

News from the City of Dearborn

Discover Dearborn! Visit www.WelcomeHomeDearborn.com

John B. O'Reilly, Jr., Mayor

Department of Public Information

Mary Laundroche, Director

313-943-2285

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 8, 2009

Dearborn's emergency responders teach a nation

DEARBORN, Mich. – When emissaries for the United Arab Emirates set out around the world looking for a way to train their citizenry in emergency response, the path eventually led them to Dearborn's doorstep.

Since fall of last year, representative from Dearborn's fire and police departments along with members of the Michigan State Police designed and implemented an emergency response training course for the United Arab Emirates based on the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) used in the United States.

The mission was to create a program tailored to the region and train citizens in the United Arab Emirates to become instructors in the program. But the difference in climate, culture, and language all posed significant obstacles when trying to modify an American born emergency response system for the United Arab Emirates, said Capt. Bradley Smith, Emergency Management Coordinator for the City of Dearborn Fire Department.

Obstacles like heat in excess of 100 degrees, traditional clothing that are often not well suited for dealing with emergency situations and a lack of medical supplies all had to be taken into consideration when designing the course.

Smith also found that many of the citizens in the United Arab Emirates didn't have the basic first-aid skills that are often common knowledge in the United States.

"It's just not something they are brought up with, so even simple things like bandaging a cut had to be addressed," Smith said.

But the largest hurdles to successfully implementing the program came from the difference in language and custom. Many of the English words used to describe medical and disaster issues do not have a direct Arabic translation, so much of the program's instructional materials had to be re-written in Arabic.

"Having Arabic speaking staff members was vital to the success of the program and one of the reasons Dearborn was specifically sought out to create the program," said Dearborn Police Sgt. Issa Shahin, who took part in creating and training CERT in the United Arab Emirates.

In addition to language, customs also dictate that men and woman not interact directly in training exercises. In order to accommodate those customs, enough instructors had to be provided to allow for women and men to have separate practical areas, Shahin said.

There is still work to be done, but so far Dearborn personnel have been involved in more than 100 training classes and have certified 15 citizens of the United Arab Emirates as instructors in the program.

“The program that we develop and implemented is currently being used in the U.A.E to teach thousands of local Emiratis how to respond and work together in case of a major catastrophe. In the end, we had constructed a program that we and the U.A.E could be proud,” Shahin said.