

MINUTES

February 12, 2025

New City Hall (formerly the Stillwater Building) 5th Floor Emergency Operations Center (EOC) & Virtual 9:03 am – 10:29 am

APPROVAL OF MINUTES as distributed [1st: Bob Lough with YARES; 2nd: Tyler Wattles with Par Montana Pipeline]

AGENDA – DISCUSSION:

Quarterly Financial Report: NEXT REPORT IN MARCH

Member Presentation(s):

Montana Department of Corrections (DOC) – MT Women's Prison

- DOC is the 3rd largest department in the MT state government.
 - Department focus is on rehabilitation of those that pass through their facilities.
 - Local facility objectives focus on maintaining the inmate population.
- DOC is the largest POST certified operation in Montana.
- Current MT Women's Prison population in Billings is 275.
 - There are currently 178 prisoners awaiting transport to the Billings facility.
- Across the state, the DOC is working to expand their Emergency Management portfolio, eventually to include 21 emergency managers, tied in the Incident Management Teams (IMTs) throughout Montana.
- They are also working to develop comprehensive THIRAs.
- Long-term goal is to make the DOC a community asset.
 - They have vehicles, buses, etc. should a mass evacuation be needed.
 - There is also a Starlink for backup communications and additional radios.
- They're also wanting to take part in exercises with community partners to better develop what steps they (as the DOC) would need to implement/carry out should the exercised incident become reality.
 - Previous evacuation site was the Metra, however, as that is also a public evacuation site. If public evacuated to Metra, then the DOC cannot use it to house their population.
 - Difficult to ask schools to approve/be on board with housing inmates long-term (depending on the incident's scope).
- Area DOC is working with Billings Police to have shared communications channels between entities, prior to a bad day.
 - The last TTX they participated in was a refinery fire at P66 due to their proximity.

LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE

NEW CITY HALL – BILLINGS, MT 59101

JEN STATON, CHAIR

Subcommittee Schedule & Chair Contact:

- Right-to-Know (RTK)
 - VACANT
- Public Education & Information
 - CCC/CAER
 - Pam Sanderson
 - psanderson406@gmail.com
 - 4th Tuesday every month; 09:30-10:30 @ United Way or virtual
 - Crisis Communications
 - Dan Carter
 - <ENTER NEW EMAIL ADDRESS>
 - Quarterly; 11:45-1315 @ Windmill; Contact Dan for more details
- Hazardous Materials Facilities Liaison
 - VACANT
- Emergency Response and Resources
 - Exercise Design
 - Paul Totton (Email Chrissy Brese with questions)
 - volcoord@uwyellowstone.org
 - 4th Tuesday every month; 10:30-11:30 @ United Way or virtual
 - Planning
 - Annemarie Overcast
 - aovercast@yellowstonecountymt.gov
 - Every other Friday; 08:30-09:30 @ St. Vincent's Mansfield Center/virtual
- Grants
 - Dianne Lehm
 - dianne@bigskyeda.org
 - Meets as needed. Contact Dianne for more details.
- Training
 - yclepc@gmail.com
 - Email all training opportunities to LEPC Gmail.

Subcommittee Reports:

- **Right-to-Know (RTK) & Hazardous Materials Facilities Liaison**
 - Both committees still need a chair
 - There is currently a rough informal process. It's not pretty but it works.
 - There are roughly 150 facilities already reporting and filing their Tier 2 reports in e-Plan.
- **Public Education & Information**
 - Question they are focusing on for 2025 is: **What would be the most helpful for this community in terms of citizen preparedness?**
 - Rough guesstimate is that 90% of people don't have a clue about what Yellowstone County Informed is.
 - When people have to sign up, they don't.
 - Ways to get additional sign-ups?
 - One-on-one, especially with seniors, works best.
 - Does the County have a pre-staged incident webpage that they can activate/publish quickly for an incident?
 - Or better yet a Facebook Page?
 - YC DES had a Facebook Page but took it down due to recent commissioner dissent over its existence.
 - Getting the correct information to the right people in a timely manner is critical.
 - City of Billings has a Public Information Officer (PIO) position, but that position will become vacant after 3/7.
 - **Question: Does the County have a designated/identified PIO? Should they?**
 - There is a difference between notifying people of the incident versus giving the general public information about the incident.
 - Do people know what Shelter-in-Place actually means and what to do?
 - They are working on a description of what an ideally prepared community looks like.
 - **UPDATE FOR YELLOWSTONE COUNTY INFORMED**
 - DES changed the YCI callout number from 406-256-2775 (DES desk phone) due to the sheer volume of callbacks generated by a single notification.
 - **NEW NUMBER IS 406-256-2774**
- **Emergency Response & Resources**
 - Planning
 - DES is currently discussing the HAZMAT Plan. Specifically:
 - Who responds
 - When
 - How do they respond
 - How are they notified

