

CitySafety

How safe is our City?

By JUDI E. LOOMIS



Mayor Graham Richard has publicly stated numerous times that his goal as mayor is to make Fort Wayne the safest city in America. During his tenure Mayor Richard has succeeded in beefing up the number of uniformed officers on the street, oversaw the implementation of new and better utilities (water and sewer), and sought funding for numerous public safety projects. Now Mayor Richard faces a new challenge.

Over the past several months Mayor Richard has entertained the idea of implementing a new state-of-the-art command center that would allow for immediate response to high and low-level city emergencies at his fingertips. The command center's computer technology was designed by FourthWave's "Sentry Points" division.

The Mayor's vision has correctly foreseen potential crisis issues in the drive to place in the South Town area a fully equipped training center capable of running near "real time" command management scenarios. The mayor's vision is supported by FourthWave's Mayor's Crisis Center (MC2) technologies, as well as their extensive relationship with the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Together these elements will allow Fort Wayne to establish the nation's first Training Institute for the use of integrated command technology. Additionally, the use of a separately located Mayor's Crisis Center (MC2) in direct and adjacent support of the city's executives is being considered.

The question is does the Mayor adopt the power of FourthWave's "SentryPoints" new

state-of-the-art command center computer technology? Or, continue the manual/voice status quo with fire, police and city utilities, each utilizing their individual systems of command and response? What if Fort Wayne became a target for a terrorist attack? It's not unfathomable considering that the Department of Justice Domestic Preparedness Program has identified Fort Wayne as one of 100 cities in the country vulnerable for a terrorist attack.*

Bringing it closer to home, let's consider other catastrophic emergencies. Fort Wayne is vulnerable to flooding. The command and response system FourthWave is proposing would provide all the necessary informa-

of response, there are issues involved besides fire engines, ambulances, public works and police cars," says Don Willis, chairman of FourthWave. "In the case of a disastrous occurrence we can't be 'Car 54 Where Are You?'. Who ever is at the head of the helm needs to have the capability of identifying the need. Right now when neighborhoods experience flooding we traditionally respond by listening to the people who are calling in saying they can no longer see their curbs. We are just in a responsive mood. With a command center everyone has the common operating picture. It is seamless connectivity and that means there are command and control features running

on the system from which you can provide command and control response. In a city-wide emergency situation there are decisions that have to be made quickly, taking a holistic approach that involves all city departments. Right now cities can not do that."

The command center Willis and FourthWave have proposed to the Mayor, and City Council as well, is the executive decision integration center for the deployment and management of the response assets of the city. FourthWave believes the command center

Fort Wayne Police Cadets Undergo "Awareness Level" Training and Response

Currently there are 32 Fort Wayne Police Cadets training at the Academy for a multitude of law enforcement incidents, including Terrorist attacks, hostage situations, critical incidents, crowd and mob psychology and what they refer to as active shooters. Even prior to 9/11 cadets were receiving awareness level training as was designated by The Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP).

The ODP is the principal component of the Department of Homeland Security and is responsible for providing training, funds for the purchase of equipment, support for the planning and execution of exercises, technical assistance and support to local level agencies. Because Fort Wayne is evaluated as a Class 1 city, training on all levels has been enhanced.

"Our officers receive over 900 hours of instruction at the academy," says Capt. Dottie Davis, who has been on the department for 23 years and at the academy the last four. "We are designated a Class 1 city because of our size and the various different types of crimes that occur here. We train our officers to respond to a wide range of incidents including domestic violence, terrorism and we work closely with the Fort Wayne Fire Department in HAZMAT situations."

When incidents of potential danger to any person, persons, or an area of the city are at risk our uniformed officers are trained to identify the situation and secure the scene. At that point the critical tentacles of personnel like HAZMAT, the SWAT Team, or the Explosive Ordinance Division (bomb squad) are brought in.

"We have 28 trained SWAT officers and while I can not go into detail about how we respond we are prepared over 100-percent," says Sgt. Kevin Zelt. "During training we talk about the different responses and different tactics that can be used for each individual situation. Every officer in the department is trained up to the awareness level, and then we call in our specialty teams. SWAT is trained at the operator level, with the right gear and the right training to deal with the situation."

tion to track where the water levels are gaining and where emergency response teams would need to go.

"When you start talking about command and managing many, many units



sets a new standard in public safety management technology. If Fort Wayne adopts the new command center concept and deploys the distributed control system, it would be the nation's first city to implement a fully integrated response management system (with real time response) that would include law enforcement, EMS, fire and rescue and municipal services.

"In the final analysis it is an executive decision that will have to be made by the Mayor," says Tom Smith, City Council, First District, and City Council president. "I am in favor of this in light of the fact that we don't know all of the details yet, and we don't know what the bottom-line cost to the city could be. But, what intrigues me is that we would be the first city in the nation to implement this new command system. For a change, Fort Wayne would be ranked number one on a list."

Is our current method of responding to crisis situations obsolete? According to Willis what we have in place now only addresses communication and not command.

"We would have the ability of knowing the current situation at every level, called the Common Operating Picture (COP), which has been integrated across the region," adds Willis. "There is a mind set that command functions are accomplished by communicating on radio. The truth is all you have with radios is communication. Response management has to include the four C's, Command, Control Communications and Computing."

Willis envisions a command center in two different locations. He suggests a smaller executive version in the current FourthWave location in the old NIPSCO building (now the new FourthWave

building), and the other location would be determined by the Training Institute.

"A city should have two command centers," adds Willis. "Until there is a decision about where that will be, and that could take several years, we will equip the system in our building and keep it maintained as the city's crisis command center. Our proposal was that we would keep the system alive if the city is willing to pay a nominal fair market price rent on the allocated space. It's a perfect public/private partnership deal. In the end, I don't even know what the MC2 will cost FourthWave, but I am sure it will be seven or eight times the rent the city would pay for just the space. All we want is a fair, working partnership."

**The Department of Justice Domestic Preparedness Program identified Fort Wayne as vulnerable for a possible terrorist attack based on the following criteria: population, military contractors and industry, military bases, large sporting venues and shopping malls.*



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