

AFTER ACTION REPORT

IMPERIAL SUGAR DIXIE CRYSTAL PLANT

February 7, 2008

2348F



23 April 2008

The purpose of this report is to identify many of the actions taken, operational strengths, and lessons learned during the response to the fire and explosion of 7 February 2008 at the Imperial Sugar Dixie Crystal Plant, also known as the Savannah Sugar Refinery. This report does not imply that lessons learned outweigh the operational strengths that were displayed during the emergency response; it simply means that emergency personnel can learn more from problems and recommendations than from successes made by existing procedures.

The report is limited to an emergency management perspective and has been compiled from input provided by the entire emergency response community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Clayton S. Scott", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Clayton S. Scott
Director

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

At approximately 7:20 pm Thursday, February 7, 2008 a dust initiated explosion and fire occurred at the 160 acre Imperial Sugar Dixie Crystal Plant located at #2 Oxnard Drive, Port Wentworth, Georgia. The force of the explosion destroyed the three sugar elevators and fire ravaged a large portion of the remaining plant. Units from the Garden City, Port Wentworth, Pooler, Bloomingdale, Thunderbolt, and Savannah Fire Departments responded to the general alarm. The Garden City Fire Department arrived first on the scene and established command at the main gate of the refinery. Garden City Fire Chief James Crosby initiated an immediate search and rescue operation placing Deputy Chief Roy Howard in charge of interior search operations. At approximately 7:35 pm Port Wentworth Fire Chief Greg Long arrived on the scene, assumed command. Paramedic Davis Kartie assumed responsibilities as Triage Officer and began the prioritization of patients for transport to the hospital. At the same time, partial activation of the County Emergency Operations Center was initiated. Savannah Fire Department Special Operations Chief Ben Morse assumed the responsibility of Operations and sectored the incident area. At 7:45 pm Garden City firefighter Michael Godbold arrived and assumed responsibilities as the Logistics Officer. Lieutenant Don Lee of the Savannah Chatham Metropolitan Police arrived on scene and established traffic control on the perimeter and the staging area command post adjacent to Oxnard Drive and Highway 25. A family staging area was established at the Catholic Church located adjacent to the law enforcement command post.

Of the 121 persons in the plant at the time of the explosion, 92 were plant employees and 29 were contractors. Thirty six persons were injured and transported to Memorial hospital; 14 of those were non life-threatening injuries. Nineteen victims were transported to the Augusta Burn Center. Over the following week search efforts recovered the remains of eight missing workers from the debris.

AFTER ACTION REPORT

This report is a compilation of information gained from individual discussions, department reports, and an after action debriefing conducted by James 'Pat' O'Neil and Dexter Brewer as a voluntary service to our community.

The men and women of the Chatham County first responder communities are dedicated, courageous and professional. During the fire there were lives saved by acts of courage and injuries minimized through their collective dedication. The openness and candor of this first responding community during these debriefings is a credit to their professionalism.

Regardless of whether the actions during this horrific event followed current emergency management doctrine, the response to this emergency was performed in a most professional, positive, caring and safe manner. A strong point of emphasis should be noted when reviewing this document; the response/recovery missions performed during this tragic event should always be considered a "total success".

After Action Reports sometimes attempt to merely document the memories of real or perceived problems; these reports accomplish little other than to demean participants that have tried their best to accomplish often dangerous and life threatening objectives. An alternative format is that of corrective actions or lessons learned that must be accomplished in order to achieve the common goal of improving planning and future response. This report strives to provide that learning opportunity so that we may always improve the response to the citizens of our community.

I. REASONS THE OPERATION RAN SMOOTHLY

1. The disaster occurred in a region and community where strong Georgia Mutual Aid Group agreements existed.
2. Cooperation between supporting resources was superb.
3. Rapid activation of the Regional Medical Alert Plan.
4. Excellent media participation and support.
5. Excellent support from the Salvation Army and the American Red Cross.
6. Rapid arrival of the Bryan County Mobile Command Post.
7. Support of the Charleston Office of the National Weather Service, Federal Aviation Administration, and Regional staff of the Georgia Emergency Management Agency.

II. LESSONS LEARNED THROUGH RESPONSE & RECOVERY

ESF #1 – Transportation *None*

ESF #2 – Communications

There are two components to communications: Communications technology is the physical ability to send and receive messages; and Social communications is the interpretation of the content of the message.

