



THE SENTINEL

Reporting on Preparedness



Public Health

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Population monitoring at Community Reception Centers

The District 2 Public Health EP team recently completed training for radiation exposure monitoring. The course taught participants how to assess and monitor individuals potentially contaminated with radioactive material. An overview of decontamination methods explained the pros-and-cons of wet versus dry decontamination, as well as possible self-decontamination before arriving at the Community Reception Center (CRC).

Students learned about the properties of the different types of radiation - alpha, beta and gamma - and the instruments used to detect each type. Personal protective equipment (PPE) was reviewed for each type of radiation exposure. At right, the instructor

explains that he has placed radiation sources on mannequins and students will be given the opportunity to find the 'contaminated' individual(s) waiting to enter the CRC.

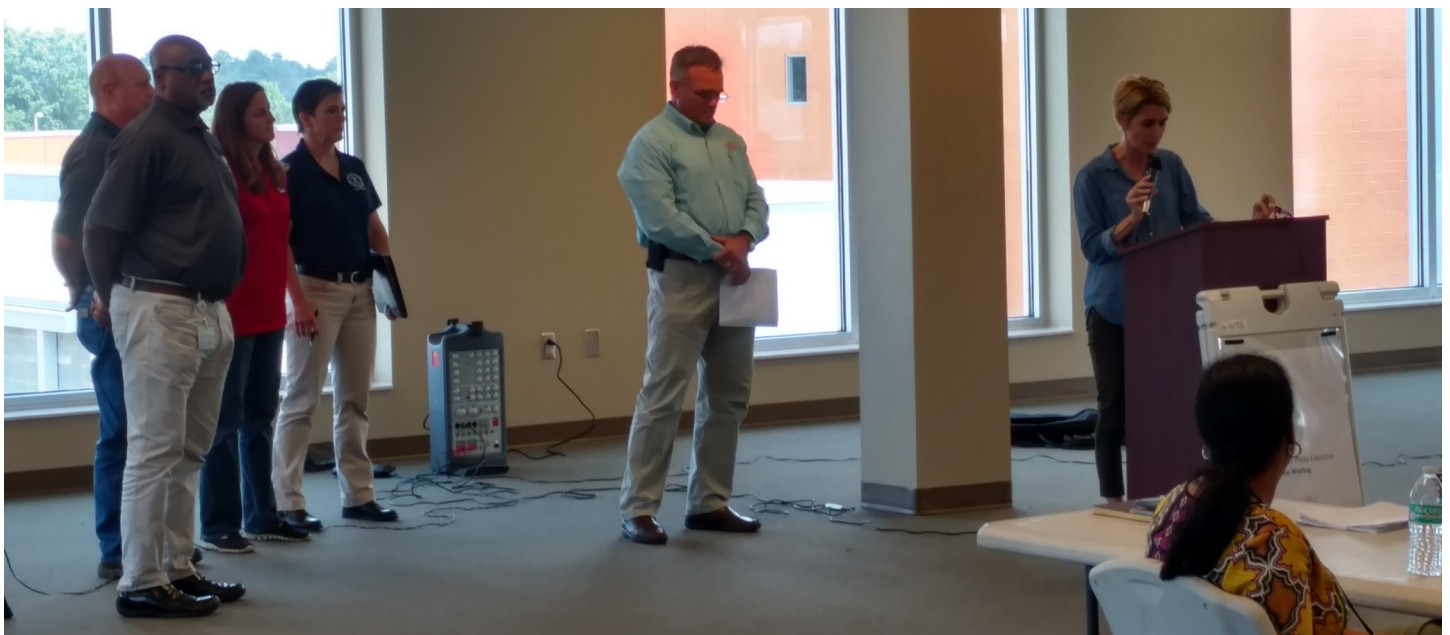


Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDA) hosts multi-agency, full-scale exercise

On August 15-16, the GDA and Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI), hosted a Food and Feed Rapid Response Team full-scale exercise at the Guardian Center in Perry, GA. The scenario called for disgruntled workers to contaminate food with radiation and then each agency was to respond to the incident as injects were revealed. Several facilities became contaminated as products were handled

by workers and distributed from the facilities to other locations per the exercise scenario.

Exercise play became somewhat stressful as the situation evolved quickly, and many agencies were working to solve the issues presented by the event. More than 200 representatives from local, state and federal partner agencies and organizations participated in the event.



Above: Lead PIO for the exercise, Julie Peake gives directions to reporters for the press briefing as the panel of speakers look on.



