

# Officials detail steps toward '100 percent' coverage Hills joins Internet bidding system

BY PHIL FOLEY  
STAFF WRITER

Just as the attack on Pearl Harbor brought home the brutal reality that the rest of the world is not as distant a place as generations of Americans had grown to believe, the events of 9-11 put this generation of Americans on notice that home is not nearly as safe as we had grown accustomed to believing.

Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson and other county officials gathered at the county's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in Pontiac March 27 to detail the county's steps toward Patterson's goal of "100 percent coverage of the county, 100 percent of the time for 100 percent of our citizens."

With images of British Prime Minister Tony Blair, National Weather Service maps and video captured from one of the county's 169 traffic surveillance cameras dancing on the wall, county officials recounted the steps they've taken to make the county respond to anything from terrorist attacks to natural disasters.

"We used to take safety for granted," offered Patterson. "Now we operate under the assumption that there's going to be another strike."

This fall, he said, the county's EOC will join with the

Army's Chem Bio Support Team and the county's five mutual aid groups for a county-wide test of Oakland's ability to respond to two simulate terrorist attacks at once.

So far, said Patterson, the county has spent \$1.7 million to beef up its Emergency Response and Preparedness Divisions.

The spending spree has included:

- \$1.1 million for three HAZ MAT/WMD response vehicles equipped with bioterrorism equipment.
- \$250,000 for a decontamination trailer equipped with walk-through showers and four decontamination tents.
- \$200,000 to train 120 county firefighters at HAZ MAT technicians.
- \$200,000 for biochemical suits, masks and self-contained breathing apparatus for first responder agencies.

Patterson said the county plans to purchase a fourth HAZ MAT/WMD response vehicle as soon as federal funds arrives. Sheriff Michael Bouchard said his agency is "slightly ahead of the curve nationally."

He said his department had already made the decision to get helicopters prior to the 2001 attacks, so while other agencies are scrambling to stand in line, the Oakland County Sheriff's Department

has already taken delivery of three six-passenger American Eurocopter helicopters.

With a flight crew of two, they can ferry four fully equipped special response team (SRT) members anywhere in the county in minutes.

Noting that the helicopters are equipped with the same microwave downlink equipment telecasters have been using for years, given police commanders the ability to see real-time video, Bouchard said, "We've finally caught up with the television stations."

Tom Gordon, the county's human services director said 298 county employees have volunteered for smallpox vaccination and another 32,000 first responders have been inoculated against the flu.

According to Patterson nearly 1,600 county employees have been trained to deal with bomb threats.

Joe Sullivan, head of the county's CLEMIS system said that while there are 43 law enforcement agencies in Oakland County, more than 140 agencies in Southeast Michigan use the 35-year-old computer system to track criminals and suspects.



Oakland County officials gathered at the county's Emergency Response and Preparedness (ERP) offices in Pontiac last Thursday to assure residents that Oakland County is better prepared than most to deal with any emergency. In hand were ERP Administrator Michael Stram (left) County Executive L. Brooks Patterson, Sheriff Michael Bouchard, Director of Human Services Thomas Gordon and CLEMIS manager Joe Sullivan.

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Bouchard noted that if the system had been in place in the Washington, D.C. area last year, it might have helped catch the snipers that much sooner.

He noted that in Oakland County, if someone is stopped for suspicious activity in Farmington Hills one night and then for the same thing by police in Rochester the next night, the CLEMIS system would alert the second agency of the earlier incident.

Noting the county is not finished yet, Patterson declared, "I believe Oakland County is among the best prepared, if not the best prepared county in Michigan and maybe the nation, to deal with whatever emergency situation comes our way, no matter where or when it may occur."

He said county officials have already provided threat assessment training to more than 70 public and private institutions across the county.

"If it never happens, fine," said Patterson, "but if we're not prepared, there's no excuse."

Phil Foley is a reporter for the Nov. News. He can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext 108 or by e-mail at pfoley@homecomm.net

BY PAUL R. PACE  
STAFF WRITER

The city of Farmington Hills has joined in the effort to save money by combining its purchasing requests with other communities.

Livingston County and the cities of Troy, Royal Oak, Sterling Heights, Birmingham, Rochester, Warren and Dearborn have created an on-line bidding service titled the Michigan Inter-governmental Trade Network or MITN.

The service is designed to streamline and simplify the way vendors who supply everything from pencils to police cars bid on government business, said Michael Lasley, director of central services for Farmington Hills.

"Our focus was to eliminate the duplication of effort in maintaining bid lists but this system takes it well beyond this minimum requirement," he said. "Our costs of providing each vendor with the paper documents and mail has

continued to grow and this service virtually eliminates this requirement, saving taxpayer dollars."

Lasley said the city has been working on the project for more than a year.

The system, run free of charge by BidNet, an Albany, N.Y. company, allows Farmington Hills to get responses to its requests for bids and keep track of who is taking out a bid, rather than wasting effort in putting out bid requests that half the time do not come back or are sent to a defunct company.

While an exact dollar figure in savings has not been estimated, Lasley said postage and hundreds of dollars in employee time to send out and keep track of bidding companies will be saved each week.

Vendors and those interested in bidding for city projects can look up Farmington Hills' proposals at [www.govbids.com](http://www.govbids.com) and go to the MITN section.

[ppace@homecomm.net](mailto:ppace@homecomm.net) | (248) 477-5450

## Fund-raiser to benefit Mark Herman

A gala fund-raiser is planned from 8 p.m.-midnight April 12 at the Farmington Hills Industrial Center, 24730-24804 Crestview Ct. (off Grand River between Halsted and Haggerty) for Mark Herman, a West Bloomfield resident and aspiring comedian, who was injured in a weight-lifting accident March 2001 that left him a quadriplegic.

Due to the nature of the accident and the limitation of his insurance provider, Mark and his family do not have the financial resources to meet his medical expenses, which run in excess of \$12,000 a month.

All funds raised directly benefit Mark, who graduated from North Farmington High School, and help defray the escalating medical costs.

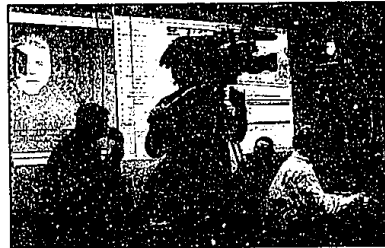
A live and silent auction will feature a deluxe "California Getaway" package that includes airfare, two nights' hotel accommodations, dinner

and two tickets to a "Friends" taping with a backstage tour; two "Chicago Getaway" packages that include two tickets to the "Oprah Winfrey Show," hotel accommodations and dinner; and a trip to New York to see "Live with John Stewart."

Other auction items consist of a day at sea on a private yacht with lunch and dinner, jewelry, artwork, electronics, sports memorabilia, spa treatments, event tickets and more.

Tickets are \$100 each. For tickets or more information please call Suzanne Leibovitz, Mark's sister, at (248) 366-1223. Donations can be sent to Variety, The Rosen Fund, c/o Mark Herman, 789 Smith Avenue, Birmingham, MI 48009.

"Our family truly appreciates all of the support of the people who have gathered around to help. The outpouring from the community has been very heartwarming," said Suzanne.



Local media listen as Oakland County officials detail the steps they've taken to increase public safety in the wake of 9-11. Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson declared, "The goal of our Emergency Response and Preparedness Division is 100 percent coverage of the county, 100 percent of the time for 100 percent of our citizens."

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