

## **King County Office of Emergency Management Podcasts** ***Disasters: Are you ready?***

### **Keeping up with Change**

There are few things as constant as change. Not the change in your pocket or purse, but the change that is happening all around us. Change is in fact so pervasive that it is expected. Yet, we don't always embrace it immediately. When we have the choice sometimes we opt for what is familiar.

Change can be disconcerting to us. Just as we learn how to use a PDA they come out with new one. It was not that long ago I had the opportunity to upgrade to the newest Blackberry, but chose not to. I'm comfortable with the one I have and know the ins and outs of how to use it. So, I'm waiting for the next evolution before I make the leap in changing my mobile connectivity.

When I look at the homeland security process we have had in the nation, Washington State and here in King County certainly constant change has been at the forefront.

Each grant cycle has brought a new or different twist to the application process. Overtime we have see general guidance continue to narrow in to some pretty specific categories of how we can spend the federal funds that are allocated to state and local jurisdictions.

The Katrina disaster had an impact on the grant process and future disasters will impact how we use funding.

Since the inception of the homeland security process in King County our goal has been to implement a regional approach that is both multi-discipline and multi-jurisdictional. Here in King County our Region 6, which is part of the Washington State Homeland Security system, has continued to evolve and try to keep pace with the changes made at the Federal Level.

To that end we recently disestablished the Regional Homeland Security Subcommittee (RHSS) which was the group charged with

the direct supervision of grant dollars under the authority of the Region 6 Homeland Security Council (also known as the Emergency Management Advisory Committee EMAC).

This decision came after much debate about what was the most efficient and effective manner in which to continue our regional collaboration. It was decided that the Region 6 Council would step-up and have a more hands-on role assuming most of the responsibilities of the Regional Homeland Security Committee.

What I'm very proud of is the manner in which we as a region considered this option and way in which everyone had chance to weigh in on the decision. As you probably know, the only thing harder than getting something started, is stopping it when the function has outlived its usefulness.

This is a real tribute to our regional partners and the trust that has been engendered over the past five years as we have built upon successive grant cycles to achieve a more unified regional approach. And, the process is not done. It may be that in several years we may have a better idea yet on how to move forward—and another change may be needed. Until then, it is good to know we are doing the best we can with the resources provided towards goals that meet the common regional good.