

TNCAT earthquake drill improves preparedness

After more than a year in planning, the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency along with other state agencies and numerous local governments conducted the first-ever test of revised Tennessee catastrophic emergency plans over three days in June.

The scenario called for a no-notice event ... a massive 7.7 magnitude earthquake in the New Madrid Seismic Zone along West Tennessee. In reality, this large of an earthquake would most likely result in massive building damage, disruption to communications and electrical power grids, fracturing of transportation infrastructure, as well as large chemical or hazardous material releases and untold casualties to the public.

Adding a touch of realism to the exercise, an actual earthquake measuring 3.3 in magnitude was recorded in East Tennessee on the first day of the exercise, which was held in West Tennessee.

The state's earthquake exercise, known by its acronym TNCAT, also coincided with a joint federal/state earthquake-oriented Spills of National Significance exercise conducted by the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The exercise venues at Union University in Jackson, Tenn., and in UT Martin in Martin, Tenn., drew hundreds of volunteer participants for a mass casualty drill. In response to the simulated disaster, more than 20 local



A USAR canine team prepares to search the rubble. More TNCAT photos on pages 3-7.

governments, including fire, police, emergency medical service personnel and emergency management officials,

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TEMA site gets praise for usability

A recent study of state emergency management websites found that most efforts fall short of educating the public on emergency actions that can be taken to safeguard their lives. However, the report picked out Tennessee, along with three other states, as examples of how to do it right.

Brooke Liu, assistant professor of Public Communication at American University in Washington D.C., examined emergency management agency websites in four areas: democratic outreach, information content, outreach to special needs populations and intergovernmental relations.

According to Liu, TEMA's website (www.tnema.org) stood out as successful in these four benchmarks. In addition, Virginia, Oregon and Missouri were also given recognition for their websites.

"In the post-Katrina world of emergency management, states must evaluate their role in managing preparation for; and in response to, disasters," said Liu in her report.

Emergency Management magazine had a lengthy report on the study on page 50 of its Summer 2007 issue.

The full story is available online: www.govtech.com/em/articles/118808.

Preparedness Tennessee is a quarterly update of the latest and most important information that affects the protection of the state and its inhabitants. Its aim is to support the state's large community of response professionals, giving particular attention to topics that cross boundaries and enhance coordination between agencies.

Please contact the publication editors if you have information or questions that can help in this effort.

Tennessee Emergency Management Agency

Editor — Jeremy Heidt
jheidt@tnema.org
(615) 741-0482

Dept. of Safety, Office of Homeland Security

Editor — Anna Smith
anna.smith@tn.state.us
(615) 532-7825

Emergency Management Association of Tennessee

Editor — John Riley
rileys@cafes.net
(931) 455-2319

Preparedness Tennessee

Graphics Designer — Linda Walters
lwalters@tnema.org
(615) 741-2940

Notice of this publication is sent to all emergency response-related offices in Tennessee, including those of emergency management, emergency medical services, firefighting, law enforcement, rescue, and local, state, and federal government leadership and policy-making.

State inspection program nets 62 drivers, 66 trucks

By MIKE BROWNING
OHS Contributor

The Tennessee Dept. of Public Safety reports 62 drivers and 66 trucks were placed out of service as a result of a random highway check aimed at "deterring big rig violations and terrorist activity."

According to a state issued news release, during the first-ever Operation United S.T.O.P. (Strategic Transportation Observation and Prevention) May 3, the Highway Patrol and multiple partner agencies examined more than 1,500 trucks during 24-hour operation.

"The goal of Operation United S.T.O.P. is to be pro-active in deterring large truck violations and terrorist activity by conducting random truck inspections across the state," THP Colonel Mike Walker said in a statement. "We conducted eight simultaneous Homeland Security Hazardous Materials Checkpoints over a non-stop 24-hour period."

A total of 395 hazardous materials trucks were checked, as well as 466 moveable containers and 218 rental vehicles. In all, 596 safety defects were found, 329 trucks were checked by bomb or drug dogs and 760 were checked for radiological contaminants. The stops also resulted in three alcohol violations, one drug arrest, one arrest for no driver's license and another arrest for a fraudulent use of an I.D.

"The cooperation of local, state and federal agencies at these checkpoints demonstrates a strong willingness to work together to ensure public safety on Tennessee's interstates and highways," said Gov. Phil Bredesen. "Ensuring the safety of the motoring public is a high priority for Tennessee."