Statement of Issue 1: Responding agencies encountered difficulty communicating with other responders.

Discussion: Channel and frequency charts must be available for all first responding units. Even though units such as the one from South Carolina do not normally respond to Chatham County emergencies, the availability of a simple interoperability plan or frequency matrix would easily resolve the many of the communications conflicts.

Recommendations: Coordination and practice is the answer to achieving communications interoperability across a number of communications networks. ESF #2 should work to establish a comprehensive policy and user-friendly channel matrix for the use of common talk groups and frequencies during emergencies.

Statement of Issue 2: Sufficient radios and batteries were not available for responding units to maintain communications throughout the duration of the emergency.

Discussion: Responding organizations have basic allowances for communications equipment that meet their routine needs. It is neither financially nor operationally practical to maintain sufficient levels of communications equipment to support deployments of an extended duration.

As long as radios, batteries, and chargers are readily available and accessible, to meet emergency requirements, there will be no problem. In this event, sufficient equipment was provided to support operational needs. Additional supplies were readily available throughout the entire period of the emergency.

Recommendations: During major emergencies, CEMA will continue to provide on-site spare 800 MHz radios and batteries for emergency responders. Requirements for additional radios and batteries beyond those available will continue to be coordinated by CEMA with Savannah Communications.

ESF #3 – Public Works and Engineering

Statement of Issue: Within hours after the response to the fire, it became apparent that the services of a structural engineer would be required prior to emergency responders entering the fire scene.

Discussion: Within an hour of the request, a structural engineer was located that was willing and qualified to enter the fire zone to evaluate the strength of the facility for purposes of the safety of fire and rescue personnel. Fortunately, sufficient fire turnout-apparel and equipment was available to outfit the engineers whose services were to be required for days to come.

Recommendation: Fire departments located in Chatham County and the Georgia Search and Rescue (GSAR) team should consider recruiting, equipping, and training structural engineers for future events requiring this type of expertise.

ESF #4 - Firefighting

Statement of Issue 1: The field operations command post was positioned too close to the fire; a true incident command post was not implemented.

Discussion: Incident Command System doctrine emphasizes that the Incident Command Post be upwind from potential hazardous material releases, easily accessible to responders, likely to have sustained communications systems and power, and be positioned outside of the present and potential hazard zone but close enough to the incident to maintain command.

Recommendation: Principles of the Incident Command System should be adhered to in all incidents.

Statement of Issue 2: The initial explosion at the refinery destroyed the water main system that looped the facility and provided water for firefighting.

Discussion: Many of the water systems located along the Savannah River are antiquated and consist of small mains. In some instances, the systems are not looped but one-way or dead end mains. Most systems have no source of emergency back up or redundancy.

Recommendation: River-front facilities should install hydrant-type manifolds on top of the City of Savannah Industrial and Domestic (I & D) water supply system. These manifolds will allow for sufficient water flow at each potentially hazardous facility.

ESF #5 – Emergency Management

Statement of Issue 1: A general lack of knowledge by key individuals and agencies of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS) disaster response/recovery principles, and emergency management functions in general, led to confusion and frustration among responding agencies at all levels of government.

Discussion: NIMS and ICS are federally mandated for all public safety agencies. Chatham County has conducted more than 1200 hours of ICS level 300 and 400 instruction; this is command, staff, and upper management level training.

Regardless of the technology, remotely located dispatch centers cannot be used to command or control a ground emergency; that is the legally mandated responsibility of the Incident Commander and his or her staff. The ICS system provides for an Incident Commander, Operations Officer, Plans Officer, Logistics Officer, and Finance/Administrative Officer; all were eventually present with the exception of the latter and those duties were being assumed by the Logistics Officer.

Each of these officers has specific duties and responsibilities. If they are not being accomplished, they are to be corrected by members of the unified command team, not by individual criticism. Rogue activities have a detrimental effect on the response effort and unauthorized or impede logistical requisitions and slow and confuse the system.

Recommendation: Principles of the Incident Command System should be adhered to in all incidents.

Statement of Issue 2: Like all other medium size cities and counties throughout the nation, the Chatham County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) routinely operates from eight am to five pm, five days a week.

Discussion: As with the myriad of EOCs around the country, without a local Declaration of Emergency, CEMA neither commands, controls, nor dictates actions on the ground during local emergencies; that is the prerogative and legal responsibility of an Incident Commander.

