

Merry Christmas Seasons Greetings from the Minister

The holiday season is a special time of the year when family and friends can share and celebrate the season together in many different ways.

At this time, I would like to share in this festive season by extending my special thanks for the contributions made by Yukon's emergency personnel and volunteers. These remarkable people dedicate their time throughout the year to emergency response and preparedness work in Yukon communities. Their commitment to undertake emergency work often takes them away from their

own families and, at times, places them at risk as they respond to urgent and serious situations.

Yukoners appreciate your sincere efforts and I thank you for your service to the people of the Yukon. I wish you and your family and your friends a happy holiday season.



Pamela J. Buckway, Minister
Community and Transportation Services



Emergency Preparedness College Comes to Yukon

During the week of December 11th to 15th, emergency and planning officials were able to participate in a course normally held at the Canadian Emergency Preparedness College in Arnprior, Ontario. The course entitled "Emergency Operations Centre Management" was held in Whitehorse, and was co-delivered by Emergency Measures, and an instructor from the College. Sixteen participants from around Yukon were able to learn about the various roles and responsibilities of each agency that might be needed to respond to an

emergency. In each municipality, and at the territorial level, an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) can be set up to coordinate and assist in the response to any kind of emergency or disaster.

Representatives from each of the response agencies, and specialists in providing logistical support, communications, planning and operational expertise work as a team to support those working at the scene of the emergency. The EOC's role is key, as field responders need to be able to

concentrate on the tasks at hand. During the course, two one day simulated exercises were run which involved all of the course participants. Each person was put in a role playing function at the EOC, and expected to respond to scripted "problems" involving the fictitious town of Beothuk, Newfoundland. The two "emergencies" which hit the town were a severe winter storm, and a forest fire. Both of these events are possible in the Yukon, so the lessons learned were very valuable to those attending.

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SARSCENE 2001 UPDATE

Watch this space for news and information on SARSCENE 2001 – SAR North of 60.

- A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the National Search and Rescue Secretariat and Whitehorse District Search and Rescue Society
- Representatives from the NSS have visited Whitehorse, toured potential facilities and venues, and are currently establishing agreements with suitable suppliers.
- Whitehorse SAR has been meeting to establish a local organizing committee.
- The SARSCENE Steering Committee met on December 7.

Whitehorse to Host SARSCENE 2001 — Sept 10 - 16

Whitehorse District Search & Rescue Society (WDSAR) and the City of Whitehorse have been chosen by the National Search & Rescue Secretariat (NSS) as the hosts and venue for SARSCENE 2001, SAR North of 60, an international workshop of search and rescue volunteers.

The purpose of the conference is to provide a forum for search and rescue providers from all jurisdictions to exchange information and ideas. To Yukon SAR volunteers this means easy access to a world class workshop that will provide them with training, networking and demonstration opportunities as well as a national SAR skills competition - the SARSCENE Games.

This will be the first time the international workshop will be held in the north and we are looking forward to showing

delegates the best of what Yukon has to offer.

For Yukon businesses, it means an influx of approximately 600 - 800 delegates (some bringing their families) spending a week enjoying Yukon attractions and hospitality. NSS officials and conference organizers have already spent a week in Whitehorse touring facilities and venues, in preparation for the event.

