

## **Results of Fire Drills at Headquarters Complex on June 19, 2007**

The Office of Operations conducted unannounced fire drills at the Whitten, South, Yates, and Cotton Annex buildings during this morning, June 19, 2007. The drills were concluded efficiently, safely, and without incident. I commend all participants for their cooperation and rapid responses.

During the drills, we used most of our communication tools including the Computer Emergency Notification System (CENS), Be-Prepared Website, Channel 6, ROAM™ Secure Alert, and the Employee Information Line to keep key personnel and all USDA employees in the National Capital Region informed. These communication methods proved highly effective. We also used the Public Address System at the conclusion of the drills. If you did not receive a CENS message on your computer, please contact your Agency's or Office IT Systems Administrator.

We encourage all employees to take these drills seriously and use them as an opportunity to practice evacuation procedures. In most cases, employees vacated the buildings promptly, but wardens also encountered small pockets of employees who remained at their desks. As a reminder, when you are departing the complex, please use the crosswalks, do not cross in the middle of the street.

In addition, I want to take this opportunity to remind all employees that the red warden phones located at the end of each corridor may be used by anyone with disabilities, whether apparent or not, or any permanent or temporary health issues. The warden phones are answered by emergency personnel who are monitoring the emergency situation and can provide sound guidance on the actions that you should take.

We strive to keep all employees, contractors and guests informed throughout drills and emergency situations. All feedback that you provide is listened to, evaluated and acted upon. Comments on whether information is delivered to you in a timely and informative manner would be greatly appreciated, as well as any other suggestions or observations that you would like to provide. I encourage you to send any comments or suggestions to [preparedness@usda.gov](mailto:preparedness@usda.gov) <<mailto:preparedness@usda.gov>>.

Boyd K. Rutherford  
Assistant Secretary for Administration