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- Essentially a public information campaign working to expand comprehension of those liable to respond per MCA and the HAZMAT Plan.
- Plans that are signed hold you to account to the plan. The point of the plan is to do the plan.
- Exercise Design
 - Even though the recently conducted exercises are not HAZMAT specific, they cover related/relevant topics that would likely come up in a HAZMAT incident.
 - Upcoming Exercises:
 - St. Vincent's Hospital and Billings Fire are coordinating an exercise of the St. V's helipad (internal operation).
 - FAA requires an annual airport exercise.
 - This year is a functional exercise in MAY.
 - Hospitals are conducting a medical response and surge exercise.
 - This will help them coordinate their own resources due to limited medical transportation resources available in Montana.
 - Observers/listeners allowed
 - Billings Public Schools are holding a Safe Schools Summit class (internal).
 - There should be a review of the BBWA Ditch Breach Response Plan to ensure everyone is aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- Grants
 - Grants subcommittee only meets for the Homeland Security grant.
 - Each grant application must have a letter of support from LEPC and have application ranked by LEPC in order to qualify for the grant.
 - If interested in applying for this grant, please coordinate with YC DES and Dianne Lehm before the end of February.
 - Homeland Security Grant Applicants
 - Billings Police Department SWAT and YCSO TRT are going for a joint application for a ROOK (armored skid steer with attachments: Ram, raised platform, forklift, etc.). Asking for \$495,000. This is a joint application due to SWAT and TRT combining on more and more operations and are a county, region, and state asset, often deploying to cities in eastern Montana (where they have no tactical response team resource) or in support of other tactical response teams in Great Falls, Helena, Bozeman, Gillette (WY), and/or Bismarck (ND) (to relieve existing teams on long-term deployments).

- Application focuses on reducing potential for loss of life and help preserve life for responders, the public, and those involved in the incident. De-escalation of incidents is always the goal.
- Officers continue encountering the same problems on barricade incidents.
 - **What are tactical response teams to do when they run out of tactical resources?**
 - You have to send in people and end up risking personnel because you can't leave. This piece of equipment will fill the gap.
- Examples:
 - Big Bear – subject had access to unlimited ammunition and firearms. SWAT's lack of precision equipment resulted in a significant amount of property damage. SWAT was 30 minutes away from having to send people in.
- Ridgewood – homicide – subject barricaded himself in a house attic. This resulted in having to use the fire department bucket (which is not armored) to lift teams. This resulted in officers being exposed on the ladder/bucket when the subject started shooting.
- During another incident, officers ran out of options to safely remove cars from the incident, had no contact with the subject, and had to breach the door with people to deliver a phone for contact with the subject. This resulted in a SWAT officer being seriously injured when the subject fired at officers, breaching the ballistic shield and missing the officer's vest and instead hitting the officer.
- We cannot continue placing officers in life-threatening scenarios due to lack of appropriate resources.
- The previous grant cycle approved a ROOK for the west (Missoula) fulfilling a state goal of having a minimum of 2 in the state – one in the east and one in the west – for faster deployment.
- MSU-Billings is applying for additional cameras and overhauling existing cameras on the main campus and city campus.
 - There are currently 90 surveillance cameras on the main campus.
 - Existing cameras were purchased with a grant 10 years ago.
 - There are currently no cameras on the City College campus.
- **Training**
 - As there is no chair, there are no meetings.
 - All training opportunities should be emailed to LEPC Leadership, so they can forward them to the rest of the LEPC members.
 - Training opportunities can be found at:
 - MTDES

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- DNRC/NWCG fire classes
- Betsy Ross is the state training coordinator at MTDES (betsy.ross@mt.gov)
 - New training opportunities are **BOLDED**.
- CISA does numerous FREE online trainings/webinars.
- Continue pursuing NIMS/ICS training. ICS 100, 200, 700, and 800 are free and can be completed 100% online. Email your certificates to Annemarie (aovercast@yellowstonecountymt.gov) for the county records.
 - [ICS 700.B – An Introduction to the National Incident Management System](#)
 - [ICS 100.C – Introduction to Incident Command System, ICS 100](#)
 - [ICS 200.C – Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response, ICS-200](#)
 - [ICS 800.D – National Response Framework, An Introduction](#)
- **IF DEPARTMENTS OR AGENCIES NEED ADDITIONAL CLASSES (higher level ICS) – CONTACT DES.**