The multi-agency event included members of TEMA, TBI, TDOT, TDEC, the Tennessee National Guard, the federal Department of Homeland Security, FBI, ATF, TSA, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, RAD Health and several local police agencies. Nuclear detection devices were



Operation United S.T.O.P. (Strategic Transportation Observation and Prevention) examined more than 1,500 trucks during a 24-hour period. The program utilizes experts from a number of state, local and federal agencies to examine cargo, driver logs and perform truck safety inspections.

utilized at several checkpoints to identify radioactive materials. Three were found but determined to be legal shipments.

In October 2006, a similar eight-hour operation in 17 sites across the state helped earn Tennessee national recognition for leadership from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, the department noted.

"We couldn't carry out an operation of this scale without the help of our partners. We're thankful they're as serious about this issue as we are," said THP Captain Steve Binkley, who oversees commercial vehicle enforcement.

Why do you need EMAT?

**By Daryl Justice
EMAT Contributor**

Sometimes “the way we’ve always done it” just doesn’t work any more. Sometimes an outside force – weather, fire, explosion, bomb threat, or other circumstances – can force disrupt our plans. When things don’t go as expected, a “quick fix” isn’t always available.

When that happens, it’s truly an emergency situation. When the unpredictable happens, could you use some help? Some guidance? When you are getting ready for the next emergency, do you know where you can get extra resources?

Well, guess what, you have help through the Emergency Management Association of Tennessee (EMAT).

According to Webster’s *Collegiate Dictionary*, “Association” means an organization of persons having a common interest. EMAT is such an organization, with a wide spectrum of members from

EMAT Conference for 2007

The annual EMAT Conference is scheduled for October 9-11 at the Park Vista Hotel in Gatlinburg, Tenn.

Information on attending and a draft agenda, along with vendor information can be found online: www.emat.org.

various emergency services from across the state, not just policemen or firefighters. Membership includes medical personnel, volunteer groups, emergency managers, the whole gambit of people just like you; that could use a hand with resources, exercises, general planning and training. The list could go on and on.

No single organization will be appropriate to each and every disaster, nor will a single planning blueprint meet every need. The key is to apply sound principles, founded on experience, to the prob-

lem at hand. The fact is, that emergency response personnel are faced with such a wide array of problems that no one organization can handle all of them.

Let EMAT help. Their members have faced an unbelievable number of situations and developed lessons learned from a wide range of incidents, emergencies and disasters.

EMAT provides a framework within which the more detailed plans of the emergency services, local authorities and other organizations fit and joint to form an incredible response capability. It incorporates the best practices, sound training and valuable lessons learned. Join us.

As an association, EMAT can help your organization prepare and to cope with an emergency or disaster. They can enhance your capabilities. If someone asks you how you’re helping your community, what will you answer? “We’re doing it the way we’ve always done it”. Hum, seems sort of lame doesn’t it?

First responders excel in earthquake exercises



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organized teams to manage search & rescue efforts, provide decontamination of victims, triage and transport the wounded and even process the mock fatalities at each venue.

“This type of exercise participation by state and local agencies is critical to the state’s preparedness for all hazards that may threaten the safety of our citizens. An earthquake is just one of many potential threats that we face here in Tennessee,” said Tennessee Emergency Management Agency Director James Bassham.

Approximately 400 small earthquakes occurred in the New Madrid Seismic Zone area over the last two years including four earthquakes of about magnitude 4.0 in 2005. On

June 2, 2005, a magnitude 4.0 earthquake was felt strongly across the area and caused minor damage in northwest Tennessee.

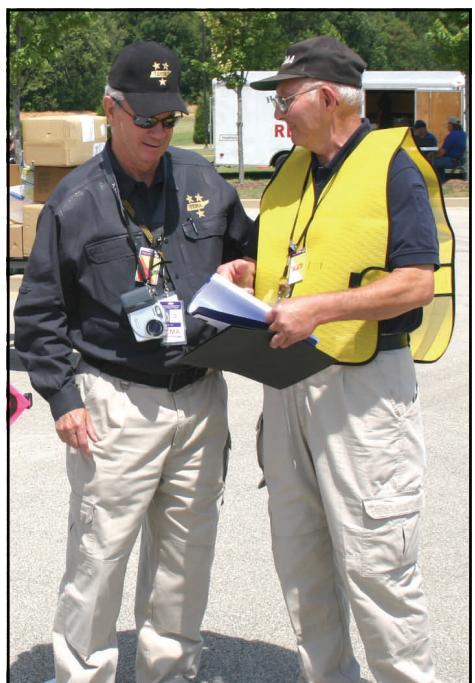
With these constant reminders of the potential for a Katrina-like disaster, Governor Phil Bredesen directed TEMA to improve emergency preparedness with an emphasis on the earthquake threat in Tennessee. This led TEMA to revise and update the state’s catastrophic emergency plans following the devastating Hurricane’s Katrina and Rita in 2005.

