that they have the same concerns. This issue is currently being undergoing
scrutiny in several boards to determine what action to take. Preliminary indications are that volunteer firefighters brought on after January 1, 2012, will be required to come more in line with the training requirements of career firefighters (L. Pardue, personal communication, September 28, 2009).

Georgiap has developed regional response teams in the form of specialized teams to respond to a variety of major emergency situations like large hazardous material releases. Georgia also requires all city and county governments to be part of the State wide mutual aid agreement through GEMA in order to be eligible for grants associated with emergency services. These programs along with training available for incident management of large scale emergencies/events appear focus on how local communities can support regional responses instead of focusing training on local communities.

The research found that funding is available from different agencies and grants for training local communities to handle large scale emergencies/events but this funding does not seem to be sought out as much as funding for vehicles, tools and equipment, and staffing. Jonathan Daniel, Ware County EMA Director, stated that funding for large scale emergency training generally was not requested because of the traditionally low participation. It takes a lot of work to properly set up table top exercises and then the follow up with live drill for the city or county. To bring in mutual aid agencies from neighboring communities adds even more obstacles and delays (J. Daniel, 2009).

Training has been grouped with other areas under the AFG Program every year but 2001. This grouping may explain why training for large scale emergencies/events has not been sought by applying fire departments due to having to make a decision between equipment, personal protective, or modifications to stations. The rules have changed throughout the years concerning
grants and the number of applications that can be submitted each year. Some years only one application was allowed per department while other years allowed one application per program area. As discussed earlier these program areas started out a six areas in 2001 (FEMA, n.d.) and have been condensed to two program areas since 2005 (FEMA, n.d.). Having training grouped with other area such as personal protective equipment and equipment means that fire departments have to make tough decisions.

Training has a direct bearing on the outcome of the mitigation efforts of emergencies/events. Success is not dictated simply because a department receives automatic or mutual aid from other departments. If those responding are not properly staffed and trained, then all that is received is equipment and personnel. It is of the utmost importance that neighboring communities get together to discuss, plan, and practice for future events that may require assistance from each other. This cannot be limited to emergency services agencies. Anyone that has the potential to be part of an emergency/event needs to be part of the planning and practice.

The research did not find any recommended changes to training from the fire service concerning responding to and handling large scale emergencies/events. The researcher could not find any material showing where any study has been done for the effectiveness of emergency preparedness training for large scale emergencies/events.

To summarize, the research presented throughout this study did show that communities could be affected differently by the size of the emergency/event. The affects are not limited to what is viewed as traditional emergency responders, i.e. fire and police. Large scale emergencies/events have an impact on the entire community and in some cases neighboring communities. The training that is currently available is taught to lean more towards medium to
large communities. It is up to individual communities to tailor the available training to meet the needs of their communities.

Recommendations

The problem that initiated this applied research project is that the emergency preparedness plans that are in place for the City of Waycross are based on training methods that are geared towards medium to large communities that have the personnel and equipment to handle large scale emergencies. The purpose of the research was to determine if the current training methods and curriculum used to train emergency workers for large scale emergencies adequately met the needs of the Waycross Fire Department and the City of Waycross.

Based on the information obtained from the literature review, interviews, surveys, emails, and internet search the following recommendations are made to address training received for the Waycross Fire Department and the City of Waycross for large scale emergencies/events:

- Identify the different agencies that would have a part in the mitigation of a large scale emergency/event. Members from these different agencies should meet to introduce themselves and the role and responsibility of their agencies to the community during day-to-day operations. Each agency should also be able to state what role it will or could play in the event of a large scale emergency/event.

- Hold annual table top exercises and drills with the various local agencies of Waycross and Ware County. These events should not be geared towards only evaluating the local fire and police departments.

- Request funding for large scale emergency/event regional drills. Move forward with the drills even if other agencies or neighboring communities do not participate. Not to
have drills because of less than 100% participation hurts the agencies that would attend.

- Request large scale drills from the communities larger industries to include CSX Railroad.

- Promote annual refresher training for large scale emergencies/events to all agencies that could be involved in large scale emergencies/events. The refresher training could simply be re-taking IS-100, IS-200, and IS-700.

- Develop a local Emergency Operation Center training program to be given annually to the local IMT members. The training will also be used to train new IMT members as well.
References


_EAFSOEM-Student Manual_. (Available from the National Fire Academy, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727)


Jacksonville, Fla: Author.


DHS Secretary cites firefighter input in reducing AFG funding. (2009). _Firehouse.com_.