End subcommittee reports

Continuing Discussion/Old Business:

- Move GAP Analysis to March meeting due to time constraints. (gap analysis: pgs 8-10)
 - Recap: Used the new LEPC gap analysis tool to assess our LEPC – completed in September 2024. We are currently doing 23% of the goals/priorities that we should be.
We can and should do better. Some will take some work, but others are easy 'low-hanging fruit'.
We need to pick 5 that we are going to accomplish for 2025.
 - TABLED UNTIL MARCH
- Hazardous Release Report
 - Standard releases/flaring events.
 - Notified of HAZMAT being transported over icy roads (low-speed accidents or runoffs)
 - No major releases
 - No activations of the EOC or DES Personnel requested.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comments given during this time.

TOPICS OF NOTE/SITUATIONAL AWARENESS:

- Possible BNSF HAZMAT car training in May?
 - Still working on the details.
- State currently has an open grant to add electric buses and trucks to their fleets.
 - Money comes from a settlement with VW.

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- YC DES and MTDES held an ICS 300 and ICS 400 class at the end of January. There was a fairly heavy exercise component to both.
 - Exercise focused on a preemptive brownout where the power company shuts down the power before or during a high wind event to reduce fire potential (as they often do in California).
 - It became very apparent how reliant on power we are.
 - NorthWestern Energy has mentioned or hinted at this type of event for Montana for the last several years – likely a heads up for a policy that will eventually be implemented here.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned @ 10:29 am. [1st: Bob Lough with YARES; 2nd: Tyler Wattles with Par Montana Pipeline]

Next Meeting:

- **MARCH 12, 2025 @ 09:00am**
 - **WE WILL BE IN THE 5TH FLOOR EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC)**

2024 LEPC Gap Analysis Results

LEPC Structure and Organization (7/13)

- Organize subcommittees and establish clear membership roles (.5).
- Produce annual report covering trends in accidents, hazards, enforcement, drills, risk reduction, etc.
- Work towards reducing vulnerability zones and accident potentials.
- Maintain own identity independent from host agency.
- Improve emergency response and mitigation.
- Set progress objectives (funding, participation, communication, etc.) and annually evaluate progress towards achieving these goals (.5)

Identification of Hazards (1/4)

- Identify facilities with extremely hazardous substances (EHS).
- Identify facilities with other hazardous chemicals.
- Identify facilities contributing to or subject to risk near facilities with EHSs and hazardous chemicals.

LEPC Emergency Response Planning (5/18)

- Annually review and update the hazmat plan.
- Coordination exists between EHS facilities and fire departments and other organizations (police, hospitals, etc.).
- Establish a means to determine the severity of a chemical release.
- Identify potential shelters and evacuation routes.
- Include emergency response information on those facilities identified in local emergency plan.
- Maintain an inventory of emergency response resources.
- Establish plans for shelter-in-place or evacuation.
- Establish early warning systems (.5).
- Provide education on protective actions (evacuation/shelter-in-place) to the public and first responders.
- Evaluate the protective capacity of shelter-in-place structures.
- Conduct a hazards analysis.
- Ensure hazard analysis is incorporated into plan.
- Ensure procedures are in place by which facility emergency response coordinators will notify first responders of a hazardous chemical emergency (.5).
- Include emergency response measures used by medical personnel in local emergency plan (.5).

Implementing the LEPC Emergency Response Plan (0/3)

- Establish notification procedures by which facility coordinators will notify first responders or other system in the event of an EHS or hazardous chemical emergency.
- Describe the incident command system to be used in responding to hazardous chemical emergencies.
- Establish alert and warning systems to notify the public (.5).

Community Hazard Analysis (0/9)

- Develop easily understood community maps showing EHS facilities, vulnerable zones, transportation, etc.
- Conduct commodity flow study to identify chemicals and volumes moving through community.
- Identify potential hazards from natural events such as flood, tornado, earthquake, drought, winter storm, etc.
- Identify critical facilities, vulnerable environments, and potentially exposed populations (e.g., schools, nursing homes, residential areas, workers onsite) (.5).
- Prepare or obtain worst-case and lesser release scenarios at each EHS facility and those in transportation.
- Assess potential risks and develop a prioritized plan.
- Establish process to determine whether EHSs or other hazardous chemicals have been involved in past accidents.
- Establish a process to determine the level of risk if EHSs or other hazardous chemicals are involved in an accident.
- Establish a process to determine the areas and populations that will be affected in the event EHSs or other hazardous chemicals are released (.5).

