

**Familiarization Workshop
June 6, 2002**

Prepared Opening Remarks
9:00 a.m.

**Michael C. Rogers
Executive Director
Metropolitan Washington Council of
Governments**

Good morning!!!

Welcome to the first-ever "Familiarization Workshop."

I'm Michael Rogers, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, COG.

COG, for those who might not be aware, is a voluntary association of 17 local governments in the Washington, DC, metropolitan region.

COG works to facilitate solutions to issues that cut across the boundaries of Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. Issues like transportation, air quality, growth and development, restoration of the Anacostia River and the Chesapeake Bay, the digital divide, affordable housing. And public safety.

We work with all levels of government – federal, state, local – with elected officials and professionals – and with the private and non-profit sectors - to help make this region the best it can be.

COG has worked for many years on enhancing public safety in this region – insuring coordination and communication and preparedness in response to the unexpected.

The mutual aid agreements, for example, that were so effective on 9/11, were crafted through COG and its myriad of public safety committees. We coordinate what happens when it snows and when it stops raining or when the air is bad. And COG provides a forum for our members and key stakeholders to come together to address virtually any issue of common concern and interest.

For your information, the United States Congress provided funding to COG to assist all levels of government in this region with emergency planning, coordination, communication, training and exercises. You will hear more about what COG has been doing in these areas in a few minutes and later during the day.

Among COG's most important roles is as a convener. Today's event is a prime illustration.

I want to thank everyone who has elected to participate in this very important workshop for being here.

Because it is this group of assembled experts that together are responsible for insuring that this region responds as effectively as possible to the next emergency – whether it be terrorist in origin, an accident, or a natural disaster.

Unfortunately another event will surely come – including sadly, a terrorist event, based on the warnings issued over the past few weeks at the highest level of our government.

**So, why are we here?
What is a “Familiarization Workshop?”**

We’re here to make sure that the regional emergency team – the local, state, and federal government emergency planners and responders, as well as our partners in the private and non-profit sectors, understand each others roles, understand and are familiar with each others plans, ***and probably, most importantly, get to know and understand each other better.***

One of the most important “lessons learned” from the “9-11 -- Looking Back, Moving Forward” conference I

just attended in New York City is that the ***relationships*** among emergency response professionals is among the most critical aspects of being prepared and responding effectively.

As former New York City Mayor Guiliani reminded us, these relationships are cemented through planning, preparing and practicing, planning, preparing and practicing, over and over and over again.

Clearly the people in this room and your colleagues are, and will continue to do this ...

Today's Familiarization Workshop provides an opportunity work across agency lines and across levels of government. The workshop was designed as a first step in a multi-phase process to assure that all the emergency response players can and will work together effectively and in a coordinated fashion.

Future stages include a "Synchronization" Workshop and a Senior Leaders Exercise that will provide further opportunities to insure our plans will work in harmony -- so that we are ready to respond to the next emergency.

While many of us already know some of the people here today, I have no doubt you'll make a new friend, meet a new person, gain a new idea that will come in handy during the extreme stress of responding during

an emergency, or perhaps when designing your organization's emergency response plans.

All of these ideas and more is what this Familiarization Workshop is all about.

Putting together this event would not have been possible without the intense effort of a great many people and partners, many of whom are here in this room.

First, I want to thank the **White House Office of Homeland Security**, particularly **Michael Byrne and Stephen Rickman**, who were the initial catalysts for this event and who emphasized that today we must discuss the dual critical federal roles in this region -- as major employer – and as provider of assistance to state and local governments during emergencies.

Michael Lowder, Chief of the Planning and Policy Branch at **FEMA** has provided outstanding guidance and support to COG's regional emergency coordination efforts and on the design of this day.

Next are our three state emergency management agency partners –

- **Peter LaPorte**, Director of the District of Columbia Emergency Management Agency,

- **Don Keldsen**, Acting Director of the Maryland Emergency Management Agency, and
- **Michael Cline**, State Coordinator of Emergency Management in Virginia.