Retrieved from http://cms.firehouse.com/content/article/printer.jsp?id=63818


Appendix A

Georgia EMA Directors Email List

emaberrien@alltel.net
janderson@bryan-county.org
monroe@gema.state.ga.us
treutlen@gema.state.ga.us
benhillcoema@mchsi.com
banks.county@gema.ga.gov
jasper.county@gema.ga.gov
muscogee.county@gema.ga.gov
rhoward@pickenscountyga.gov
appling.county@gema.ga.gov
atkinson.county@gema.ga.gov
bacon.county@gema.ga.gov
baker.county@gema.ga.gov
baldwin.county@gema.ga.gov
barrow.county@gema.ga.gov
bartow.county@gema.ga.gov
bibb.county@gema.ga.gov
bleckley.county@gema.ga.gov
brantley.county@gema.ga.gov
brooks.county@gema.ga.gov
bulloch.county@gema.ga.gov
burke.county@gema.ga.gov
butts.county@gema.ga.gov
calhoun.county@gema.ga.gov
camden.county@gema.ga.gov
candler.county@gema.ga.gov
carroll.county@gema.ga.gov
catoosa.county@gema.ga.gov
charlton.county@gema.ga.gov
chatham.county@chatthamcounty.org
chattahoochee.county@gema.ga.gov
chattanooga.county@gema.ga.gov
cherokee.county@gema.ga.gov
clarke.county@gema.ga.gov
clay.county@gema.ga.gov
clayton.county@gema.ga.gov
clinch.county@gema.ga.gov
cobb.county@gema.ga.gov
coffee.county@gema.ga.gov
colquitt.county@gema.ga.gov
columbia.county@gema.ga.gov
cook.county@gema.ga.gov
coweta.county@gema.ga.gov
crawford.county@gema.ga.gov
crisp.county@gema.ga.gov
dade.county@gema.ga.gov
dawson.county@gema.ga.gov
decatur.county@gema.ga.gov
dekalb.county@gema.ga.gov
dodge.county@gema.ga.gov
dooly.county@gema.ga.gov
douglas.county@gema.ga.gov
eyearly.county@gema.ga.gov
echols.county@gema.ga.gov
effingham.county@gema.ga.gov
elbert.county@gema.ga.gov
emanuel.county@gema.ga.gov
evans.county@gema.ga.gov
fannin.county@gema.ga.gov
fayette.county@gema.ga.gov
floyd.county@gema.ga.gov
forestpark.county@gema.ga.gov
forsyth.county@gema.ga.gov
franklin.county@gema.ga.gov
fulton.county@gema.ga.gov
gilmer.county@gema.ga.gov
glascock.county@gema.ga.gov
glynn.county@gema.ga.gov
gordon.county@gema.ga.gov
grady.county@gema.ga.gov
greene.county@gema.ga.gov
gwinnett.county@gema.ga.gov
habersham.county@gema.ga.gov
hall.county@gema.ga.gov
hancock.county@gema.ga.gov
haralson.county@gema.ga.gov
harris.county@gema.ga.gov
hart.county@gema.ga.gov
heard.county@gema.ga.gov
henry.county@gema.ga.gov
houston.county@gema.ga.gov
irwin.county@gema.ga.gov
jackson.county@gema.ga.gov
seminole.county@gema.ga.gov
smyrna.county@gema.ga.gov
spalding.county@gema.ga.gov
stephens.county@gema.ga.gov
stewart.county@gema.ga.gov
sumter.county@gema.ga.gov
talbot.county@gema.ga.gov
taliaferro.county@gema.ga.gov
tattnall.county@gema.ga.gov
taylor.county@gema.ga.gov
telfair.county@gema.ga.gov
terrell.county@gema.ga.gov
thomas.county@gema.ga.gov
tift.county@gema.ga.gov
toombs.county@gema.ga.gov
towns.county@gema.ga.gov
treutlen.county@gema.ga.gov	
troup.county@gema.ga.gov
turner.county@gema.ga.gov
turner.county@gema.state.ga.us
twiggs.county@gema.ga.gov
union.county@gema.ga.gov
upson.county@gema.ga.gov
walker.county@gema.ga.gov
walton.county@gema.ga.gov
ware.county@gema.ga.gov
warren.county@gema.ga.gov
washington.county@gema.ga.gov
wayne.county@gema.ga.gov
webster.county@gema.ga.gov
wheeler.county@gema.ga.gov
white.county@gema.ga.gov
whitfield.county@gema.ga.gov
wilcox.county@gema.ga.gov
wilkes.county@gema.ga.gov
wilkinson.county@gema.ga.gov
worth.county@gema.ga.gov
Appendix B

