

**Delaware County MORPC  
Special Emergency Transportation Needs  
Forum Discussion  
December 9th, 2009  
Time 5:30-7:30 pm**

**Representatives participating in the discussion**

Area Agency on Aging Recipient

Agencies that observed forum

Delaware County Red Cross

Delaware County General Health District

Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission

Delaware County Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency

Liberty Township Fire Department

Delaware County School Representative

Delaware County Development Disabled Agency

**Discussion Format**

This forum was held at the Liberty Township Hall, 7761 Liberty Road, Powell, OH. This location was coordinated by the Delaware County Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, with assistance from the Liberty Township Fire Department. Pizza and drinks were supplied for all the attendees before the meeting was started at 6:00pm.

The forum discussion was almost cancelled due to high wind warnings that were evident during the day, and continued through the early evening hours. It was suggested that such weather severely reduced the attendance at the forum. Outside temperatures had dropped from mid 40's to into the 20's at the time of the forum.

The forum discussion was moderated by Dave Patton from the Kettering Foundation on behalf of the Mid Ohio Regional Planning Committee's Plan for Populations with Mobility Needs. All attendees were encouraged to participate with instructions being given to the agency representatives to observe and not participate in the discussion, unless a specific question was addressed to them.

**Discussion**

Lt. Piwtorak presented to the attendees information regarding the new Special Needs Emergency Registry Listing Program that is to be implemented for Delaware County residents in early 2010. The program will be coordinated and administrated by the Liberty Township Fire Department with the full cooperation and support of all the other fire and safety forces in Delaware County.

The discussion was then initiated by Dave Patton on having the participants discuss their experiences that they encountered with the Hurricane Ike wind storm in 2008. It was pointed out that only one person from the general community was in attendance, an elderly woman that was referred to the meeting by the Delaware County Council of Aging. Throughout the meeting she provided excellent insight as to her views as contrasted with the agency representatives.

Significant discussion was initiated in the general subject of emergency response procedures within Delaware County by all the participants. The discussion was more free flowing than the other forums held on this subject mainly because of the over abundance of agency participants.

Based upon those discussions the following points were made:

- There was interest in expanding the use of text messaging in an emergency, because of the flexibility that exists with such an option, and that during a large emergency the voice cell phones might not work, and lower usage of land lines;
- The community representative recommended a system based upon the Ohio Health Response Line, which is an Elderly Alert system to be used in the event of a personal or community emergency;
- Most participants realized that radio and television are used the most in Delaware County for the general public in the event of a community emergency;
- Satellite broadcast systems do not carry local community warnings;
- It is imperative that emergency planners are acutely aware of the differences in the use of media by different generations;
  - Elderly use broadcast radio and television mostly;
  - Younger generation really connected by computers, cell phones, Blackberries and other portable electronic devices;
  - Internet is a questionable source-power lost, access, etc.;
- Discussion then on what information do you want in the event of an emergency;
  - Where to go in the event of an emergency;
  - What transportation options exist, if individuals do not have transportation;
  - Where are the shelters;
  - What should you take with you, if you leave your home, to go to shelter, or just leave the area;
- Discussion then held on use of Registry:
  - Concerns raised about privacy;
  - Consider the population where English is a second language- trust could be a major issue in using this system because of their lack of trust in governmental programs among such groups;
  - Strong support for the Liberty Township Special Needs Registry;
- Other Comments;
  - Make maximum use of available electronic devices;
  - Important that any emergency plan be adjusted to incorporate some process to connect parents with their children in the event of an emergency; (actively involve local school representatives in such discussions.)
  - Use 211 for more expanded emergency communications; (Need back up power generators.)

- Involve the local school systems as they are becoming more electronic literate in their facilities;
- The community representative was extremely supportive of the Liberty Township Special Needs Registry and volunteered to communicate such support to the contacts she routinely interacts with;
- ***Final Point*** – the term special needs –needs more discussion, since all the local agencies have used this term, and just about all of them have a different impression as to what the “Special Needs Population” is.

## Summary

The discussion was limited due to the lack of diversity within the attendees, with only one community representative being in attendance. The other 10 people were representatives of 7 other governmental agencies.

Main points of the discussion were as follows:

- There was interest in expanding the use of text messaging in an emergency, because of the flexibility that exists with such an option, and that during a large emergency the voice cell phones might not work, and lower usage of land lines;
- The community representative recommended a system based upon the Ohio Health Response Line, which is an Elderly Alert system to be used in the event of a personal or community emergency;
- It is imperative that emergency planners are acutely aware of the differences in the use of media by different generations;
  - Elderly use broadcast radio and television mostly;
  - Younger generation really connected by computers, cell phones, Blackberries and other portable electronic devices;
  - Internet is a questionable source-power lost, access, etc.;
  - Strong support for the Liberty Township Special Needs Registry;
- Other Comments;
  - Important that any emergency plan be adjusted to incorporate some process to connect parents with their children in the event of an emergency; (actively involve local school representatives in such discussions.)
    - Involve the local school systems as they are becoming more electronic literate in their facilities;
- ***Final Point*** – the term special needs –needs more discussion, since all the local agencies have used this term, and just about all of them have a different impression as to what the “Special Needs Population” is.

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