The Rainbow Family of Living Light Gathering held near Dahlonega

The Rainbow Family of Living Light held its annual gathering in the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest near Dahlonega. The “gathering” is a loosely organized group of individuals who have come together each year since 1972 to grow a community and pray for world peace. Many have been coming to gatherings since the 1970’s and are called ‘Earlies’. While there is no formal structure to the organization, the ‘earlies’ are often looked to for wisdom and guidance.

Some of the Rainbow members say that the group started when a group of Vietnam Veterans were looking for an alternative way to celebrate the 4th of July. They explain that the group was looking for a peaceful way to gather and avoid all the hoopla and fireworks surrounding Independence Day celebrations.

Past gatherings have drawn thousands of people. In anticipation of the influx of people, local authorities requested additional law enforcement support from other agencies. The U.S. Forest Service National Incident Management Team deployed to Lumpkin County to assist with the event. The IMT provided regular updates to community partners. Also, several town hall meetings with the Rainbows and residents were held to share information.

While an exact number of attendees is not known, it is estimated that approximately 2,000 people were at the gathering. During the end of June, teams arrived to meet with Forest Service officials and to set up camps.



Betty Jewett, U. S. Forest Service Ranger (right) shares a light-hearted moment with Rainbow ‘Glowing Feather Maji’ before the community public meeting on June 28.

Each camp has a name for what it does for the gathering. For instance, one for cooking food, providing first-aid, and teaching a craft or playing music. Because the gathering is in the forest, there is a need to have teams to provide drinking water and teams to set up trench latrines. Attendees begin arriving a couple of weeks before July 4 and set up their own camping spaces.

After the gathering, teams of Rainbow members stayed to clean the forest and return it to its original state. These teams repaired damaged plants and ground, and made sure there was no trash left behind.



A community public meeting was well attended by local residents to learn more about ‘The Gathering’.



Gainesville Safety Day provides opportunity to share preparedness information



On June 8, District 2 Emergency Preparedness participated in Gainesville Public Safety Day at Midway Greenway. Various city and county agencies were on hand to demonstrate capabilities to City of Gainesville employees. During the day, Gainesville Police K-9 Unit held several demonstrations and highlighted the various capabilities of the unit. Hall County EMA and District 2 Public Health also participated by handing out preparedness information and encouraging attendees to Get a kit, make a plan, and be informed.

One of the biggest attractions on this warm day was the ice cream booth across from public health. The EP team showed willpower by enjoying only a small sample of the tasty treat. Many of the suppliers for Gainesville's many departments were also on hand with giveaways.





Striding for a Better Banks community resource fair held

On Saturday, July 21, Banks County hosted a resource fair for residents. Free school clothes and school supplies were available for children readying for the new school year. Business sponsors and public safety agencies including law enforcement, fire department, emergency management/911, and District 2 Public Health Emergency Preparedness provided residents with information about their agencies and handed out items to children.



Left: Mark Palen, District 2 Emergency Preparedness Director discusses public health's role in emergencies with Red Cross volunteers.

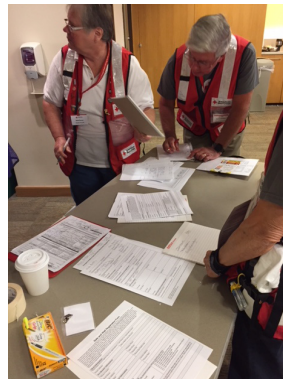
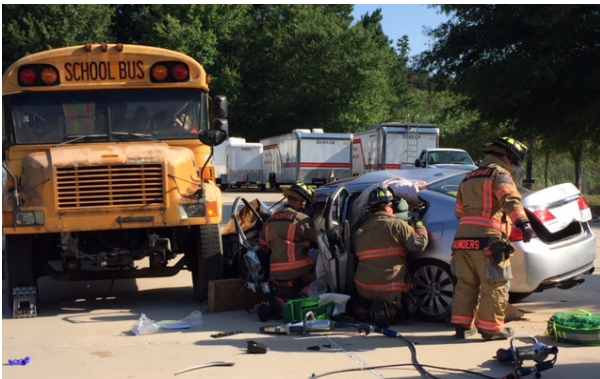
Above: Sparky the Fire Dog and Apple from Habersham Federal Credit Union were a big hit with the kids.



Northeast Georgia Mountains Healthcare Coalition full-scale exercise held August 29

The Region B Healthcare Coalition full-scale exercise featured several events unfolding in different locations during the morning. For the exercise scenario, a severe weather event caused damage in many of the locations prompting hospitals and nursing homes to request resources from the Regional Coordinating Hospital. In Hall County,

an inject for a bus accident involved fire, law enforcement, and emergency management. Health occupation students from Chestatee High School served as 'victims' complete with moulage. Red Cross volunteers helped with family reunification as children from the mock accident were transported and triaged for care or release to their family.



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