

NWACC joins Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium

BENTONVILLE (May 1, 2007- Rural emergency responders nationwide have a new tool in preparing for emergencies, disasters and incidents of terrorism. NorthWest Arkansas Community College, Eastern Kentucky University, The University of Findlay, East Tennessee State University, and Iowa Central Community College today announced the formation of the Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium (RDPC or the Consortium).

The Consortium comprises academic partners that possess extensive and unique capabilities relating to rural emergency preparedness training as well as other strategic partners with technical expertise that will assist the RDPC in supporting a national training program. NorthWest Arkansas Community College, through its Institute for Corporate and Public Safety, has significant experience at ruralizing preparedness training courses.

NWACC has worked in the area of homeland security and preparedness for the past sixteen years through various programs including ICPS and academic departments housed on the NWACC campus. ICPS has extensive experience in curriculum design and the curriculum approval process of the Department of Homeland Security, Office for Grants and Training and possesses unparalleled success in building positive and productive relationships with both the public and private sectors with current cooperative partnerships with prominent world-wide companies including Wal-Mart, Tyson Foods, and J.B Hunt Transportation, all of whom has a stake in rural America.

NWACC also works closely with other corporate partners through its Division of Corporate and Community Education to meet other training requirements and needs. Currently, the Division of Corporate and Community Education offers courses specifically for our corporate partners in various areas including Leadership, Team Effectiveness, and Human Performance. Our corporate partners believe in NWACC, Corporate and Continuing Education, and ICPS and show their support through intellectual, experiential, and financial assistance. The staff possesses extensive contacts throughout the business and emergency response community as well as key state and federal offices. As a result, NorthWest Arkansas Community College is postured to facilitate critical partnerships needed to advance RDPC initiatives.

Dr. Becky Paneitz, President of NorthWest Arkansas Community College, stated succinctly the support and excitement of NWACC for ICPS and its membership in the Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium. "As a member of the Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium, NWACC and the Institute for Corporate and Public Safety are at the forefront of homeland security and emergency preparedness efforts nationally. The courses developed and offered through the RDPC will better prepare rural America for all types of crisis events. Through the combination of RDPC efforts and the current corporate and community training efforts developed by ICPS in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, NWACC is truly making Arkansas and the Nation safer and better prepared."

The Consortium and its academic partners are led by Eastern Kentucky University's Justice & Safety Center (JSC). In announcing the formation of the

Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium, Dr. Allen Ault, dean of the College of Justice & Safety said “The RDPC is another of the widely recognized programs in ECU’s College of Justice & Safety. Our college has a long history of commitment to the rural emergency responder community. The Justice & Safety Center staff of professionals is nationally and internationally known for their teaching, research and innovative programs and will provide an important resource for the rural responder.”

To ensure training is timely and relevant, the RDPC will conduct training needs assessments in the form of national surveys, user focus groups, and other outreach activities; match needs to existing programs or curricula; identify gaps; develop and deliver training; disseminate preparedness-related information specifically tailored for rural communities; and facilitate communications between the Department of Homeland Security and the rural emergency response community on relevant preparedness training issues.

Since March 2006, as the Consortium was being formed, RDPC facilitated the training of more than 600 rural emergency responders by delivering or hosting all-hazards preparedness training courses. In the coming years, as the Consortium becomes fully operational, it is anticipated to train thousands more rural emergency responders across the Nation.

The RDPC will utilize advances in instructional technology and training delivery methods, such as distance learning, to deliver content addressing a broad spectrum of emergency preparedness topics.

NWACC CONTACT: For more information about the Consortium, contact Dr. Ricky Tompkins, Director of the Institute for Corporate and Public Safety, at 479-619-4325 or e-mail rtompkins1@nwacc.edu or Linda Mayberry, RDPC Executive Director, at 859-622-8106 or e-mail Linda.Mayberry@eku.edu.