Georgia Fire Chiefs Email List

beck601@bellsouth.net
bryanc@thomasville.org
chick@syrupcity.net
chiefbrooksdfd@yahoo.com
chiefmock215@hotmail.com
chiefphillip@windstream.org
climaxfd@bellsouth.net
cullycmcfire@bellsouth.net
jhowell@lee.ga.us
kennyh@moultriega.com
mikef@tifton.net
1222higgston@gmail.com
afcrobbywilliams@yahoo.com
afrcchef101@yahoo.com
cbfd301@yahoo.com
charleswasdin@mchsi.com
dds1201@bellsouth.net
dkeen@warecounty.com
fitzfire1@mchsi.com
jwilliams@houstoncountyga.org
rpowell85@peoplepc.com
smerritt@coffeecountygov.com
jdrice@valdostacity.com
bbbohannon@romea.us
ssstephens@cedartowngeorgia.gov
bbrantley@jesupga.gov
chiefcooper@mvfd.net
csmith@lagrange-ga.org
firedepartment@hahira.ga.us
marvin.riggins@macon.ga.us
rcloud@eastpointcity.org
tmorris@hapeville.org
chall@alpharetta.ga.us
fire.department@perry-ga.gov
dale.jackson@zebulonfiredepartment.com
chieftayers@yahoo.com
fire@cityofswainsboro.org
info@westjacksonfd.com
lpittman@willacoochee.com
statesborofire@statesboroga.net
tennillefd@tennille-ga.gov
dearnest@riverdalega.gov
jcanada@gainesville.org
rlunsford@crispcounty.com
Appendix C

EMA Director Survey Questions

1. How long have you been an EMA Director?
2. What is your staffing number?
3. What is the population of the area/county that you are responsible for?
4. How many large scale emergencies/events have taken place in your assigned area in the past 5 years that required multi-agency responses?
5. Were the multi-agency responders/participants in your assigned area able to handle the emergency/event without having to seek help from outside agencies?
6. Were any areas identified as needing improvement? Yes or No or N/A
7. If so, what were they?
8. Was training available or made available to correct these areas? Yes or No
9. How many multi-agency, large scale drills have been held in your assigned area in the past 24 months? (Not including agencies outside of your assigned area.)
10. Were any areas identified as needing improvement? Yes or No or N/A
11. If so, what were they?
12. Has your assigned area received any funding for large scale emergency/event training?
   Yes or No
13. If so, how much?
14. From what source did this funding come from?
15. Do you feel like the funding was adequate? Yes or No
16. If no, why not?
17. Do you think that adequate training is available to meet the needs of a community the size of your assigned area to prepare the various agencies for a large scale emergency/event? Yes or No

18. If no, what training would you recommend or like to see?

19. Do you think that adequate funding is available to meet the needs of a community the size of your assigned area to prepare the various agencies for a large scale emergency/event? Yes or No

20. If no, what funding would you recommend or like to see?

21. Do you believe that the various agencies in your assigned area that would respond/participate during a large scale emergency/event are adequately trained and prepared? Yes or No

22. If no, is there an area that you believe needs the most attention?

23. Do you believe that the current training equally addresses the needs for large, medium and small communities? Yes or No

24. If no, why not?

25. What is a triggering factor for you to initiate the EOC Plan?
Appendix D

Georgia Fire Chief Survey Questions

1. How long have you been the Fire Chief for your current department?
2. Is your department Career, combination or Volunteer?
3. How many suppression personnel?
4. How many administrative personnel?
5. What is the population of the area that your department covers?
6. How many fire stations?
7. How many pumpers?
8. How many aerial trucks?
9. How many special units? (Hazardous Materials, Rescue, etc…)
10. How many large scale emergencies/events have taken place in your assigned area in the past 5 years that required multi-agency responses?
11. Were the multi-agency responders/participants in your assigned area able to handle the emergency/event without having to seek help from outside agencies? (i.e. another city or county) Yes or No
12. Were any areas identified as needing improvement? Yes or No
13. If so, what were they?
14. Was training available or made available to correct these areas? Yes or No
15. How many multi-agency, large scale drills has your department have been held in your assigned area in the past 24 months? (Not including agencies outside of your assigned area.)
16. Were any areas identified as needing improvement? Yes or No
17. If so, what were they?

18. Has your department received any funding for large scale emergency/event training? Yes or No

19. If so, how much?

20. From what source did this funding come from?

21. Do you feel like the funding was adequate? Yes or No or N/A

22. If no, why not?

23. Do you think that adequate training is available to meet the needs of a community the size of your assigned area to prepare the various agencies for a large scale emergency/event? Yes or No

24. If no, what training would you recommend or like to see?

25. Do you think that adequate funding is available to meet the needs of a community the size of your assigned area to prepare the various agencies for a large scale emergency/event? Yes or No

26. If no, what funding would you recommend or like to see?

27. Do you believe that the various agencies in your assigned area that would respond/participate during a large scale emergency/event are adequately trained and prepared?

28. If no, is there an area that you believe needs the most attention?

29. Do you believe that the current training equally addresses the needs for large, medium and small communities? Yes or No

30. If no, why not?
31. What is the maximum emergency/event that your department and local multi-agency responders/participants can handle, while maintaining minimum protection for the remainder of your community, before calling on other departments or agencies?

32. Do you feel that you will receive adequate help from outside departments and agencies to handle large scale emergencies/events?