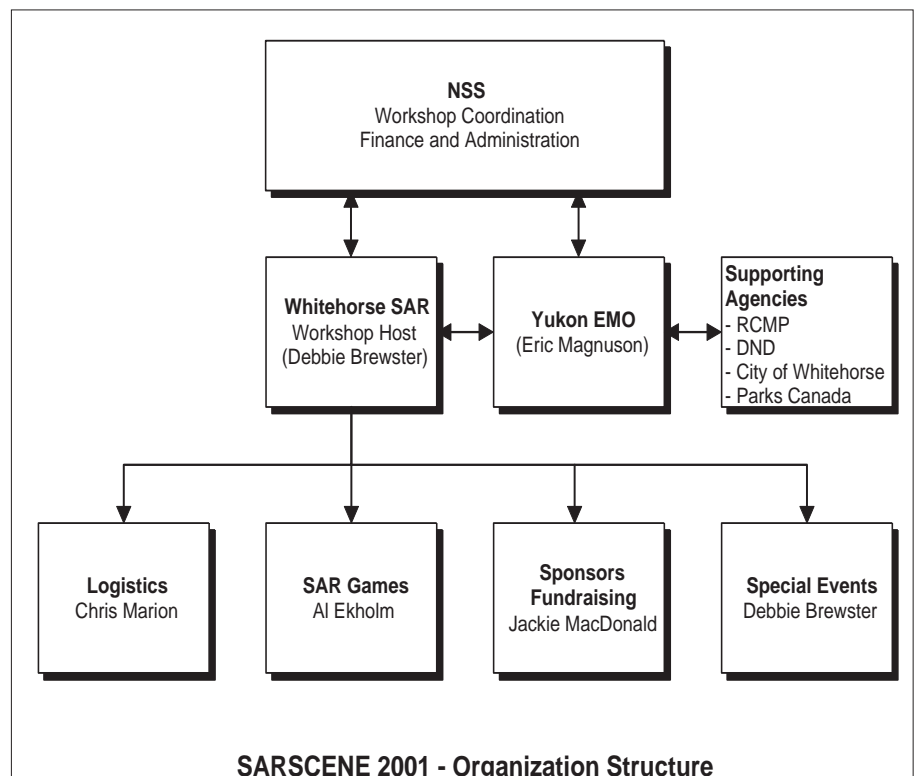
WDSAR, as the local host, with assistance from various conference partners (other Yukon SAR teams, City of Whitehorse, YTG, EMO, Parks Canada, DND), will share in several aspects of conference preparations. These include local fundraising, arranging for optional social activities and pre and post convention activities, SAR demonstrations as well as assistance and input into banquet, SAR Games and workshops. ❀

Resurgence of SAR Interest

We are happy to report a surge of interest in volunteering for search and rescue! SAR societies in Teslin and Carmacks are both reorganizing with new members, and experiencing renewed involvement of past/current members. Meanwhile, SAR teams in Carcross, Mayo, Watson Lake and Whitehorse continue to be strong.

In Yukon communities, members of the RCMP are working closely with volunteers to encourage involvement in search and rescue. The announcement of SARSCENE 2001 is also anticipated to be a catalyst for additional interest.

Many thanks to SAR members past and present for your continued commitment to search and rescue. ❀



Yukoners attend SARSCENE in Laval, PQ

By Denise Norman, WDSAR

In the second week of October, four members of Whitehorse District Search and Rescue attended SARSCENE 2000 in Laval, PQ. Debbie Brewster, Nancy Tanner, Leah Battersby and Denise Norman spent the week in Laval, observing how the workshop was organized and presented. Most important, for Yukon SAR volunteers, was the task of observing the organizing and workings of the conference, and making contact with the officials with whom we will be working throughout the next year to plan and execute SARSCENE 2001.



As well, the group attended informative workshops and promoted Yukon for SARSCENE 2001: "Search & Rescue - North of 60". One of our own favourite trainers, Wayne Merry also attended, giving volunteers from across Canada the benefit of his knowledge by co-presenting a pre-conference Tracking Workshop. Other workshops attended by WDSAR members included:

- Media and Crisis,
- NIF Fund Access,
- What a Blind Person Can Teach You About Orientation,
- Search Techniques in Urban Setting,
- Use of Air Scenting Dogs in UK,
- Managing a SAR Unit,
- SAR Incident Management,
- Arson Detection Dogs,
- Bereavement - Helping Families Cope with Loss,
- New SAR Technology and others.

Yukon was well represented at the conference by the delegates. Emergency Measures Branch and Yukon Tourism provided travel assistance and, along

with the City of Whitehorse and the Yukon Convention Bureau provided a display and materials to promote Whitehorse and Yukon as next year's venue. The booth was staffed almost continuously, with the four delegates taking turns and even doubling up during busy times. Hundreds of Yukon Tourism books and perhaps almost as many stories were passed on to SARSCENE delegates from as far away as Taiwan, Denmark and the Netherlands. Local interest from those living in Quebec and Ontario was also high. The Laval conference was unique in that it brought together 3 events: SARSCENE, the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary Games and the COSPAS-SARSAT Conference with delegates from more than 30 countries. Yukon's presentation at the final Banquet consisted of WDSAR President Debbie Brewster inviting all those in attendance to the Yukon for SARSCENE 2001. Vice-President Denise Norman gave them a taste of the Yukon by presenting a recitation of Robert Service's "Spell of the Yukon" in period eveningwear,

accompanied by a series of slides of breathtaking Yukon scenery.