Three areas of the catastrophic plans were tested extensively as part of TNCAT. Those areas were: emergency communications, logistics and mass casualty surge capacity of the hospital system.

TNCAT '07



All photos by TEMA Public Affairs Staff



Earthquake Exercise



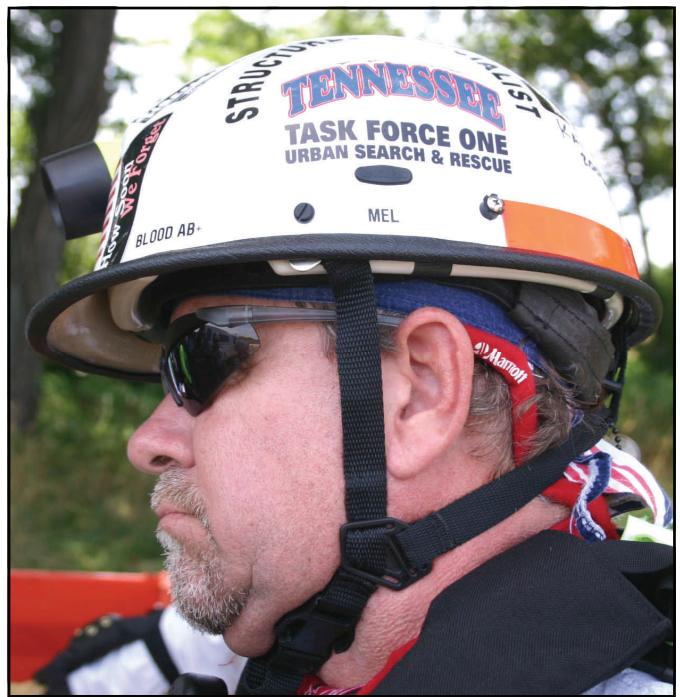
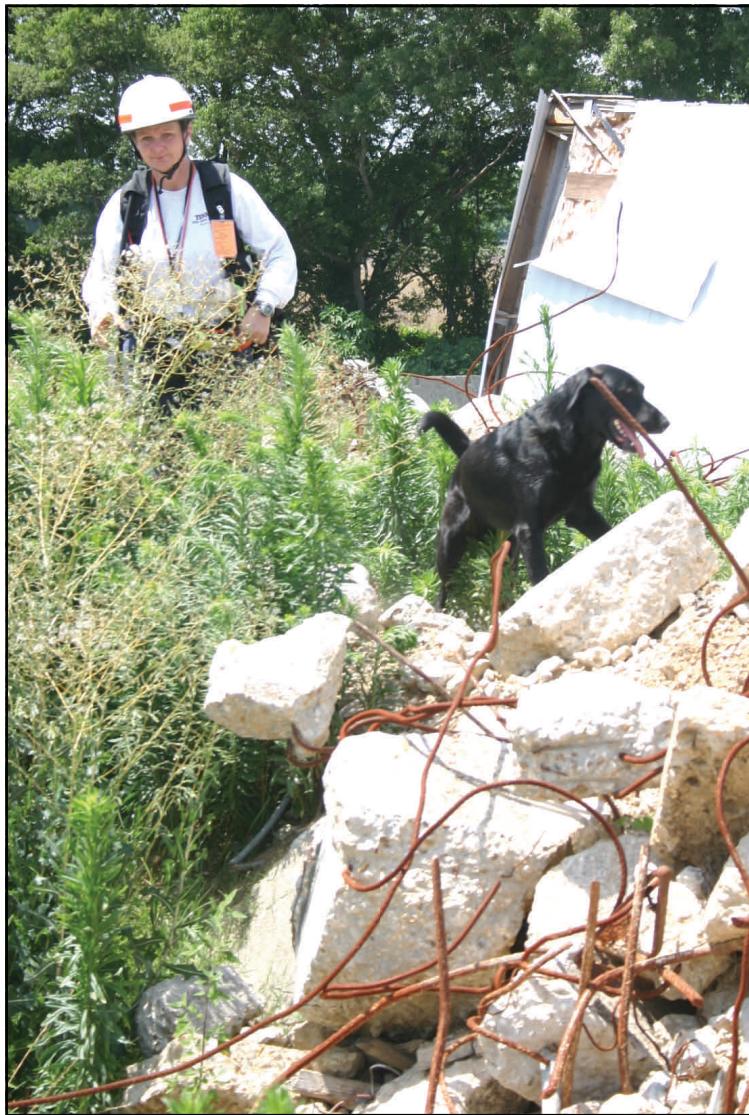
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