

Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness

SUCCESS STORY

KANSAS

Fire Ignites Need for Multi-Sector Response

Contributor: Darren Muci

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Darren Muci is responsible for the purchasing, supplies and warehousing, production printing, nutrition services, student transportation, and commercial advertising for Wichita District's nearly 100 schools. Although he notes that the schools have always collaborated well within the district, as well as with the city and county, he credits his participation in the Kansas Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness in October 2007 for expanding his perspective of those agencies with whom the school district should be collaborating to include non-profit and business partners as well.

The eye-opening appeal of the Meta-Leadership Summit

As Muci describes, the Summit was "eye-opening in that it had an incredibly broad spectrum of participants." Muci explains that preparing for and responding to disasters "takes a village. There will come a time when you will be in need of resources and will need to reach out to a partner for assistance."

An unpredictable fire summons the need for partners & additional resources

In April 2008, the District's Crisis Response Team was faced with an incident in which he needed to call on partners to effectively respond. The day was windy, and the incident began when a yard fire spread, roaring toward a nearby middle school. The school was then evacuated, and all children (nearly 1,000) were moved first to another nearby school, but when the fire changed direction, both schools were evacuated to a second evacuation site: a local church. Although the children were safe from the fire, using the church posed new challenges including re-routing buses, identifying a pick up location for families, obtaining adequate bathroom facilities for the increased number of people at the church, as well as the need for food and water. A local large retail establishment donated water to help supplement supplies from the school district. In the end, the relationships the school district had in place with police, fire, emergency management, as well as the faith-based and business communities, proved invaluable on a day in which a small fire quickly escalated to an incident warranting a multi-agency response. The fire damaged five homes; no children or school properties were harmed.

A happy ending and critical lessons learned

As was reinforced at the Meta-Leadership Summit, community partnerships are critical to effective emergency planning and response. Muci highly values these partnerships, and he continues to work toward creating new and enhancing existing partnerships to ensure the faculty, staff, and students of the Wichita Public School district are safe and prepared.

The Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness empowered business, government and nonprofit leaders to act together in times of crisis. The five-year initiative connected 5,000 business, government and nonprofit leaders in 36 communities. For resources and more information about Meta-Leadership visit the [CDC Foundation Meta-Leadership Website](#).



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