Within one hour of notification of the emergency, CEMA had a representative on scene to assist the Incident Commander and a partially activated EOC. If the CEMA offices were collocated with the EOC, activation would have been faster and access to much needed files, records and equipment would have been more efficient.

Recommendation: As funds and facilities become available, CEMA offices should be located adjacent to the EOC.

Statement of Issue 3: Many fire and medical emergency assets self dispatched and responded directly to the scene. With no Incident Command to coordinate, Police did not restrict this equipment from entering the scene.

Discussion: With the enormous number of ambulances and fire apparatus that self-dispatched to the scene, nothing but on-site coordination could alleviate the traffic congestion. Establishment of an Incident Command Post with Police and Fire representatives would have assisted in clearing the main entrance corridor. However, within the first 20-minutes of the incident, Police were able to direct traffic and ambulances from the scene and manage the staging and movement of tankers

Because the fire began after dark, responding units were unable to see the excellent staging areas that were available for stand-by response units. With Savannah's preponderance of marsh, only first hand knowledge of the terrain would have identified these plentiful areas. Once daylight, these areas were not only used for staging but also for helicopter landing sites.

Recommendation: In an event of this size, the Incident Commander should ensure that a Unified Command is established with key departmental representatives co-located to resolve joint management issues such as determination of priority staging and area access requirements.

ESF #6 – Mass Care, Housing and Human Services

Statement of Issue 1: Coordinated feeding sites for first responders and workers during response and recovery.

Discussion: Once the response and subsequent recovery operations were identified as being long term events, feeding sites and the logistics to continually re-supply them were established. The fact that Chatham County has an active chapter of Volunteer Agencies Assisting in Disaster (VOAD) greatly enhanced the ability of the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army to coordinate these sites. VOAD continued to provide feeding to the sites as the response phase transitioned to the recovery phase and the Imperial Sugar Company began conducting operations for site clean-up and restoration.

Recommendation: Coordinators continue to actively recruit volunteers through such activities as CERT to insure there is a pool of well trained volunteers to staff such areas as mass feeding sites.

Statement of Issue 2: Sites for Post Traumatic Stress Debriefings (PTSD) were identified by ESF # 6 and counselors were made available thru ESF # 8 for first responders.

Discussion: Responders are involved in stressful situations and subject to harsh conditions both physically and mentally. The need to have PTSD is paramount in assisting the responders deal with the issues of stress during such a response.

Recommendation: ESF # 6 & # 8 actively recruit and train mental health counselors and work with the religious community for pastoral support for responders.

Statement of Issues 3: Family support counseling.

Discussion: Agencies such as the Savannah Chapter of the American Red Cross are providing counselors for the families of the disaster. Like the First Responders, these families have experienced a stressful event some with tragic results. The counseling program also addresses the mental health of the families, and provides direct assistance in dealing with issues of financial assistance.

Recommendation: Advocate, through such organizations as the Local Emergency Planning Council, for business and industry to develop effective and realistic Family Support Plans as part of their Continuity of Operations Plans.

ESF #7 – Resources

Statement of Issue 1: As a result of the Police outer perimeter staff being unable to communicate with the Logistics staff, entrance was denied to two generator-powered portable light units that had been requested at the scene.

Discussion: Because of the initial chaos and confusion resulting from the magnitude of the incident, the police outer perimeter staff was unable to contact the Incident Command Logistics Officer to validate requirements for portable light units, fuel deliveries, volunteer organizations' supply deliveries, etc. In some instances, those deliveries were turned away.

Recommendation: In an event of this size, the Incident Commander must ensure that a Unified Command is established with key departmental representatives co-located to resolve joint management issues.

Statement of Issue 2: Reports of the Incident Command staff being unable to fulfill logistical requirements.

Discussion: The Logistics Officer has the authority and responsibility, on behalf of the Incident Commander, to procure whatever personnel and services are required for the accomplishment of the mission. In order for responding equipment and services to access the outer security perimeter, that information must be coordinated with the Law Enforcement Officer in charge.

Recommendation: The Logistics Officer must coordinate with the on scene Law Enforcement Officer to relay accessibility requests to the perimeter control staff.

ESF #8 – Public Health and Medical Services

Statement of Issue 1: Other than the burn patients airlifted to the Augusta Burn Center, seven of those injured in the fire and explosion were transported to Candler Hospital; the remaining were transported to Memorial Hospital.

