

# Erie County Public Safety Newsletter

## Special Interest Articles:

- SafeTown Initiative Unveiled
- 2013 Training

## Erie County Department of Public Safety

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## Letter from County Executive Barry Grossman

On December 12, 2012, the Erie County Department of Public Safety launched SafeTown, a powerful, easy-to-use suite of web- and mobile-based applications that connect and empower local law enforcement, fire, emergency medical service providers, and the citizens they serve to make their community a better and safer place to live.

The safety of Erie County residents is always at the forefront of everything we do. We are moving forward, utilizing state-of-the-art technology to interact with the citizens in our community. Through the Household Profile app, for example, citizens with special needs, handicaps, or in-home medical equipment can input their critical information to be sure that, in the event of an emergency, the first responders have everything they need to respond in a quick and secure way. This is an added capability and service for our citizens that will have a positive impact on our brave first responders' abilities to save lives and property.

SafeTown apps have the added benefit of being fully integrated with the dispatch center's computer aided dispatch system, so information is always accurate and up-to-date. Erie County has initially implemented two modules of the SafeTown suite:

**Household Profiles** – a quick, easy, and secure method to provide critical household and personal information to the 9-1-1 staff before an emergency happens. What if your son is dependent on a service animal? Or your daughter is allergic to penicillin? Or an elderly parent has an oxygen bottle on their bedroom? Household Profiles allows citizens to pre-register information that could save a life.

**Community Alerts** – provides real-time, map-based visibility to current events and crime history. When you know about potential problems affecting your community, you are safer and have the chance to help others.

Be sure to check out the SafeTown link on the County website. With this potentially life-saving technology in place, Erie County residents can rest a little easier in 2013. I wish you all a happy and healthy 2013.



Barry Grossman, County Executive

# Letter from Public Safety Director, Todd Geers

Public Safety accomplished a lot in 2012. My staff and I began the year by defining our goals and objectives. For the most part, we felt confident that our efforts in 2011 adequately stabilized operations, allowing us to focus on process improvement in 2012. So many systems and processes demanded our attention. Stability does not mean 100% perfection in all we do, but the beginning of 2012 was a turning point for this department. Noteworthy highlights for the year include ...

During the spring and summer, I visited 27 of the 38 municipalities, sharing the Public Safety goals for 2012. Top priorities included defining a comprehensive, county-wide ambulance policy, creating awareness that duplicate addresses exist and the need to standardize street naming, and promoting regional emergency management groups.

Using federal grant monies and a generous donation from LECOM, secured by the efforts of the County Executive, we distributed mobile data terminals (MDT) to all law enforcement, fire, and EMS agencies in the county. Work is still underway on the towers and we anticipate going live very soon.

Eire County fire and EMS agencies now use an online program called *I Am Responding* to quickly inform dispatch of their response to an incident. This tool greatly improves overall situational awareness and benefits citizens by reducing dispatch times. Another online initiative was the unveiling of SafeTown, an application that allows citizens to register important household information with Public Safety and view currently dispatched incidents.

Interdepartmental cooperation and coordination produced improvements in several areas. Thirteen municipalities and Public Safety created a standardized storm siren test policy. To satisfy the needs of Millcreek PD and PSP regarding incidents of a dual-response nature (e.g., police/fire; police/EMS), we jointly developed policy and a flowchart. The nine police agencies dispatched by us developed a new police type code system. These police codes were designed specifically to integrate into the MDT system and a side benefit was a cost reduction to our budget.

This year we plan to save more money and prepare ourselves to move ahead of the 9-1-1 industry by joining regional endeavors to consolidate backroom technology and move away from individual computer and server systems to cloud-based applications. Another goal is to create a catastrophic event preparedness plan. An earnest effort will be undertaken to design the next generation radio system for Erie County. Now, this does not mean funding has been identified, but the design phase is an important first step.

Many other projects are planned to improve the services we offer our user agencies and citizens. With diligence, devotion, and pride, we constantly strive to attain our vision – A safe community for all. 2013 will be an exciting year.

## **JOB WELL DONE!**

### **BEST CALL-TAKING TIMES** Nov/Dec 2012

Police Incident  
Rob Collins  
22 Seconds

Fire Incident  
Sean Haley  
32 Seconds

EMS Incident  
Jeff Barrett  
31 Seconds

### **BEST DISPATCHING TIMES** Nov/Dec2012

Police Incident  
Brian Wisniewski  
20 Seconds

Fire Incident  
Jeff Barrett  
7 Seconds

EMS Incident  
Jeff Barrett  
7 Seconds

# CERT Attends Border Patrol Citizen's Academy

Submitted by Janet Damico, CERT Coordinator

The Academy was held at the Erie Border Patrol Station in Fairview, PA over the course of six weeks. Attendees learned about the history of the Border Patrol, present day operations, use of force tactics, canine resources, and how other components within Customs and Border Protection operate.

CERT toured the Erie Border Patrol Station, the Office of Air and Marine Facility, the U.S. Customs patrol boats and the Customs Office at the Erie Airport.

CERT members were trained on radio procedures and night vision equipment in a field exercise, use of force training including taser shooting and pepper spray usage. We were taught about radioactive isotopes and taught to use PRD'S (Personal Radiation Detector), Handheld Survey Meters, RIID (Radiation Isotope Identification Device) and we learned about RPM'S (Radiation Portal Monitors).

CERT's training also consisted of Border Violence Videos which clearly showed the Border Patrol's role as the primary law enforcement agency responsible for preventing terrorists and terrorist weapons from entering the United States between ports of entry. These videos also demonstrate the challenges and dangers Border Patrol agents face every day.