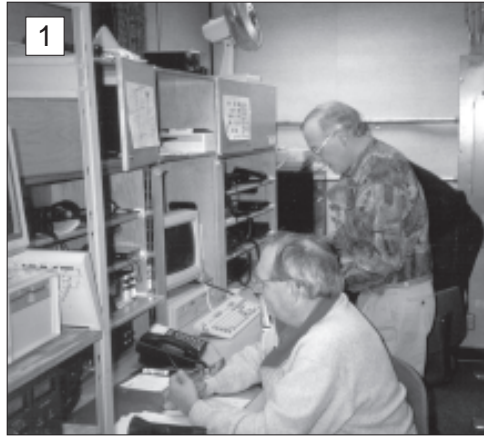
Yukon SAR volunteers have already benefited from workshop knowledge gained at SARSCENE 2000 and will continue to benefit over the winter as those who attended pass on the knowledge. Wayne Merry presented an Urban Search module at this fall's SAR Training Weekend and other topics will be covered during an enhanced training schedule over the winter. WDSAR Volunteers (or other team members who happen to be in Whitehorse) should note that a second monthly training is being scheduled for the 3rd Wednesday of the month (7-9 p.m. at EMO) starting in February.

With approximately 6-800 delegates expected to attend the conference in Whitehorse next September, there will be plenty of excitement and activity over the next 9 months, culminating in an event that will benefit the Yukon SAR Program and our community for years to come.



Photos:

- 1.** Amateur radio volunteers.
- 2.** Fox Lake fire, 1998.
- 3.** Burwash fire, 1999.
- 4.** Community volunteers, Teslin flood, 1992.
- 5.** SAR equipment.
- 6.** Klondike Valley flood.
- 7.** Volunteer firefighters, Whitehorse.



Decade in

After the first year of the new century, it is worth
Yukon's emergency preparedness and the Eme

Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery

- Establishment of the Yukon Disaster Committee
- EMO Coordinators in each community
- Comprehensive data base of personnel
- Over 500 volunteers ready to assist
- Major equipment acquisition
- Agreements with volunteer groups for service
- Numerous prevention and awareness publications
- Government Wide Emergency Plans
- Departmental Emergency and Business Continuity Plans
- Private sector resource inventory
- Planning and preparation for the Year 2000 Roll Over
- Year round emergency training
- Hundreds of operational responses (floods, fires, ice storms, missing aircraft)
- Merger of Communications Branch and Emergency Measures Branch
- Relocation and renovations of Joint Emergency Operations Coordination Centre
- Burwash Landing Fire, and assistance with the Reclamation Plan

Telecomm

- Provision of 911 Ph
- improvements
- Emergency Telecom
- Community Radio a
- Management of CB
- services
- Establish Multi Dep
- System
- Management of mu
- Connect Yukon Proj
- Marsh Lake Infrastr



Annual Review

Reflecting on some of the achievements made in the Emergency Measures Branch over the last ten years



Communications

Phone service and planned
 Communications Centre
 and Television Service
 C Emergency Broadcast
 Departmental Mobile Radio
 Multi-million dollar,
 Project
 Structure Build project

- Establishment of SAR Societies in each community
- Search and Rescue Asset Implementation Strategy
- Search and Rescue Training and Certification Program
- Support for Civilian SAR Dog and Avalanche Rescue Dog Programs
- Centralized SAR Training Weekends
- Volunteer participation on Advisory Committee
- Development of SAR Standard Operating Procedures Manual.

Ground Search and Rescue

- Annual SAR Conferences are held to receive volunteer input
- Funding for search and rescue training and equipment
- Major equipment acquisitions (SAR vehicles, boats, communications)
- Increased involvement by the RCMP in local and territorial SAR matters
- Completion of a comprehensive review of Ground SAR in the Yukon.
- Participation on national level committees, councils and groups
- Assist with the hosting of SARSCENE 2001



Fall SAR Training Weekend

Search and rescue volunteers from around the Yukon were again encouraged to learn new skills, and share experience during this year's Fall Training Weekend held in Whitehorse, October 20 – 22nd. More than 20 people participated in a variety of courses intended to provide basic skills for new members and more advanced training for those who have been around for awhile.

