

GENERAL LESSONS LEARNED

After completing the exercise and listening to the comments of staff and observers, the Exercise Coordinator put together the following “lessons learned” that are intended to focus on the major opportunities for enhancing overall emergency preparedness.

1. Create an Emergency Response Group of limited size, focused training, and having appropriate emergency preparedness and response duties written into their job descriptions.

The current exercise participants were approximately 20 in number, many of which have only limited responsibilities in emergency preparedness. Going forth, training and exercises for the Emergency Response Group would be more comprehensive than for general staff as the Response Group would have an appropriate larger list of responsibilities. In order for the Emergency Response Group to sustain its mission over time it needs to consist of upper, middle, and entry-level career level personnel so that future decision-makers can begin to learn from the current leaders.

2. Develop a list of emergency operating procedures needed to support staff responsibilities related to emergency preparedness, revise/create procedures that identifies the steps to be taken, assigns responsibility for implementing the procedure and then forms the basis of a formal training/exercise program. Select members of the Response Group would need additional training insofar as (A) understanding the electrical, petroleum, and natural gas systems specific to Michigan and B) developing adequate emergency response strategies across all types of energy systems and all types of disasters.

A number of procedures, particularly those addressing some of the higher-level less frequent emergency management tasks, seemed to be either lacking, unclear, or misunderstood. Currently, many of these procedures may be sited in the Emergency Response Plan. However, they may lack detail, be difficult to identify in so comprehensive a document, or not clearly delineate who responsibility for implementing the procedure. Going forth formal training and exercise programs would then be created based on assigned responsibilities and documented procedures.

3. Providing an updated communications plan would not only identify appropriate contact information, but should provide three levels of backup in case the primary or secondary recipient cannot be reached, outline the means for reviewing all sensitive information released from the Commission, and identify the back-up means for communicating in an event assuming primary communication systems are lost.

Currently, awareness regarding key decision-makers and those with a “need-to-know” are generally understood. However, any one person may be inadvertently left off the distribution list and in the absence of a key-decision maker, the chain of authority is not always clearly understood.