This was an excellent opportunity to learn about the Border Patrol and to gain valuable training. Erie County CERT is honored that the Border Patrol extended an invitation to the CERT team to attend the Academy.

The training from the Border Patrol is an example of the unique training opportunities that are available to CERT members. If you are interested in joining CERT the next course starts January 25<sup>th</sup>. For additional specifics and to register please e-mail [CERT@eriecountygov.org](mailto:CERT@eriecountygov.org).

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# Training for 2013 Emergency Management

The following training is scheduled for 2013:

TRAINING	DATE	TIMES
Resource Management	January 19 <sup>th</sup>	8 to 5
CERT Basic Course	January 25 <sup>th</sup> through the 27 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 pm Friday, 8-4 Sat/Sun
Responding to the Functional Needs Community	February 5 <sup>th</sup>	8-5
Social Media in Disaster	February 21 <sup>st</sup>	8-5
State Weather Exercise	March 5 <sup>th</sup>	9:00 to noon
LEMC ¼ Tng	March 14 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 am to 11:30 and 7pm-9
Mobilizing the Faith-Based Community	April 4 <sup>th</sup>	8-5
Strengthening Public/Private Relationships	April 25 <sup>th</sup>	8-5
LEMC ¼ Tng	May 30 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 am to 11:30 and 7pm-9
LEMC ¼ Tng	August 29 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 am to 11:30 and 7pm-9
LEMC ¼ Tng	November 14 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 am to 11:30 and 7pm-9

All training will be conducted at:

**Erie County Public Safety Building, 2880 Flower Road, Erie, PA 16509**

Please RSVP for all training by e-mailing [mking@eriecountygov.org](mailto:mking@eriecountygov.org) .  
Please watch for additional training announcements in future newsletters.

# Uncle Sam's Garage Sale Equals Expanded Capabilities and Cost Savings

*Submitted by Dale Robinson, EMA Coordinator*

In the past few years, with tight budgets and falling revenues, we have all probably heard the old saying about "doing more with less." That seems like an oxymoron to most of us who struggle with limited funds to prepare for the next flood, tornado or other calamity, but there is a grant program available to most public safety entities which allows an eligible organization to stretch their budget. The Federal Surplus Property Program is administered through the Pennsylvania Department of General Services (DGS). For many, surplus means used. To Uncle Sam, surplus means items no longer needed, whether used or brand new in the packaging.

Eligible applicants can be municipalities, councils of governments (COG), schools, hospitals, fire/rescue departments, shelters, food banks and even scout troops. Those organizations who want to use the program must first complete an application that can be found at:

[www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/federal\\_surplus\\_property\\_program/federal\\_surplus\\_property\\_eligibility/](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/federal_surplus_property_program/federal_surplus_property_eligibility/)

As with any program, there are regulations that must be followed. For example, an organization must use the acquired property for a minimum of 12 months unless the new value of the property is above \$5,000. If that is the case, the item must be used for a minimum of 18 months. Some items, especially vehicles, have even longer periods. There can also be no personal use of the acquired federal property.

The on-line inventory can be viewed at: <http://www.dgsweb.state.pa.us/fsurplus/> for items that may be of interest to your organization. There is not a lot of information about the items other than a photo and very short description. To look at items in the warehouse, a trip to Harrisburg would be necessary.

Emergency Management has used the program since 2006 (with the exception of 2010). Property purchased has costs the county taxpayers approximately \$18,000. However, the federal government's fair market value of the property purchased estimated to be \$66,000. Items that emergency management has added to its inventory include a Hydraulic Electric Tool Outfit (HETO) that includes a Hydraulic pump that powers a Stanley concrete saw, chain saw, sump pump, impact wrench, drill and 3KW generator. This piece of equipment originally cost the federal government \$46,391. The cost to Erie County was a minuscule \$2,500. Other items of interest for public safety agencies include wool blankets for \$4 each, brand new canvas tarps (salvage covers) for \$19 each, folding cots for \$16 each, Garmin GPS for \$10 each, and packs of 100 sand bags for \$20.

The inventory of the program changes almost daily. Most of the items are from the military. Items from FEMA and other federal agencies also become available. Like buying anything used, remember "Caveat emptor" – buyer beware. If you have questions about military equipment, ask the veterans in your organization if they have any experience or knowledge about the items. Something else to keep in mind about the items offered is that many are built to a Military Specification and are not cheap imports, but rather high end, top of the line pieces of equipment. With the Federal Surplus Property Program, it really is possible to do more with less.



Pictured above is an Hydraulic/Electric Tool Trailer, one example of what is available through the Federal Surplus Property Program.

# County Executive Barry Grossman Recognizes Erie County Hazmat Material Team

Erie County Executive Barry Grossman and the Administration recognized the Erie County Hazardous Materials Team for attaining national certification. The participating Department Recognition Program was created to recognize organizations that support, promote, and encourage their emergency response personnel to voluntarily certify within the Commonwealth's Certification Program administered by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner.

The various levels of recognition are obtained by a percentage of total membership that has attained a national certification recognized by the Commonwealth. The various levels are 10%, 50%, 75%, and 100% participating. The Erie County Hazardous Materials Team has attained the 50% level, meaning at least 50% of the team's membership has earned at least one national certification, many of the members having earned more than one national certification.

In Erie County, only 6 fire departments participate in the program and of the 6, only 2 have attained the 50% level. The Hazmat Team not only attained the 50% level, but is currently the only non-fire department affiliated hazmat team in the state to participate in the program. Grossman stated, "I commend our Erie County Hazmat Team for reaching this monumental achievement and voluntarily dedicating themselves to providing the citizens of Erie County with the utmost skills and commitment."