Discussion: Both Candler and St. Joseph's Hospitals discharged patients in order to provide emergency treatment and accommodation for victims from the fire. Thirty six injured were taken to Memorial Hospital for evaluation and treatment; nineteen of the thirty six were transported to the Augusta Burn Center and seven went to Candler and none to St. Joseph's Hospitals.

Patients were transported almost exclusively to Memorial Hospital because Candler has no helicopter landing facilities if onward evacuation had been required. As a result of its distance

from the other two hospitals, none were taken to St. Joseph's. In retrospect, better victim distribution should have been achieved.

Recommendation: ESF #8 develop protocols for optimum distribution of mass casualty victims that capitalize on the capabilities, location, and availability of each of the three area hospitals.

Statement of Issue 2: Crisis Counselors need to coordinate with ESF# 6

Discussion: Though it is the responsibility of ESF # 6 to identify crisis counseling centers and the need for PTSD counselors and family support counseling, ESF #8 has a support role to find and coordinate with such counselors. Due to relationships developed with the Low-Country Health District in South Carolina, ESF # 8 was able to secure well qualified counselors for the PTSD teams. In addition, ESF # 8 located bi-lingual counselors for the responders and families from Imperial Sugar who spoke Spanish as their primary language.

Recommendation:

1. Public Health should work with Mental Health Agencies in recruiting counselors.
2. A database of bi-lingual counselors should be developed as an attachment to ESF # 8 Annex.

Statement of Issue 3: Difficulties tracking and identifying victims.

Discussion: Immediately upon arrival, Police detectives began working with Refinery staff, relatives of potential casualties, and area hospitals to identify and track victims.

Recommendation: ESF #8 should establish protocols for mass casualty identification and accountability.

ESF #9 – Urban Search and Rescue

Statement of Issue 1: Canine search teams requested through the Georgia Emergency Management Agency were on site within six hours of their request. They were superb!

Discussion: Canine teams were provided by the Georgia department of Corrections and the Georgia Body Recovery Teams. These search teams have unique skills that may not be locally available. The response of these teams was so rapid that no actions need to be taken.

Recommendation:

1. Continue to plan and exercise with these teams during future training.
2. Canine team leaders should prepare a list of support requirements for requesting organizations that include veterinarian support. Veterinarian support was coordinated prior to arrival of the teams; when it was required, it was immediately available.

ESF #10 – Oil and Hazardous Materials Response *Not used*

ESF #11 – Agricultural and Natural Resources *Not used*

ESF #12 – Energy

Statement of Issue 1: As a result of the impact of the fire on the Sugar Refinery substation, electric power was lost.

Discussion: Georgia Power repair crews responded rapidly and effectively. Power to selected areas was quickly restored.

Recommendations: N/A

Statement of Issue 2: City fuel agreements prohibited fuel trucks from refueling fire apparatus and generators from other jurisdictions.

Discussion: Under emergency conditions such as this incident, organizations or municipalities providing fuel for one department should be authorized to provide fuel to meet any responding unit's needs.

Recommendation: ESF #12 should broker an agreement for the mutual provision of fuel under emergency conditions.

ESF #13 – Public Safety and Security

Statement of Issue: Due to the overwhelming response of area resources, the single ingress/egress corridor was restricted by responding fire apparatus.

Discussion: Because of the size of the facility and the extent of the fire, all available area fire equipment and personnel were required. However, upon arrival responders were to find little if any area available in which to deploy equipment and were forced to park on the side of the only entrance corridor. Responding traffic could have been blocked during their approach to and departure from the incident site by fire equipment that was unable to turn around.

The Fire response was so rapid, extensive and uncoordinated that responding Police units did not have the opportunity to clear vehicles from the roadway before the congestion occurred. They were able to stage ambulances away from the area and deploy them as individually requested.

Police could have stopped fire units but did not know which units were self dispatched and which had been requested. Although a Police staging area was established, Fire units did not stop to coordinate; repeated requests eventually had to be made to assist in restaging equipment.

Recommendations: As soon as possible, a Fire representative should be positioned with the Police Staging Officer (that can coordinate the availability of specialty units with the Logistics Officer) at a sufficient distance from the incident site to direct emergency responders to designated holding or staging areas while still enabling rapid response without blocking access to the incident site.

ESF #14 – Long Term Community Recovery & Mitigation *Not used*

ESF #15 – External Affairs

The media serves as the primary conduit to the general public. Especially in instances that involve violence and casualties, the media is essential for communications with family, friends and co-workers. Local planning and exercises have historically involved the media but exercises rarely achieve the degree of urgency that is demanded during an actual event.

