

NORTH CENTRAL AREA PARTICIPATES IN CR16

Emergency managers from the north central region had been preparing for CR16 for many months. It was an opportunity to showcase capabilities and a chance to find ways to be even more prepared. Many of the jurisdictions in the area experienced a particularly difficult fire season in 2015 and were no strangers to coordinating complex responses. The scenario for CR16, however, was designed to test systems that would be impacted from a non-traditional event.

Emergency Operations Centers are facilities and capabilities that are not always activated, but each and every EOC in the area activated and functioned at a high level. In Lewis County for example, elected leadership from all sectors of county government worked together to find solutions to the exercise injects. Bob West noted that the experience and knowledge of the participating individuals allowed them to realistically solve issues as they arose. He also recognized that the work they had put in doing trainings and exercises in advance of the exercise contributed to their success.

Technology helped contribute to situational awareness, but was also noted as something that must be kept up on in order for it to be fully utilized. In Nez Perce County the PIO and Emergency Manager worked together to send a live video stream from the Lewiston Airport to the EOC during the fire department response to a simulated aircraft crash. It was also observed that technology takes staff, training and current equipment to leverage it to its full capability.

A significant level of appreciation is due Sue Welch and Casey Schooley whose many hours of design work resulted in the successful exercise. A tip of the hat is also due to the emergency managers of Latah, Nez Perce, Clearwater, Lewis, and Idaho counties as well as the Nez Perce Tribe who demonstrated their ability to manage emergency operations in their jurisdictions. Although the exercise has ended, more work remains. All participants identified areas of strengths and areas to improve, and this cycle of strategic planning will continue to make Idaho stronger and better prepared for the challenges of tomorrow.

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Photos:

(Top Left) EOC: Lewiston Fire Department Chief Myklebust, Lewiston Police Chief Ankeny and others work together in the Nez Perce County Emergency Operations Center.

(Opposite) Airport: A LifeFlight helicopter lands at the Lewiston Airport to assist in the transport of patients from the mass casualty scenario during Cascadia Rising

