



# Northwest Central Regional Task Force

*Investing in our homeland safety and security*



## Counties

Cameron

Clarion

Clearfield

Elk

Jefferson

McKean

# Protecting Pennsylvania



## STATE COORDINATION AND PROTECTION

No one can do it alone. In Pennsylvania, multiple jurisdictions, agencies, and disciplines work together to strengthen our ability to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from acts of terrorism and other catastrophic events.

**Pennsylvania Criminal Intelligence Center (PaCIC)** is managed by the Pennsylvania State Police and is the primary all-hazards fusion center comprised of analysts and subject matter experts from local, state, and federal agencies. In 2016, PaCIC fulfilled almost 40,000 requests for information and developed 57,434 products including briefs and alerts ranging from dirty bombs and the increased findings of Carfentanil in heroin, to attacks on natural gas facilities. In 2016, PaCIC completed 43 event assessments for emergency response, public sector and private sector partners.

### Critical Partners

The private sector owns and operates an estimated **85%** of infrastructure and resources that are critical to our physical and economic security. GOHS has mapped over 30,000 sites in PA.



Duke Energy's gas-powered plant, Masontown, Pennsylvania.

### Increased Demand, Decreased Funding

Homeland Security Grant Program Funding (HSGP) has dropped 48% since 2010. However, demand for services continues to increase. For example, in 2016, PaCIC received 993 reported cyber compromises, an increase of over 400 since 2015.



### How HSGP Funds Supports Agribusiness and Food Safety:

- Lab systems and equipment which are critical to the safety of **PA's food supply** and **agriculture systems**.
- Food safety **communications and inspection** system for approximately 130 local and state agency health jurisdictions with food safety responsibilities.
- Equipment to enhance **lab testing** for real-world food contamination incidents.
- PA is positioned to lessen the devastating effects of a disease outbreak on PA's poultry industry through **mapping and database investment**.

The **Governor's Office of Homeland Security (GOHS)** helps to secure Pennsylvania from acts of terrorism and reduce the vulnerability of PA's critical infrastructure. GOHS provides training, exercises, and learning opportunities not otherwise available to participants. Since 2012, GOHS has provided more than **30 training courses** to over 4000 public and private partners, **28 tabletop** prevention and protection exercises, and engaged over 7500 participants with **29 seminars**.

**Risk-Based Planning and Funding.** PEMA is the lead agency for the annual Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and State Preparedness Report (SPR). The result is a comprehensive strategy for funding capability gaps at state and regional levels.

**Deployable Assets.** PEMA maintains deployable assets purchased using HSGP funds to support counties during disasters; such assets include trailer-mounted generators, bathroom shower trailers, light tower trailers, non-potable water trailers, and remotely operated camera trailers.



## Vital Statistics

The Emergency Response Group is a model for intergovernmental and multi-jurisdictional cooperation.

- Population: Over 3 Million
- Area: 10,233 Square Miles
- Municipalities: 737
- Fire Departments: 734
- Police Departments: 399
- Emergency Med Service Agencies: 210
- Hospitals: 67

## Capabilities

The Northwest Central PA Emergency Response Group has the following capabilities:

- Hazmat Teams: 15
- Bomb Disposal Teams: 2
- Explosive Detection K9 Teams: 16
- Water Response Teams: 27
- Urban Search and Rescue
- Western All Hazards Fusion Center
- Regional Communications Ntwk
- Regional 911
- Tactical (SWAT) Teams

## Investment



# Northwest Central Emergency Response Group

## SECURING THE HOMELAND: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The Northwest Central PA Emergency Response Group (NWCPAERG) provides emergency response training, planning and equipment to the emergency service providers the region. The mission of the NWCPAERG is to protect human life, work to mitigate emergencies and respond to human-made and natural disasters throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Homeland Security Grant Program funds are critical to the success of the equipped, prepared and ready region.

County governments in our region struggle to provide the necessary services that are mandated within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. One of these services is to maintain an effective emergency management program that prepares the counties for the unlikely event of a disaster, either manmade or natural caused. To have an effective program, the need for trained and dedicated professionals who understand the needs of their respective areas and who can closely work with the elected officials not only on the county level but also on the municipal or local level where all emergencies happen.