Statement of Issue 1: In one instance, a public official inadvertently released incorrect information to the media.

Discussion: In order to maintain continuity and accuracy, only one Public Information Officer (PIO) was designated. While the PIO advises the Incident Commander on information dissemination and media relations, the Incident Commander must approve all information the PIO releases to the media.

This was clearly a Fire incident; the PIO was a trained Fire officer and was assigned as a member of the Incident Command staff.

During an emergency, Assistant PIOs are needed to control rumors, (in the absence of Liaison Officers, support VIPs), assist the media, act as victim liaison, and to serve as primary spokespersons for local public safety agencies. Assistants were assigned from the Metro Police Department and CEMA; it is the Assistant's responsibility to gain the approval of all press-released information from the designated PIO.

Recommendation: Principles of the Incident Command System should be adhered to in all incidents. ESF # 15 should develop a comprehensive policy and operational standard for information management and dissemination during emergencies.

III. LESSONS LEARNED FROM OTHER AREAS

Over 200 agencies from all levels of government and the volunteer community responded to the Sugar Refinery fire. The following comments were derived from the debriefing and are reported as follows:

Air Operations

Statement of Issue 1: During the first evening of the Sugar Refinery fire, only one rotary wing aircraft flew medical evacuation missions from the vicinity of the Refinery. Eight other aircraft staged at Signature Aviation, Savannah Hilton-Head International Airport, and flew under Memorial Hospital's Lifestar Dispatch and the control of the FAA Air Traffic Control Tower. These aircraft transported patients from the Memorial Hospital landing site to the Augusta Burn Center.

Discussion: Air medical evacuation operations are a vital component of any major emergency, especially one that involves seriously injured victims.

While local Medevac pilots routinely fly the Savannah/Chatham County area without navigation aids, a number of obstacles such as power transmission-line towers remain hazards to navigation.

One of the means available to the Chatham County aviation community flying in support of an emergency operation is the establishment of an Aviation Support Operations Center (ASOC). This mobile radio air traffic control center is established by members of the Chatham County Aviation Division and provides a means of on-site air traffic coordination and control.

Recommendation: By procedural agreement, in the future either the Aviation Division or the CEMA staff may request activation of the local ASOC system to be deployed as the situation warrants.

Statement of Issue 2: Rotary wing aircraft assets were unavailable for time-critical missions.

Discussion: The Logistics Officer requested a helicopter for a visual reconnaissance mission to determine whether or not fire could be observed in one of the sugar silos. The Chatham County Aviation Division helicopter was unavailable. Although the Georgia National Guard had a Chinook aircraft that could fly the mission, it would be at a cost of \$10,000 per hour and due to the size, design, and power of the aircraft, it was far from an ideal platform for visual reconnaissance. US Coast Guard and the Georgia State Patrol aircraft could not respond in time to fulfill the requirement.

Georgia Emergency Management Agency representatives that were at the site were able to make arrangements with a pilot in Bulloch County that owned a small helicopter (H-23 Raven) that would fly the mission. The mission was flown in a timely and professional fashion and determined that the silo was still on fire.

Recommendation: CEMA has subsequently contacted seven local helicopter owners and operators who have volunteered to fly missions on an emergency basis if no other, or insufficient aircraft are available. These aircraft would only be used under the direction and control of the Chatham County Chief Pilot, and under emergency conditions. If these aircraft were to be used, the County will reimburse their commercial fuel expenses.

Statement of Issue 3: When requested, the Federal Aviation Administration immediately activated Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFR) over and around the Sugar Refinery; all exceptions to the TFR were coordinated by CEMA.

Discussion: This TFR process worked well and had the desired effect of restricting all but emergency flights away from the scene of the incident.

Recommendation: Continue routine planning and coordination with the FAA.

Very Important Persons (VIPs)

Statement of Issue: Complaints were received about public officials and government agency leaders visiting the incident site during the response phase of the operation.

Discussion: VIPs are generally the elected representatives of the people that routinely provide direct support for the public safety community. Regardless of their reason for visiting the site of an emergency, as long as they do not impede the response and recovery effort, they have a legitimate reason to observe the emergency response. This is a reality that must be dealt with diplomatically and efficiently. However, it should be emphasized that at no time should VIPs be allowed to interfere with those directly involved in the conduct of the response and recovery operation.

