

19 July 2007



Homeland
Security

Bill Maier
USNRC, Region IV
611 Ryan Plaza Dr., Suite 400
Arlington, TX 76011-4005

Dear Mr. ~~Maier~~ ^{Bill};

The following letter concerns agreements and facts relating to the change of the Benton County Emergency Worker Assistance Center (EWAC) from Kiona-Benton High School to Southridge High School in Kennewick, Washington

Benton County Emergency Management was notified by Kiona-Benton High School, that the location of the EWAC for Benton County, would be closing down for a two-year renovation. This notice came approximately five weeks before the closure which was scheduled for July 15, 2007.. This action necessitated some last minute attempts to locate a new site for an EWAC. The search resulted in Benton County being allowed to use Southridge High School in Kennewick, Washington for their EWAC. On June 22, a Walk-through of the proposed new EWAC was performed by; Mike Hammond, FEMA Region X, Joe Keller, PJ Nied and Dennis Wilford from ICF, the Red Cross and others interested in the new EWAC. This walk through was performed on this date since on the next day was the practice EWAC drill for the Columbia Basin College EWAC in Franklin County. Brian Calvert, from Benton County had already produced some initial drawings of a set-up for the EWAC. The proposed site was very acceptable to all of the persons who performed the initial walk-through.

An initial qualifying drill for the new EWAC was originally scheduled for July 12, 2007. Due to an on-duty death of one of the firefighters from the Kennewick Fire Department which is responsible, in part, for manning and managing the EWAC, and since the funeral for this officer was scheduled for the 12th of July, it was decided to cancel the qualifying drill due to the lack of manpower.

At our July 11, 2007 Issues meeting, it was decided that we could reschedule the qualifying drill for August 4, 2007. This is after the date of closing of the Kiona-Benton EWAC.

In addition to the items mentioned above, the following actions have taken place;

- 1) All EWAC volunteers have been notified of the change of location.
- 2) Two training sessions have been conducted for the volunteers in the last several weeks. This included a set-up of the vehicle monitoring area and practice surveys. The portal monitors have also been set up in the gym and a walk through of the decontamination area has been done.

- 3) The MOU with Southridge High School is being written.
- 4) A formal MOU with Kennewick Fire is being established.
- 5) The EWAC equipment has already been transferred to the Washington State Patrol office near the High School
- 6) Updated EWAC procedures are almost complete
- 7) Directional signs have been and are being updated.
- 8) The Emergency Notification System messages, in English and Spanish are being updated.
- 9) A letter has gone out from Benton County informing residents of the change. This includes new maps and a description of the route. This is in the form of Brochures and also a community calendar insert.

In addition, since we already have an EWAC in Franklin County (Columbia Basin Community College) that can be used in case of Emergency, and since the personnel who run the Benton County EWAC would be available to help man this EWAC, we are scheduling a full EWAC qualifying demonstration at Southridge High School for August 4, 2007.

Should you have any further questions regarding these circumstances, please feel free to call me at any time.

Sincerely,



Michael L. Hammond
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Cc: Steve Williams, Washington Emergency Management
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