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Administration's Homeland Defense Website Showcased Today in Emergency Operations Drill for First Responders in Laurel, MD

Washington, D.C. – Today Mark Forman, Administrator of E-Government and Information Technology for OMB, joined Maryland's Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., and Mayor Craig A. Moe of Laurel, Md. in an emergency operations drill focused on the use of technology to save lives and protect the homeland. Local first responders demonstrated how the new Disaster Management Interoperability Services (DMIS) can be used to coordinate response to a virtual train derailment involving hazardous materials by law enforcement, fire and EMS personnel in several Maryland counties.

"The Administration is committed to providing the critical tools first responders need to reduce the loss of life and property in times of crisis. Through more efficient, collaborative, and real-time incident management we can protect the homeland. Today, we showed the power of E-Government and interoperable communications in saving lives," said Mr. Forman.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the General Services Administration (GSA), Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), coordinated to provide the city of Laurel software for multi-county, multi-discipline real-time communication during an event. The software, Disaster Management Interoperability Services, (DMIS) was provided to Laurel as part of the Presidential Disaster Management E-Government Initiative. DMIS enables information sharing among emergency management organizations by providing a basic set of information tools (i.e., weather forecasts and observations, private instant message/chat, and Specific Needs Request and incident maps). The Maryland Emergency Management Agency, CSX Rail Operations Center, and the new Laurel Emergency Operations Center (EOC) also took part in the drill.

"This is yet another example of the tremendous partnership that exists between the Bush Administration and the State of Maryland. These joint emergency drills are critical to improving our level of preparedness, particularly with the use of new software and computers. We owe it to our first responders to provide them the resources needed to secure our homeland during these unprecedented times," said Governor Ehrlich

Additionally, the Honorable Craig A. Moe, Mayor of Laurel, said, "During these fiscally constrained times, it is nice to see the Federal government, through the Disaster Management E-Gov Initiative, pool federal resources to provide hardware, software and training that we would not have otherwise had for our new EOC. As a result, we have better prepared our responders and emergency managers to assist this community and its neighbors during times of need."

As an integral part of the President's Management Agenda, the E-Gov initiatives make it easier for citizens and businesses to interact with the government, save taxpayer dollars, and streamline citizen-to-government transactions. For more information on each of the President's E-Government initiatives, please visit www.egov.gov or contact OMB Communications at 202-395-7254.

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