



TOGETHER. HELPING IOWANS.

Private and Public Partners Work Together to Protect Critical Infrastructure/Key Resources

During disasters, when decisions are made about prioritizing the use of overextended resources, ensuring that critical infrastructure and resources are protected is a key mission of public and private responders. The Safeguard Iowa Partnership (SIP) has been actively working to ensure that key infrastructure and resources are identified before disasters strike, and that public and private organizations have a clear understanding of the steps to take to protect these items.

SIP and Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management teamed up to present a tabletop exercise on April 19, 2012, to help public and private responders understand roles and responsibilities. The exercise was the culmination of a series of training exercises to help responders identify key resources and develop a better understanding of their interdependence. A snow storm scenario was used to drive discussion.

“This is at the very heart of the mission and vision of the Safeguard Iowa Partnership,” explained Executive Director Jami Haberl. “The exercise and workshops helped to link and bridge local and state public sector agencies with private business and, by doing so, protect Iowans.”

Haberl’s comments were echoed by Wayne Johnson, State Regulatory Affairs Director from CenturyLink. “The workshops have provided insight into various avenues for the public and private sectors to work together to maintain critical infrastructure during disaster-type events. For example, after the 2008 floods there was a workshop held to give an overview of the tools available on the web to monitor river flows as well as predictions looking a few weeks out. These assisted our personnel in planning and staging materials necessary to protect our infrastructure in a cost effective manner.”

Johnson went on to add, “One of the primary benefits of the workshops has been to meet those in the public sector who can provide information or contacts to help gain access, seek assistance, request equipment or otherwise assist in protecting and repairing critical infrastructure during times when these assets may be in short supply.”

During disasters, local and state emergency operations centers now have a better understanding of the critical infrastructure that needs to be protected to ensure that public safety is preserved. This is just one more step taken by the Safeguard Iowa Partnership to protect Iowans and help public and private organizations work together.

The Safeguard Iowa Partnership is a 501c3 nonprofit involving government, private-sector, higher education and nonprofit organizations. Our mission is to strengthen the capacity of Iowa to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters through public-private collaboration.

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