An excellent session on group dynamics, and working as a team was presented on Friday evening, and this seemed to set the tone for the rest of the weekend, as participants were very involved throughout the next two days. As with most planned events, the weather played a role, and some of the training scheduled for Saturday did not occur, as fresh snow made the Sign Awareness module a little too easy. Other courses scheduled for Saturday included:

- Wilderness Search Techniques
- Urban Search Techniques
- Communications
- Media Skills
- Map and Compass

- Hypothermia
- Lost Person Behaviour
- Night Sound Sweep and,
- Introduction to SAR Mandates

The highlight on Saturday was the arrival of a Trans North Bell - 206B helicopter. The pilot (Kurt Cyr), completed a full briefing on the helicopter for all the volunteers, and described some of the other equipment available to assist in search and rescue. Once the briefing was done, everyone was given an opportunity to see what it was like to hook up a sling load of gear under the machine when it was in flight. For those that had never been under a hovering helicopter, this was quite an experience.

On Sunday, a search command team was set up to organize a search for two missing people from a hiking party. The scenario involved a report of a group of hikers that were on their way to the Cadet Camp. The hikers became disoriented, and it appeared that one of them did not want to be found, as the tracks in the fresh snow were back-tracked, and reversed to throw the searchers off. Two dog teams were on

hand, and other ground searchers were deployed in small teams to conduct sound attraction searches. The search started at about 0930 hrs. and both victims were found by 1145 hrs. Mild "hypothermia" had set in on one of the victims, which necessitated evacuation by stretcher. Carrying a patient for 500 metres proved difficult for the 8 or 9 rescuers.

A debriefing of both the search scenario, and the entire weekend was held, and participants were encouraged to recommend changes they would like to see for future training weekends. The consensus was that in addition to maintaining basic level courses, more advanced training could be provided in concurrent sessions. New scenarios also need to be developed.

The Cadet Camp continues to be an excellent venue for the Training Weekend, and for those volunteers who stay for the entire weekend, the value is not just in the courses, but also in the experience gained from after hour discussions.



Canada's Newest Model City: Welcome to Grandville!

By Emergency Preparedness Canada

Grandville is a typical small Canadian city—with a twist. This fictitious town was created by the Canadian Emergency Preparedness College (CEPC) for use in emergency training.

Based on the picturesque town of Perth, Ontario, Grandville has a population of 5,000 and all kinds of features that create a perfect setting for disaster simulation exercises. This virtual community has a river flowing through its centre, a rail line, a small industrial park, a provincial highway, a small airport, a hospital and its own police and fire departments.

Sometime this year, Grandville will begin to experience all kinds of disasters. Using it as an example, emergency planners from across Canada will participate in a new program that will focus on emergency preparedness for communities with less than 5,000 residents.

Why Grandville?

Of a thousand people who attend CEPC courses each year, the majority comes from small communities. And when it comes to designing and providing training, one size does not fit all. “When course participants from small, rural municipalities are required to use the existing Collegeville model with all its resources, they are sometimes understandably overwhelmed,” explains Tom George, Senior Education Officer at the CEPC.

Collegeville—the fictitious city for the CEPC’s current simulation exercises—has a population of 137,500 and is modeled after Saskatoon. Boasting all the ingredients for any disaster that trainers might need, Collegeville has a fleet of fire engines, rescue vehicles, state of the art equipment and a small army of specialists. But these are

resources that personnel from small communities will likely never have to manage in real life disaster situations.

Furthermore, the definition of ‘disaster’ can have an entirely different meaning in a small community. George himself lives in a community of only 675 people with one fire truck and a small volunteer fire department. “One house fire would be manageable,” he explains, “but a second one at the same time is quite another matter.” And authorities in small communities often find their human resources get stretched to the limit, necessitating that respondents wear several hats. Says George. “It demands that you change the way you structure and do things.”

A “Phenomenal” Emergency Plan

Regardless of a community’s size, the basic emergency planning principles remains the same: everything begins with a good emergency plan. As a result of being the model for Grandville, Perth ended up with a top-notch plan. Together, town officials and the CEPC crafted the plan that has served the town well during both the 1998 ice storm and, more recently, during a serious disruption to the town’s water supply.

Perth’s Fire Chief has nothing but praise for the expertise and assistance offered by the College and the resulting emergency plan. “It’s phenomenal for us to have such a document,” says Chief David Bell. He recalls that prior to having its new plan, the town’s approach was to envision every possible disaster. Officials often became overwhelmed with details and lost sight of the big picture. Bell says the new plan clearly identifies all the common issues and sets out basic steps that are often the same no matter what kind of disaster.

