

Media Release

March 23, 2004

Lawrence County Emergency Preparedness Project Equipping Local Emergency Responders

The Lawrence County Emergency Preparedness: Integrated Community Solutions (EPICS) Project partners have set aside \$10,000.00 for hazardous materials (HazMat) training and equipment. The EPICS partners established a HazMat Task Force dedicated to improving services and safety for Lawrence County residents. Equipment purchased with EPICS funds have helped provide equipment for Operations and Awareness levels of training for HazMat responders. The EPICS project has recently purchased decontamination equipment for both Lawrence County hospitals.

The HazMat Task Force is currently forming a mobile Decontamination Team to respond to HazMat event sites. Dunn Memorial Hospital and Bedford Regional Medical Center have agreed to provide physicals for 16 volunteers for the Hazmat Decon Team. Each hospital will each incur the cost for eight team members. The HazMat Task Force meets twice monthly to identify possible hazards and develop solutions that will protect workers and citizens from bio-terrorism events.

The Lawrence County EPICS Project is designed to improve emergency preparedness and response and increase the health/safety knowledge and skills of county residents. The project is a partnership between the State of Indiana, Lawrence County Health Department, Lawrence County Emergency Management Agency, Hoosier Uplands and other local health and safety agencies.

Other local agencies are receiving grant money through the Lawrence County EPICS Project. The project is supplying laptop computers with GPS tracking for Bedford Regional Medical Center and Dunn Memorial Hospital ambulances. In addition Lawrence County Search and Rescue will receive funding for Advanced Vertical Rescue Training, emergency vehicles in Lawrence County will have their radio systems upgraded for new emergency channels, and the American Red Cross' Hoosier Hills Chapter will receive support to provide a Youth Disaster Preparedness Program.

The ambulance equipment will increase response times and allow ambulance drivers to chart a direct course to emergency scenes by using the ThinkMap software installed on the computers. The new radio channels will better serve communications between local emergency agencies. The Advance

continued on page 2

Media Release Continued - March 23, 2004

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Vertical Training will give instruction to ten students from Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Services, and Search and Rescue personnel. The American Red Cross Youth Disaster Preparedness Program will teach area youth to not only be prepared, but also operative in a community emergency.

Hoosier Uplands provides project management services for the Lawrence and Martin County EPICS Projects, which receive their primary funding from the Preventive Health and Health Services Block grant through the Indiana State Department of Health. Additional information is available at www.lawrencecountypepics.com, www.martincountypepics.com, or by contacting Kevin Andry at (812) 275-3182 or 1-800-276-3182.

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