I cannot thank each of you enough for your assistance, support, and counsel over the past several months, and in the past few weeks as we put together this event.

George Vradenburg, Co-Chair of the Greater Washington Board of Trade Potomac Conference's Emergency Preparedness Task Force has been an absolutely essential partner and voice for the private and non-profit sectors since 9/11, and his presence here today reflects the critical importance of private industry and the non-profit world to our region's ability to respond to emergencies.

Finally, I want to thank our consultants from **Marasco Newton Group**, whose support has been magnificent. While I am sure the sleep deficit is very high right now, and the number of gray hairs or lost hairs has jumped dramatically in the past few weeks, Kim Fletcher, Bob Fletcher, Bob Adamcik, Sherry Eckert, Alicia Hosmer, Anna Parrott, Kelly Pettyjohn and others at MNG as well have made this day possible and I thank you.

Before I turn the podium over to COG's Board Chair Bruce Williams, let me ask the **COG staff** to stand so everyone can see who you are. [Recognize individual staff as time permits.]

[Staff stands briefly.]

Now it is my honor to introduce **Bruce R. Williams**, Chair of the COG Board of Directors. Bruce Williams is Mayor Pro Tem of the City of Takoma Park. He has been a member of the Takoma Park City Council since 1993 and mayor *pro tem* since 1997. Serving on the COG Board since 1997, Mr. Williams was elected Chair of the Board in January, 2002.

Bruce ...

[Bruce Williams speaks.]

Thank you very much.

Next to speak to us is **Carol Schwartz**. Carol is an at-large member of the Council of the District of Columbia and immediate past Chair of the COG Board. Among Ms. Schwartz's most enduring accomplishments while Chair of COG last fall was the creation of the COG Task Force on Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness for the National Capital Area.

Carol has been a determined and dedicated leader of the Task Force, and has been outspoken concerning the critical need for events like this one where the key players from all sectors meet and work together to enhance our region's preparedness for emergencies.

It's my honor to introduce the Honorable Carol Schwartz.

Carol ...

[Carol Schwartz speaks.]

Thank you Carol.

Now it's my distinct pleasure to introduce **Michael Byrne**, the Senior Director of Response and Recovery for the White House Office of Homeland Security. Mr. Byrne represents one of the newest agencies created since 9-11 with an extraordinarily important role and function. It's my pleasure to introduce Michael Byrne...

Mike...

[Michael Byrne speaks...]

Thank you very much.

Next we will hear from **Michael Lowder**, who as I mentioned earlier is the Chief of the Planning and Policy Branch for FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency. FEMA is and will continue to be an exceptionally important agency to everyone here should there be another major regional emergency. I again want to thank Mike for everything he has done for us and with us over the past months.

Mike...

[Mike Lowder speaks...]

Thank you.

George Vradenburg is our next speaker. George is the Strategic Advisor for AOL Time Warner, and as noted, the Co-Chair of the Board of Trade's Potomac Conference Emergency Preparedness Task Force. George has been an extraordinary advocate for the importance of the private and non-profit sector roles and responsibilities to our emergency response, and an equally important voice for the critical importance of regional communication and coordination among and between governments and the private sector. I'm extremely pleased to have George here with us today.

George ...

[George Vradenburg speaks...]

Now let's move into our program, which is very ambitious.

Our facilitator today is Robert P. Fletcher, consultant to the Marasco Newton Group. He's known to many of you as a result of his prior experience in government, as well as his very active emergency management planning and facilitation work for the Marasco Newton Group. Bob will now describe the design of the day and provide a big picture context for our discussion.

Again, thank you all for coming. I look forward to working with you and having some time for further discussion during the breaks, during lunch (which will be provided), and at the end of the day during the reception. Please note that while we are taping this event, it's for internal use only. There will be no media attendance today.

Bob ...

**[Bob Fletcher begins his presentation.
Scheduled for 9:40 a.m.]**