

## July 2010 CARRI News

### Mississippi Gulf Coast Oil Spill Disaster Recovery Summit

CARRI was a presenting sponsor of the June 30 Mississippi Gulf Coast Oil Spill Disaster Recovery Summit, organized by South Mississippi Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (SMVOAD) and the University of South Mississippi's Center for Policy and Resilience (USM-CPR). The day-long summit, held at the USM Gulf Coast's Gulf Park campus in Long Beach, emphasized that the Gulf Coast oil spill disaster will profoundly affect the environment, the economy and the well-being of Mississippi Gulf Coast citizens and that long-term recovery must start now.

SMVOAD partnered with USM-CPR in this summit to identify the possible impacts and begin to develop community wide strategies to respond to and recover from this man-made disaster. The Summit Management Team included representatives of the Mississippi Coast Interfaith Disaster Task Force, Lutheran Episcopal Services in Mississippi, International Relief and Development – U.S. Gulf Coast Community Resource Centers, American Red Cross Mississippi Gulf Coast Chapter, United Way of South Mississippi and USM-CPR, while a larger Planning Committee ensured input from an even more broad-based group.

The summit attracted approximately 200 registrants. Organizers invited representatives from several organizations, including businesses, government, health and human service providers, faith-based volunteer groups and other nongovernmental organizations and associations, to collaborate in developing recovery strategies. They especially welcomed representatives of fishing, tourism and other industries and groups affected by this disaster.

Organizers envisioned this summit as the first of a series and having the following primary goals:

- Identify key types and scale of potential long term impacts of this disaster on Mississippi Gulf Coast residents, businesses and the coastal environment.
- Develop strategic partnerships to address these needs in follow-up meetings.
- Provide input for a joint policy statement on the necessary resources to address primary needs associated with recovery.
- Provide input for a long term recovery plan, including regional partnerships and one or more Regional Summits.

The morning session of the summit brought together panels of national, state and local experts to identify and explore key issues and needs for long term recovery. The panels addressed environmental, economic, emotional and health impacts and provided opportunity for questions and comments from other summit participants. Steven Picou, Ph.D., University of South Alabama, was the featured keynote speaker at the luncheon hosted by USM. He described the results of two decades of research on impacts to coastal Alaskan communities following the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill and what is known about the differences between natural and technological disasters. The afternoon session presented a coordinated approach advocated by SMVOAD to assess the effects experienced by residents and to collaborate in providing services to facilitate long-term recovery.

LaDon Swann, PhD, director of the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, moderated the first morning panel, which focused on forecasting long-term impacts on the environment. He also educated participants on impacts of the oil spill on the life cycle of common Gulf of Mexico oysters. Harriet Perry and Jim Franks, with USM's Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, presented information about estuarine-dependent organisms, using the blue crab life cycle as a focal example, as well as expected impacts on off-shore ecosystems, with emphasis on the sargassum seaweed that provides nurseries for species such as blue-fin tuna, amberjack, dolphinfish, blue marlin, and sailfish.

Tom Lansford, Ph.D., Academic Dean of the Gulf Coast, and professor of Political Science, University of South Mississippi, moderated a panel focused on economic impacts. It featured Scott King, director of Policy and Research with Gulf Coast Business Council, and Earnest Ulrich, owner of Port City Cafe in Gulfport, Mississippi.

John Hosey, MDiv, with the Mississippi Coast Interfaith Disaster Task Force, moderated the third panel, which explored the long-term impact on emotional and physical health. Panelists included Benjamin Springgate, MD, MPH, with Tulane University School of Medicine, RAND Gulf States and the REACH-NOLA Mental Health Infrastructure and Training Project; Gabriel Nehrbass, program specialist with Save the Children; Grayson Norquist, MD, MSPH, professor and chairman of the Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior with the University of Mississippi Medical Center; and William Smith, M.D., with Singing River Hospital.

Following Picou's luncheon presentation, Hosey invited BP's new Government & Public Affairs Coordinator for Mississippi, Margaret Laney, to speak. She stressed that businesses and residents should move forward with their claims and expressed gratitude for the opportunity provided by this summit for BP staff to listen and learn.

Lori West, Gulf Region Director of International Relief and Development, Inc. – US, presented a model developed by SMVOAD, emphasizing the importance of activating a Long-Term Recovery Committee. She advocated a collaborative "Neighbor Helping Neighbor" approach to assess needs, identify existing services to meet those needs, fill service gaps and deliver those services.

The summit then provided time for attendees to ask additional questions or comment on their own experience or services provided by their organizations. At least one attendee, not from the Mississippi coast, shared that he was particularly impressed with the proactive, collaborative spirit of the summit. Attendees completed forms relating to services they could provide to those in need, along with evaluations of the summit itself. Summit organizers agreed to plan future activities based on those responses.

For additional information about the Summit, including links to presentations, please visit: <http://www.smvoad.com/Gulf-Coast-Oil-Spill-Recovery-Summit.html>.

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**From the CARRI Blog:  
New Urbanism and Disaster Resiliency?  
By: Arthur Felts**

Attending the Annual Hazards Workshop, hosted by the Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado, has been a privilege I have enjoyed since coming on board with CARRI. The conference, unlike most, is not discipline specific, but rather brings together a group of researchers and practitioners who are interested in learning more about hazards, meaning disasters, and how we can deal with them.

Continue reading the CARRI Blog [here](#).

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**Charleston Tri-County Continues to Make Strides Working Regionally**

Regional approaches to resilience, disaster planning and mitigation increasingly are becoming the norm rather than the exception in Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Counties. Two key initiatives recently have been undertaken: 1) The formation of a Regional Local Emergency Planning Committee

(LEPC) for the Tri-county, and 2) organized discussion on the development of a Regional Emergency Operations Center that would physically house the emergency operations for each of the three counties under one roof.

On July 15, the memberships of the three county LEPCs convened for the first-ever regional meeting. Under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, LEPCs work to understand chemical hazards in the community, develop emergency plans in the case of an accidental release and look for ways to prevent chemical accidents.

The membership agreed unanimously to apply as a coordinated regional project for funding through the Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) Grant Program. The funds would support planning and training efforts, detailed data gathering, analysis and planning needed to ensure adequate preparedness for hazardous materials emergencies. In a follow-up meeting to refine the scope of the effort, it was determined that Dorchester County would coordinate the grant and one objective would be to bring all three counties to equal levels in terms of GIS data. Assessment of existing data will be a first step.

The three county LEPCs agreed to meet collectively at least twice annually and the committees will meet as-needed.

That same week, Ron Mitchum, executive director of the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments, convened an informal meeting of the three county administrators and emergency managers, along with several deputy administrators, to discuss the potential of the counties working together to design and construct a regional emergency operations center centrally located in Ladson. The attendees talked about the timing being more opportune now than ever before.

The idea of a regional emergency operations center was an initiative that was supported and advanced by the CARRI Advisory Group as part of the roadmap toward greater resilience in the Charleston Tri-county area.