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## Preparing for the Unthinkable

*Local Agencies Acquire the Knowledge and Skills Necessary to Help Protect the Public from the Threat of a Terrorist Incident.*

November 2, 2004—For three days last week, more than 50 participants from thirteen different agencies participated in a security training and exercise program designed for public works agencies to help secure Vallejo in case of a major terrorist attack.

Organized by the Vallejo Sanitation and Flood Control District, the training program was developed in cooperation with the Texas A&M University System, the Texas Engineering Extension Service, and the National Emergency Response and Rescue Training Center. The Department of Homeland Security funded the development of the program by Texas A&M, who provided two instructors for the 3-day program.

“We want to be well prepared in case of a major emergency,” explains Ron Matheson, Vallejo Sanitation & Flood’s District Manager. “We’ve learned lessons from situations that other communities have faced, and their experiences help us prepare for whatever might come our way ... whether it is a natural disaster or a terrorist incident. We were delighted to extend this program to other agencies.”

In addition to Vallejo Sanitation and Flood Control managers and some staff, participants included representatives from the cities of Vallejo, Benicia and Napa, Red Cross, Kaiser Permanente, Vacaville Sanitation & Flood Control, Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District, Sonoma County Water Agency, Touro University, NorCal Waste Systems, Vallejo Garbage Service, the Solano County Disaster Council and Six Flags Marine World.

Vallejo City Council member Joanne Schivley was one of the participants at the training program. “These are not easy subjects to think about,” she said. “But it’s clear, looking at the lessons from 9/11 and Oklahoma City, that having a strong plan in place would be invaluable if the unthinkable actually happened. It’s wonderful that we had so many agencies participate in the program, and special thanks to Vallejo Sanitation & Flood Control for making it happen for us.”

The course covered an overview of terrorism and encouraged participants to develop a vulnerability assessment of their agencies, gave instructions for preparing for, responding to and recovering from a terrorist or CBNRE (chemical, biological, nuclear, radiation or explosives) incident.

For more information, contact Jennifer Kaiser at the Vallejo Sanitation and Flood Control District by calling (707) 644-8949 or email [jkaiser@vsfcd.com](mailto:jkaiser@vsfcd.com).