Recommendations: When required, and time and personnel permitting, the Incident Command Liaison Officer should be assigned responsibility for briefing selected VIPs and allowing them to observe operations from safe areas.

Training and Exercises

Statement of Issue: Whenever possible, agency chiefs and administrative leaders should attend training and exercises conducted within the community.

Discussion: Each year CEMA, GEMA, and a host of Federal agencies conduct exercises in Chatham County that range from table-top to full scale. As recently as the fall of 2007, less than six months prior to the Savannah Sugar Refinery fire, a full scale field training exercise simulating multiple contaminated explosives, was held at the Elba Island Liquid Natural Gas facility.

In 2006 a full scale multi-agency exercise involving a hostage-taking terrorist was conducted in the Oglethorpe Mall.

Full scale air crash exercises with the potential of exhausting all local resources and devastating large portions of the community, are conducted every three years.

Hurricane exercises designed to tax every aspect of the first responding community have been conducted annually at the County's Hurricane Conference.

In April of 2008, an exercise is scheduled that will simulate destruction of the Skidaway Narrows bridge requiring commitment of local public and private assets as well as state resources to restore a 10,000 population community to normalcy.

Recommendation: If the public safety leadership of the community responds to and controls emergency events, it is important that whenever possible, those leaders attend and actively participate in the community exercise program.

Contingency Plans

Statement of Issue: During the after action debriefing the question was asked, “How should we have responded [select situation]?” Reportedly, there was often wide-spread disagreement.

Discussion: The Chatham County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) has been agreed to by all of the municipalities within the County. The EOP provides a comprehensive, countywide, all-hazards approach to incident management; it serves as the foundation for the development of detailed supplemental plans and procedures to effectively and efficiently implement incident management activities and assistance in the context of specific types of incidents. County supplemental plans include Hurricanes, Evacuation, and Catastrophic Incidents.

Recommendation: Municipalities should actively participate in the extensive program of local training and exercises.

Command and Control

Statement of Issue 1: Incident Command and General Staff members worked well beyond the responsible time limits thereby influencing their judgment and rational thought.

Discussion: Maximum time limits should be established and imposed on personnel working an emergency. Excessive fatigue impairs ones judgment and can expose emergency personnel to excessive danger.

If necessary, State coordinated Incident Management Teams can be requested to supplement local resources and provide trained command and control staff for an emergency.

Recommendation: The emergency response community needs to work together to establish maximum time limits for general and command staff members during an emergency. Consideration should be given to exploring the use of State Incident Management Teams.

Statement of Issue 2: The principles of the Incident Command System (ICS) were not always used; this can cause confusion and lessen the effectiveness of the response.

Discussion: The ICS is a standardized on-scene emergency management construct specifically designed to provide for the adoption of integrated organizational structure that reflects the complexity and demands of multiple jurisdictions without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries. ICS is the combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure, designed to aid in the management of public and private resources during field-level incident management operations.

Recommendation: Principles of the Incident Command System should be adhered to in all incidents.

IV. RANDOM SUGGESTIONS

1. Use universal Urban Search and Rescue building markings. The markings used were not the universal standard and it was difficult to determine what they meant.
2. The exact locations of previously discovered bodies should be specified so dog handlers are familiar with these locations in regard to how the dogs are responding to the search areas.

3. Provide a daily brief on operational objectives for the current period as well as the next day.
4. If not established, have decontamination stations immediately available.
5. Ensure message boards are clear and easy to read.
6. Incident Command Liaison Officer should be assigned to the command post to serve as the point of contact for assisting cooperating agencies and organizations.
7. Conduct additional exercises and training with the Georgia Search and Rescue unit.

Special Thanks

Port Wentworth Fire Chief Greg Long deserves special recognition and commendation for his tireless efforts and dedication. His actions were exemplarily; we are proud to have him as a member of the Public Safety community.

Thanks and appreciation to James 'Pat' O'Neil, Dexter Brewer, and their able assistants, Charles Agnew and John Green for their insightful comments and volunteering to conduct the after action debriefing. Thanks to Savannah Chatham Metropolitan Police Chief Mike Berkow and his tireless efforts during the emergency. Thanks also to Mike Godbold for his resourcefulness, coordination and comments regarding logistical issues; and to Tracy Sergeant for coordinating K-9 support and her perceptive and constructive after action report comments.

