

Summary

The ReadySanDiego Business Alliance (BA) is a coalition of businesses that can contribute resources, participate in preparedness activities and assist in disaster response and recovery activities. The BA will address issues specific to business needs with support from the Office of Emergency Services. The BA incorporates private and non-profit sectors in its planning processes.

Background

During Firestorm 2007, local businesses and national chains provided resources to assist in both the response and recovery phases of the incident. During this process, we had no coordinated method to request and track these resources. We also didn't have a system in place to provide timely information to the private sector. OES had no formal links to the private sector, but depended on informal relationships built from meetings and previous contact.

As a result, OES and the private sector jointly determined that there was a need for better coordination, communication and sharing of information during an event. Initiating the Alliance allowed us to address both the private sector and government's concerns and gaps in working in tandem. Working together, we can prioritize each others major concerns and determine middle ground on those areas where there may be conflict.

Goals and Objectives

The primary goals for the ReadySanDiego Business Alliance (BA) are;

- To establish a coalition of businesses which can; contribute resources and senior expertise, share best practices for disaster response and recovery efforts; and build a formal supply and communication chain before a crisis occurs, thereby being able to respond immediately during a time of crisis
- Participate in ongoing public/private partnership efforts, including additional planning
- Identify what resources businesses can provide to the community during a disaster
- Educate their employees on how they can become better prepared for a disaster.

Description

The region's overall resiliency is the overarching goal for the ReadySanDiego Business Alliance. Our public-private participation is key to preparing for and lessening the economic impacts of a natural or man-made disaster in our county.

The BA will raise awareness of the need to prepare businesses and their employees for emergencies, promote public-private partnerships, and extend the message into the community. A key focus is to increase the number of residents who have completed and practiced their Family Disaster Plan, assembled a Family Disaster Kit and created a

communication and evacuation plan. By encouraging personal preparedness, the business increases its chances that employees will return to work or feel more comfortable staying at work following a disaster. Creating a database of resources that the business community has available to assist government during the immediate response if necessary is another one of the tenets of the partnership. Creating a communication tool, a social networking site, for the businesses to have real time information from the Emergency Operations Center is crucial for the business community and we've established that link.

OES established an Advisory Council for the BA. OES didn't want this to be a government lead activity, but one where the private sector leads the discussion. The Advisory Council as the guiding influence on the Business Alliance is comprised of some of San Diego's leading employers and organizations from a cross section of industries including media and communications, retail, finance, healthcare, transportation, and hospitality. The Council will also act as spokespersons for the Alliance, tap their existing relationships with their counterparts and encourage them to join the alliance. They will add credibility to the effort with the use of their name and company's name and assist Sector Chairs with unusual issues if the need arises. There are clear roles and responsibilities for the Advisory Council.

Additionally, the responsibility of the Advisory Council members includes:

- In conjunction with County staff, identify strategic goals of the partnership
- Provide recommendations on campaign activities and direction
- Review materials associated with the Alliance

The Alliance is organized into eight sectors where businesses with similar issues and concerns can address them and bring back their priorities to the large group. This process provides businesses an opportunity to discuss their issues and ensure that meetings are not impacted by the concerns of a few in the group. Each sector has the ability to schedule its own meetings, if necessary.

The Alliance currently consists of over 300 business members representing eight business sectors. The sectors; Public Health & Healthcare, Communication/Media, Services, Production, Service Industries and Supply Chain, Sustenance and Health, Venues/Facilities, and Members-At- Large, are lead by Sector Chairs.

The Sector Chairs are responsible for identifying their goals and objectives related to their sector and discuss relevant issues that impact their sector as it relates to response and recovery activities. These discussions should be ongoing and established before the emergency.

The goals and objectives of the Business Alliance Sector Chairs are to:

- Promote private/public partnerships to extend the messages into the community
- Develop tools to reach all segments of the community

Sector Chairs have the responsibility of:

- Tapping existing relationships with businesses to encourage them to join the Alliance
- Rallying sub-sector members to get involved in the Alliance
- Establishing connections with potential partners
- Providing recommendations on campaign activities and direction
- Scheduling and coordinating meetings for their sub-sector business partners
- Recruiting and supporting partnership attendees
- Promoting the partnership
- Identifying strategic goals of the partnership, in conjunction with County staff
- Maintain momentum on completing sector goals, in conjunction with County staff,

OES is working closely with the California Emergency Management Agency to ensure that our goals and objectives are in line with the State and their goals and objectives.. State representatives have contributed to the success of the BA by attending summit meetings and providing oversight on how they operate their Business Operations Center. The BA will too incorporate a seat in the Emergency Operations Center at a later date, but will continue through a virtual EOC concept.

Besides the communication tool, OES has established a call out list for those businesses who would like notification when Emergency Operations Center activates reach level three status. This 24 hour notification will alert the business that an issue in the County has arose and they may or may not need to take action on behalf of the business or their employees. Businesses can obtain additional information about an event by contacting 2-1-1 San Diego, our region's public information line.

Requirements for Success

OES has committed staff to this initiative as support to the BA. There is no cost associated with the BA and some of the members have hosted earlier summits. The key to the success for this group is continued communication and coordination in advance of an event and ongoing and updated information during the event. OES has offered to not only support the Advisory Council, but each of the sectors in their meetings and/or conference calls.

OES also provides timely emails, including information from FEMA's Private Sector Office to members along with our own quarterly newsletter; The ReadySanDiego Business Alliance Connection.

Resources

San Diego Business Alliance has the following resources available through its partnership - A seat in the Emergency Operations Centers; Resources to help prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters; Web resources; Tools and templates

Training and Exercises

San Diego Business Alliance hosts and participates in joint training and exercises with the public and private sectors. We have both hosted exercises that we've included the private sector and attended exercises and tabletops that the private sector has held. We will also host a table top exercise for our Alliance members in this fiscal year.

Communication Tools

San Diego Business Alliance uses the following methods of communication with your public/private partners -- Email alerts; Text message; In-person meeting; Conferences and other events; Newsletter; Teleconferences; Video conferences; Website

On our ReadySanDiego.org website on the You Tube page you can see some of the Public Service Announcements we've completed with our partners.

Links

<http://www.readysandiego.org/>

Contact Information

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