LEPC Training and Exercises (1/5)

- Develop emergency response drills and exercises to evaluate the effectiveness of the local emergency response plan.
- Establish a schedule to regularly conduct drills and emergency response exercises.
- Sponsor training for fire, medical, police, hazmat teams, hospitals, and other response personnel.
- Hold seminars for the public on hazards within their community and how they can protect life and property.

Community Right-To-Know (2/10)

- Publicize availability of right-to-know information.
- Establish a convenient information request process.
- Publicize community hazard maps with vulnerability zones through printed or electronic media.
- Discuss or publicize options for reducing vulnerability zones (i.e., safer technologies).
- Regularly contact each reporting facility to promote better understanding of EPCRA requirements by the facility owner or operator.
- Outreach to new facilities on EPCRA requirements.
- Ensure all required facilities are submitting their Tier II forms (.5).
- Actively seek to increase number of facilities in the community annually reporting EHSs or hazardous chemicals.

Accident Prevention (0/5)

- Promote exploration of inherently safer technologies (safer chemicals, lower pressure or temperatures, less storage, fewer shipments).
- Promote other facility safety improvements (secondary containment, automatic shutoffs, alarms, etc.).
- Provide the hazard analysis to planning commissions, zoning boards, public works, citizen advisory councils, and other local entities.
- Analyze spill reports for response and prevention lessons (.5).
- Give recognition for hazard reduction efforts (e.g., awards).

Public Awareness (0/4)

- Maintain an LEPC website for public access (.5).
- Print an annual EPCRA notice for local new releases or display to EPCRA public notice on your website.
- Provide public service announcements concerning all-hazard preparedness to local radio and tv stations.
- Conduct activities in the community to heighten the public's awareness of hazards in the community (.5).

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ATTENDANCE RECORD – FEBRUARY 12, 2025

#	Agency	First Name	Last Name	Federally Funded?
1	Alternatives, Inc.	Rick	Deady	
2	AMR	Brady	Drescher	
3	Billings Police Dept	Brandon	Wooley	
4	Billings Police Dept	Ryan	Kramer	
5	Billings Police Dept	Travis	Fjetland	
6	Billings School District 2	Joe	Halligan	
7	CHS Pipeline	Corey	McIlvain	
8	CHS Refinery	Jacob	Haan	
9	Coventry Ren	Paul	Totton	
10	Dept of Corrections – Probation & Parole	Courtney	Rogers	
11	Dept of Corrections – Probation & Parole	Kurt	Aughney	
12	Dept of Corrections – Probation & Parole	Mark	Wlazlak	
13	HOPE K9 Dogs	Harry	Schlitz	
14	Laurel EMS	Troy	Charbonneau	
15	Laurel Police	Jarred	Anglin	
16	Member of the Public	Pam	Sanderson	
17	MSU-Billings Police	Brandon	Gatlin	
18	MT DES	Jeff	Gates	YES
19	National Weather Service	Nick	Vertz	
20	National Weather Service	William	McKeown	
21	Par Montana Pipeline	Tyler	Wattles	
22	Par Montana Refinery	Jake	Jones	
23	Phillips 66 Refinery	Kyle	Wilson	
24	Phillips 66 Refinery	Steve	Blood	
25	Red Cross	Austin	Ragsdale	
26	Rehabilitation Hospital of Montana	David	Ude	
27	RiverStone Health	Martin	Moulton	
28	RiverStone Health	Ray	Ezell	
29	Rocky Vista University	Bret	Jensen	
30	Salvation Army	Keith	Bjotten	
31	St. John's United	Rob	Wilkerson	
32	St. Vincent's Hospital	Jennifer	Staton	
33	Team Rubicon	Rod	Boettcher	
34	United Way	Elizabeth	Chappell	
35	YARES	Bob	Lough	
36	YARES	Paul	Miller	
37	Yellowstone County GIS	Alyssa	Quiroz	
38	Yellowstone County GIS	Mike	Powell	
39	Yellowstone County DES	Annemarie	Overcast	YES
40	Yellowstone County DES	Derek	Yeager	YES
TOTAL ATTENDANCE:				40