

Waldo County Hosts Regional Disaster Exercise

Belfast, Maine – August 17, 2007

Waldo County will host a four-day, regional, full scale disaster exercise this fall, that begins on Wednesday, September 26th and extend through Saturday, September 29th. This exercise tests emergency responders and emergency managers from throughout Waldo County, neighboring counties, and several State and Federal agencies. The purpose for this exercise is to conduct an operational homeland security incident in a maritime/coastal terrorism context, in order to increase the local, county, state and federal capability to respond to a disaster incident.

The disaster exercise starts on Islesboro on Wednesday with an emergency response by the Islesboro Public Safety Department, the Maine Marine Patrol and the Waldo County Incident Management Assistance Team. Activities will take place at the Islesboro Ferry Landing and the Islesboro Airport in response to the discovery of a terrorist cell.

The disaster exercise continues on Thursday with a joint response by the Waldo County Sheriff's Office and the Belfast Police Department to a terrorist safe house located in the area. Concurrently, the Maine National Guard's Civil Support Team will respond to a suspected Weapons of Mass Destruction incident in the Hancock County Town of Castine.

On Friday, a Command Post will be established at the Belfast Boathouse that will include the FBI, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Maine State Police Tactical Team, National Guard Civil Support Teams from Maine and Virginia, the Civil Air Patrol, Maine Marine Patrol, Waldo County Emergency Management, Waldo County General Hospital, the Waldo County Ham Radio Association and other agencies. Later that day, personnel from several of these agencies will respond to a hostage incident at the Maine Maritime Academy on board the State of Maine vessel.

The exercise concludes with the taking of hostages on board a local tour boat that results in a mass casualty incident in the Stockton Springs harbor. Emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and other first responders from throughout the county will respond to triage, treat and transport several dozen victims to area hospitals. Area ambulances will transport the victims to Waldo County General Hospital and other area hospitals and treated at the Emergency Rooms.

This exercise is being funded by the Department of Homeland Security, Maine Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Navy's Center for Asymmetric Warfare and will be a once-in-lifetime opportunity to improve the emergency response capabilities of Waldo County, the region and the State of Maine.

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