The ice storm of 1998 presented dire circumstances, but the situation in Perth was stabilized in a matter of days. Chief

Bell attributes their ability to handle it to having an excellent Emergency Management Program. In fact, shortly after the crisis began, Chief Bell, Perth’s mayor and others were transferred to assist county administration in dealing with the emergency on a county-wide basis.

Training Supports a Safer Community

Leeds and Grenville County were also hit hard by the ice storm. Like Perth, the county had the benefit of an excellent emergency plan, but it also had an additional advantage: some emergency respondents had received substantial training at the CEPC. Furthermore, the county had a long history of cooperation among its numerous small communities. As a result, the county responded quickly and effectively when the storm hit.

Emergency planning in the county first got underway in 1986 with the support of DuPont Canada’s local facility. Emergency planners from 25 local communities attended a daylong event to share information about safeguards and emergency resources within the facility and within the community. Today, the Leeds and Grenville Emergency Planning Coordinating Committee includes representatives from more than 50 organizations and has held eight emergency simulations

Looking Ahead

Trainers at the Canadian Emergency Preparedness College are encouraged by similar developments across Canada and look forward to playing an important role in providing training specifically designed for smaller communities. Once scheduling is finalized, individuals can choose to attend CEPC courses relevant to either large or small communities. The first course to be offered using the Grandville model will be the Emergency Operations Centre and Management course.



Coming Events

Winter/Spring Semester

2000 EMO

Jan. 25 TDG – 1st Responder Awareness – Whitehorse
Mar. 7/8 Basic Emergency Plans and Operations – Whitehorse
Mar. 13 TDG – 1st Responder Awareness – Whitehorse
Apr. 26 TDG – 1st Responder Awareness – TBA
June 5 TDG – 1st Responder Awareness – TBA

2001 SAR

Feb. 17–18 SAR Manager – Whitehorse
Mar. 17–18 Team Leader – Whitehorse
Apr. 21–22 GPS Navigation – Whitehorse
May 11–13 Spring Training Weekend – Whitehorse
June 2–3 Tracker 1 - Whitehorse

Fall/Winter Semester

2001

Sept. 10 – 16 SARSCENE 2001
Other Courses TBA



Situation Reports

- Sept. 11 Contamination was reported in the community well at Tagish, which necessitated a “Boil Water” advisory. Distribution of information and continued testing was required until approved for use.
- Oct. 13 An 8 yr. old boy was reported overdue from returning to his home in the Riverdale area of Whitehorse. RCMP requested SAR volunteers to initiate a search starting at 0800 hrs. on Friday morning. A total of 14 volunteers were available to respond.
- Nov. 24 An ice jam created flooding potential in Carmacks. Ice forming on the Nordenskjold River diverted water and created a dam that threatened to flood properties in the area. Dykes and sandbags were used to protect individual homes, while heavy equipment was used to clear ice formations. The Village of Carmacks coordinated the response with support from the First Nation, RCMP, Transportation Maintenance, DIAND Water Resources and Yukon EMO.



First Nations Plan for Emergencies

First Nations governments can play a key role in ensuring communities are prepared for any kind of disaster. Local input into emergency planning is needed to ensure the interests of communities are considered during all phases of preparedness, response, and recovery from emergencies or disasters.

First Nations that have signed Final Land Claim Agreements have control over the lands assigned under these agreements. One of their responsibilities

is for the safety and wellbeing of First Nation members in their communities. Selkirk First Nation is currently developing an Emergency Plan for the community of Pelly Crossing. As Yukon’s First Nations take on more responsibility for governing, they are becoming more aware of the need for emergency planning.

First Nations that have not yet signed final agreements are also demonstrating their desire to plan for their communi-

ties. Kwanlin Dun First Nation is developing a plan for the McIntyre Subdivision area in Whitehorse. Kwanlin Dun is working closely with the City of Whitehorse to ensure that City and First Nation plans will be integrated.

Such partnerships are critical to the success of emergency plans—to avoid duplication, ensure maximum efficiency and encourage emergency preparedness.



The editors gratefully acknowledge the support and contributions made by numerous members of EMO to this issue of the Yukon's Emergency Measures Organization Newsletter. Additional Copies can be obtained by writing to:

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