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NEWS

Pat Quinn - GOVERNOR

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Governor Quinn Announces that Illinois' Homeland Security Program Rated in Top 4 Percent in Nation

FEMA scorecard gives Illinois program exceptional marks for effectiveness

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Pat Quinn today announced that Illinois' homeland security program ranked in the top four percent of state programs in a recent review of program effectiveness by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Illinois received an overall effectiveness score of 91 out of 100. The national average effectiveness score was 71.

“Illinois has always been a national leader in the field of homeland security, and this high rating represents the fact that Illinois applies innovative approaches and good stewardship in the application of scarce homeland security resources,” said Gov. Quinn. “The safety of our citizens is paramount, and we will continue our efforts to enhance preparedness for all types of threats and hazards.”

FEMA used peer reviewers from around the country to review each state's homeland security preparedness efforts, focusing on accomplishments, homeland security strategy, development of investment justifications and utilization of homeland security funding to build response capabilities to confront threats.

“This exceptional ranking truly demonstrates the strength and effectiveness of Illinois' homeland security program,” said Andrew Velasquez III, director of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and the state's homeland security advisor. “Our homeland security strategy has received best practice recognition for several reasons, including our organizational structure and philosophy, the establishment of special response teams and a very robust mutual aid system.”

Illinois' homeland security strategy is developed and implemented by the Illinois Terrorism Task Force (ITTF). The ITTF was created nearly 10 years ago, and today its membership includes more than 60 agencies, organizations and municipalities that represent emergency management, law enforcement, fire services, public health and other response disciplines from throughout Illinois. The ITTF's 15 committees focus on various components of the state's homeland security plan, such as crisis response and prevention, technology, training and communications.

The task force also determines how the state's share of federal homeland security funds should be used to enhance emergency preparedness and response throughout Illinois. Since 1999, the state has received more than \$374 million in federal homeland security grants.

For FY 09, Illinois' homeland security program received nearly \$33.8 million from the federal Homeland Security Grant Program. Velasquez said the ITTF will use the funding to maintain the nation's most comprehensive mutual aid system and continue to equip and train more than 90 interoperable statewide fire, law enforcement and medical deployable response teams. Other ITTF initiatives to be funded with the FY 09 allocation include grants to support the expansion of local emergency operations centers, procurement of additional Starcom21 portable radios for deployment to local, regional and statewide emergencies, support of local, regional and statewide homeland security exercises and enhancements to the State-wide Terrorism and Intelligence Center (STIC).