## REGION STRONG

The counties within the Northwest Central region, work together on exercises, special and pre-planned events and emergency response. Through events and exercises, we are able to identify strengths and areas for improvement to make sure our responders are ready for all-hazards. Using an

all-hazards, regional approach to planning, exercising and training, we are ready for the ever-increasing daily threats from weather, human-made disasters and local forms of terrorism such as active shooter events.



*NWCPAERG Command post deployed during a statewide manhunt following the fatal shooting of a Pennsylvania State Trooper.*

## UNPARALLED COMMUNICATIONS

As outlined in the 9/11 Commission Report issued following the horrific events of September 11, 2001, a primary danger facing emergency responders is the lack of ability to communicate with each other during times of localized incidents, as well as large scale events. The NWCPAERG has bridged the gap in communications. Through the use of HSGP funds, the NWCPAERG brought the existing three different radio systems used on to one platform, allowing **all emergency service disciplines such as police, fire, emergency medical services, and emergency management to communicate utilizing one radio system.**

Our transportation system is one of the most robust forms of transit of goods and people in our region. Interstate 80 traverses through three counties in the Northwest Central region and support tens of thousands of commercial and passenger vehicles daily.

When an incident or accident occurs along the Interstate 80 corridor, most of the agencies involved cannot meet at one Location, so radio communications between all stakeholders is vitally important. Motorists not familiar with secondary roads within our rural area are sometimes detoured through our smaller communities, and these communities are not accustomed large volumes of traffic.

These communities need to be able to handle these events without notice and with minimal interruption to normal business. The NWCPAERG understands that reliable communication is vital to a sound resolution to any incident or event.

Command and communications trailers equipped with modern technology provide the region with the ability to use Internet and telephone services to effectively command and control large incidents and events. They also provide the ability for general command staff to conduct operations in a safe, secure location.



*Interstate 80 multi-vehicle accident with fatalities. Radios supplied by NWCERG were used extensively between PSP, PennDOT, Fire/Rescue, EMS and EMA.*



The purchase of Utility Task Vehicles (UTV) through the HSGP have made it easier for responders to conduct welfare checks and provide much-needed supplies to motorists trapped in queues in the aftermath of vehicle disasters on the roadway.

## ALL-HAZARDS PREPARED

Although I-80 brings challenges, it also brings positive economic impact. Thousands of people travel I-80 to visit and attend events, some of which are internationally recognized. Each February 2, Groundhog Day festivities in Punxsutawney, Jefferson County, draws up to 30,000 visitors to the town 5,000 people.

The NWCPAERG provides barricades, light plants, and mass casualty equipment. State, county, and local emergency management, and law enforcement resources also support this event. Equipment used during these types of events, purchased with HSPG funds, is utilized throughout the year.

In order to remain ready, responders in the region exercise must continuously exercise and train, often using complex and specialized equipment to help protect both citizens and critical infrastructure.



*Average hotel rates in Punxsutawney for Groundhog Day are more expensive than those in Houston for the Super Bowl.*



The NWCPAERG provides exercises and training using HSGP funds in the following areas:

- pandemic planning
- Natural disaster exercise
- Active shooter events
- Hazardous material spills or releases
- Monitoring mass gathering

Major exercises have been conducted at the Bradford and DuBois Regional Airports, as well at retail outlets such as the DuBois Mall. The region continues to provide much needed training, equipment, and support to our:

- Dive and Rescue Team
- Communications Support Team
- Swift Water Rescue Team
- Technical Rescue Team
- Hazardous materials response
- Law enforcement



## INVESTMENT IN OUR SECURITY

Pictured are two of four NWCPAERG Command Communications trailers and Suburban Quick Response Units deployed at a three day search for a missing hunter. These units helped to provide communications in a remote area where cell phones were not even able to function.

Despite the remote location, news media did show up on the site. Assistance from the state public information office was on scene and able to respond to state-wide media queries via phone and email.



Terrorism can happen in many forms. A properly equipped and trained team is necessary to protect our citizens and communities. Pictured left is the Hazardous Materials/ Weapons of Mass Destruction team entering the Jefferson County Court House during a “white powder” incident. HSGP funds support the equipment and training for all types of disasters and threats.

## EQUIPED, TRAINED, READY

The NWCPAERG purchased a remote underwater camera system with HSPG funds. The specialized equipment helps the Regional Dive Team gain access to confined spaces and provides visibility below the surface of the water. The camera reduces risk to emergency responders and assists in under water inspections, search operations, special events and no-notice events.

Pictures of camera or dive team operation/exercise here. Room for 2.