

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service -- Northern Region



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sheriff McMeekin Receives National Recognition

Missoula, MT – Missoula County Sheriff Mike McMeekin was recently honored by the Southern (US) Area Coordination Group for his activities during hurricane recovery in 2005. “Sheriff McMeekin’s *can-do* attitude and depth of experience working with a range of complex, multi-jurisdictional emergency responses made him uniquely qualified for this intense job,” said Janet Anderson, director of the Forest Service’s Southern Region fire and aviation unit located in Atlanta, GA. “This award recognizes those qualifications as well as the commitment by Mike and Missoula County during this time of national need.”

McMeekin responded as part of an area command team; highly trained and experienced personnel from local, state and federal agencies who coordinate the activities and respond to the needs of interagency incident command teams. His response was choreographed under the Office of Homeland Security’s National Emergency Management Plan. He serves locally on the board of directors for the Northern Rockies Coordination Group (NRCG); a working team of representatives of local, state and federal agencies organized to prepare for and respond to major wildland fires and other emergencies in northern Idaho, Montana and parts of South Dakota and Wyoming. He is the Montana Sheriff’s and Peace Officer’s Association representative to the Group of primarily fire fighting professionals.

“Mike’s hurricane relief work demonstrates why interagency cooperation is needed and how it can work so well,” said Tom Maloney, Chief of the Polson Fire Department and current Chair of the NRCG. “Mike is a great asset for us and he provides a different perspective as a law enforcement person working with so many fire firefighters.”

“Mike was a unique member of the area command team,” said Larry Dawson, director of the Forest Service’s Northern Region fire and aviation staff. “With his strong law enforcement background, credentials in a range of jurisdictions, and experience working in the incident command system (ICS) used during large wildfires and other major emergencies, Mike was able to act as a valuable liaison with local, state and federal law enforcement organizations during that critical time,” added Dawson.

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More information on the Northern Rockies Coordination Group is available at:

http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/fire/nrcg/about_index.htm

The Office of Homeland Security National Response Plan can be found at:

http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interapp/editorial/editorial_0566.xml