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Economy & Efficiency Commission Presentation

Editorial Note: Although every effort has been made to insure the accuracy of the material in this presentation, the scope of the material covered and the discussions undertaken lends itself to the possibility of minor transcription misinterpretations.

**PRESENTATIONS BY
Mr Ian Whyte
Program Manager
Office of Emergency Management
Los Angeles County**

***Topic: Business Continuity Planning in the County
July 6, 2006***

Chair Hill then introduced Mr Whyte, and welcomed him to the Commission.

Basic Structure and Role of the Office of Emergency Management

Mr. Whyte began his presentation by explaining the basic structure of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). The Office has a staff of between fifteen to twenty employees with Mike Brooks currently serving as Acting Administrator. Mr. Whyte noted that he specializes in County Emergency Operations Center (CEOC) operations, such as coordinating training and Emergency Exercises, while coordinating the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) Program for the County. The OEM office is located at the County Emergency Operations Center, a facility the organization shares with the Sheriff Emergency Operations Bureau. The Sheriff's Bureau is responsible for immediate response to and management of emergencies. During CEOC activations, OEM assumes a "Chief of Staff" role, serving the CEOC Manager as its principle consultant. Once an emergency has been stabilized, the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) coordinates any further response.

Business Continuity Planning in the County

Mr. Whyte reported that the Board of Supervisors ordered creation of the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) Program for the County. The Board appointed OEM to head BCP for the County. The Chief Information Office (CIO) hired a consultant to help create two web-based program design applications. The first was a Business Impact Analysis, which OEM uses to identify businesses functions and processes, and then rank them in order of importance. The second was a disaster plan-writing application, known as the Living Disaster Recovery Planning System (LDRPS). This program enables the County to standardize their planning, and to analyze plans which other County departments have developed. Both programs required approximately a year of customization.

Mr. Whyte said that by August of 2004, County departments had completed a Business Impact Analysis. This analysis isolated 719 business functions throughout the County. Coordinators within each department

were made responsible for labeling and prioritizing each department's business functions. This was accomplished by determining their countywide effect, where they took place within the department structure, and how soon the function needed to be up and running.

In the first of three BCP phases County departments used findings from the Business Impact Analysis to draw up a Crisis Management Plan. This plan is a reference list of department business functions ranked in order of importance. Phase I established a BCP team within each County department. Such teams consist of a designated department executive, plan writers, a coordinator which acts as a liaison between executives and plan writers, IT and risk management personnel, and the Department Emergency Coordinator.

At present, OEM is in Phase II of BCP implementation. Using data from the Business Impact Analysis and Crisis Management Plans, OEM works with departments to draw up detailed plans for recovering and maintaining critical business functions. In addition, OEM has worked with the CIO to support the Internal Services Division (ISD) with implementing a Data Center Recovery Plan. The Plan includes a duplicate site maintained on a server in Orange County.

Commissioner Petak asked whether the Departments' Emergency Plans of the BCP has priority. Mr. Whyte replied that the Department Emergency Plans take priority for initial response to the emergency, particularly if the event is localized, and that the BCP would be used to manage department recovery efforts.

Over the last few months, OEM has made presentations to County executives, including the Telecommunications Systems Advisory Board, the County Emergency Management Council, all department heads, and all administrative deputies. OEM postponed its BCP efforts following Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita to support development of a plan to receive up to 5,000 disaster evacuees, and join an Incident Management Team sent to the City of New Orleans. On March 8, 2006, OEM resumed BCP efforts by instructing all departments to either submit complete business continuity plans by June 2006, or to request an extension. OEM will be entering Phase III of the BCP, which will focus on planning for widespread service disruptions and integrating business continuity planning practices into the overall system of emergency recovery.

Questions and Comments

Commissioner Parks commended Mr. Whyte for the efforts of OEM, and asked if there is any operational mandate in place to ensure that departments update and review their business continuity plans. Commissioner Parks recalled that the City of New Orleans had undertaken tabletop exercises to prepare for a hurricane. Unfortunately, the preparations were not effective when hurricane Katrina struck the city. Mr. Whyte pointed out that, while this type of preparation is considered emergency planning, it differs significantly from business continuity planning. Mr. Whyte said that, throughout the past decade, OEM has conducted standardized emergency planning under the state's Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS). As of September of 2006, the federal government will require that all states coordinate emergency planning through the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

Commissioner Petak asked how much influence business continuity planning is having on decision making in the department with regards to mitigating the impact of an event. Mr. Whyte replied that, although it is a relatively new concept, its influence is increasing. In contrast, department emergency planning has been in use for some time. Commissioner Petak then asked what effect the BCP will have on how the County continues to provide public services in the event of an emergency. Mr. Whyte replied that Phase II of BCP has worked out specific plans for continuing services with each County department. He presented an example of a service-specific plan with the Department of Public Social Services DPSS for continuing issuance of food stamps after an emergency.

Commissioner Petak asked how the County coordinates with the 88 local city governments. He pointed out that if an emergency occurred that disabled local governments, the County could be overwhelmed with additional recovery responsibilities. Mr. Whyte replied that such an aspect of emergency management would be distinct from the BCP which deals exclusively with County departments. He explained that OEM works very closely with Disaster Management Area Coordinators. These coordinators are civilians hired by cities

to link their respective jurisdictions with the County to address emergency management issues.

Chair Hill asked how BCP factors into the County Strategic Plan. Mr. Whyte noted that BCP Phases I and II have laid the foundation for integrating business continuity planning into the County Strategic Plan. This is the primary goal of Phase III. Commissioner Barcelona asked if OEM is involved with managing civil disturbances such as rioting. Mr. Whyte stated that, given such a scenario, OEM coordinates with the Sheriff's Department to gather information to both keep the Board, CAO, and other executives informed, and to prepare proactive emergency planning. Commissioner Parks asked if OEM has the authority to establish a zero-based operation. Mr. Whyte responded that the authority to do so exists through their working relationship with the CAO. He encouraged Commissioner Parks to ask the CAO for a more comprehensive answer to his question.

Commissioner Petak asked how the Commission can be of service to OEM in achieving its goals in business continuity planning. Mr. Whyte said the most helpful contribution continues to be designated Business Continuity Coordinators who provide some or all their time to developing business continuity plans within their respective departments. Chair Hill asked whether OEM has received performance measures training. He replied that they had not, to the best of his knowledge.

There being no more questions, Mr. Whyte thanked the Commission for having him, and asked that they feel free to contact him whenever they please. Chair Hill thanked Mr. Whyte for his informative presentation.

[Return to Top of Presentation](#)

[Return to Agenda](#)



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