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Homeland security gets scrutiny

By Sam Mamet, associate director

The homeland security needs of local government have gotten some prominence with the release of recent reports from State Sen. Dan Grossman, D-Denver, and U.S. Sen. Ken Salazar.

The Congress also is debating a revamp of the manner in which homeland security grants are distributed back to the states and their local governments.

Grossman report

Sen. Grossman chairs a special committee on homeland security in the Colorado Senate. Other members of the committee are:

Senators Bob Hagedorn, D-Aurora; Jim Isgar, D-Hesperus; Ron Teck, R-Grand Junction; and Tom Wiens, R-Castle Rock.

This committee met a dozen times during the recently concluded regular session of the Legislature with a number of interested parties, including various first responders, and issued a set of recommendations for further scrutiny. They are summarized below:

- Centralize the state's homeland security structure: place all functions under one executive-level cabinet member and include personnel with expertise in the grant and planning process.

- Reform the state's approach to homeland security: identify and prioritize statewide training needs and encourage grant applications based upon these priorities.

- Examine local government grant

application and funding strategies: enable local governments with small staffs to apply for grants without compromising their ability to run their local agencies and be able to make purchases in compliance with federal and state rules.

- Identify a revenue stream for the state facility security fund, which protects state personnel and property.

- Continue meetings of the critical infrastructure committee.

- Complete the radio communications systems infrastructure build-out: finish the state rollover to the digital trunked radio system and identify those areas where VHF might be more

appropriate.

- Enhance interoperability statewide: investigate expanding the use of gateways to allow better communication.

- Enhance the resource mobilization network.

- Implement statewide cybersecurity plans and designate a statewide oversight agency.

The committee is expected to meet periodically in the next several months. The state auditor also is expected to release a performance audit of the state's homeland security program sometime later this year.

Colorado has received more than \$130 million in federal grants, much of which has been distributed to local governments, currently through the Department of Local Affairs. The state is divided into regions for purposes of accepting many of the grants, although

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Classified Corner

FOR SALE

1954 Caterpillar 212 Grader. Sealed bids are being accepted through July 11, 2005. Bids should be mailed to the Idaho Springs City Clerk at P.O. Box 907, Idaho Springs, CO 80452, or delivered to 1711 Miner Street, Idaho Springs. The city reserves the right to refuse any and all bids.

WANTED

Large format copier (24" x 36") in good working order that accepts rolls of paper, not single sheets. Call Janet Steinbach, Community Development Director, Town of Silt @ janet@townofsilt.org, 970-876-2353 phone or 970-876-2937 fax.

To place an ad...

contact Allison Lockwood by e-mail, alockwood@cml.org, or by fax at 303-860-8175. Ads are free for CML members and \$5 per line for nonmembers.

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some come back directly to certain counties and municipalities.

The Congress is considering legislation to redistribute a portion of the federal funds based more upon a risk assessment rather than a straight population basis, with some additional emphasis on regional approaches to homeland security. Overall funding could be reduced depending on the outcome of negotiations between President Bush and the Congress.

Salazar survey

Colorado Sen. Ken Salazar recently surveyed first responders and other local government officials on their views about homeland security. The 40 responses received from around the state revealed a variety of concerns:

- More than 70 percent face significant problems using their radio equip-

ment to communicate with other agencies.

- Five out of six responders believe federal grants are not going to the right priorities.

- By a four-to-one margin, officials feel unprepared to handle a weapon-of-mass-destruction attack.

- By a two-to-one margin, responders feel that antiterrorism information they receive from the federal government is insufficient and not actionable.

- Nearly all departments have joined with other local governments to address issues regionally, but the results have been mixed.

- Emergency responders are not up to speed generally on antiterrorism or grant information.

Copies of both the Salazar survey and the Grossman report are available by contacting the League. ■

In memory

Kent Donahue, Silverthorne chief of police, passed away in Denver on May 29. Donahue, a veteran law enforcement officer and devoted family man, died of an apparent heart attack. He was 49.

"Chief Donahue embodied the finest qualities of a Chief of Police," said Town Manager Kevin Batchelder. "Since the moment he arrived in Silverthorne, Kent has tackled every issue in front of him making tremendous progress in areas where we needed help such as employee recruitment and retention. We are deeply saddened by this huge loss to our community."



Donahue joined the Silverthorne Police Department in August 2004. In his nine months with the department, he swore in six officers, promoted one sergeant and one detective and was instrumental in updating the Police Department's mission, vision and values statements. He emphasized the department's commitment to community policing and participated in ongoing programs such as the Adopt an Angel and Safe Summer Kickoff programs. He was recently active in the Safe Summer Kickoff event where he personally greeted many of the 1,500 county residents in attendance.

Before joining the Silverthorne Police Department, Donahue worked with the Greeley Police Department for 27 years and, most recently, as director of the Weld County Regional Communication Center. Donahue was a graduate of the FBI National Academy, held a bachelor's degree in technical education from Colorado State University, a master's degree in organization management from the University of Phoenix, and was working to complete a second master's degree in criminal justice executive leadership from the University of Colorado in Denver. ■