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2013 Achievement Awards

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Virginia Association of Counties
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Call for Entries



2013 VACo Achievement Awards

Deadline: June 1, 2013

Application Form

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2013.**

Program Information

Locality Orange County

Program Title Project M.I.T.I.

Program Category Criminal Justice & Public Safety

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Signature of county administrator or chief administrative officer

Name Julie G. Summs

Title County Administrator

Signature* 

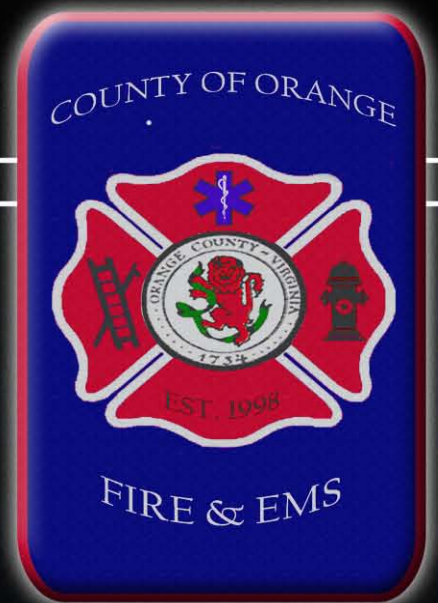
*Entries without this signature will not be accepted.



County of Orange
Department of Fire & EMS

Project M. I. T. I.

2013 VACo Achievement Award Submission



Preface

Imagine if you will, you have just been abruptly awakened from a deep sleep by the piercing sound of your smoke detector. It is same smoke detector in which you just changed the batteries after watching a short public service broadcast on television. As you stagger to your feet, your eyes begin to sting and you feel a tremendous heat about you. You cannot breathe due to the unseen smoke in your darkened room. At that moment, the



inception of panic, you remember a phrase that was on a sticker your son wore home from school, "get low and go." So, you drop to the floor and begin to crawl for the door. As you near your bedroom's escape, you can hear the loud stomps of a firefighter who has come to your aid. Without hesitation, you are carried out of your home. The firefighter sets you down on a stretcher and before you can clear your throat, he and his partner disappear back into your burning home. An EMS provider who begins to assess your condition immediately greets you. The provider asks for you to remain calm as he places an oxygen mask on your face. The next few moments are just a blur. As you regain consciousness, you are in the back of an ambulance. You observe that there are several people working on you, one's taking your blood pressure, another is sticking things on your chest, and a third just stuck a needle in your arm. The EMS crew's precision and professionalism comforts you about your



condition but, leaves you with one terrifying question in your mind, "Where are my kids?" Then, like a chorus from the heavens above, you hear those familiar voices. Your two children are standing at the door of the ambulance asking if you're going to be all right. You wave as the paramedic states, "you are going to be just fine." Your son then says to you, "We did just like the movie said. We heard old smoky, so we ran outside. But, you didn't meet us. So, I told the fireman, and he went and got you."

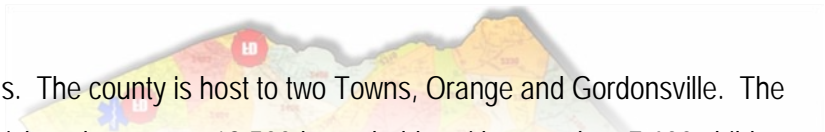
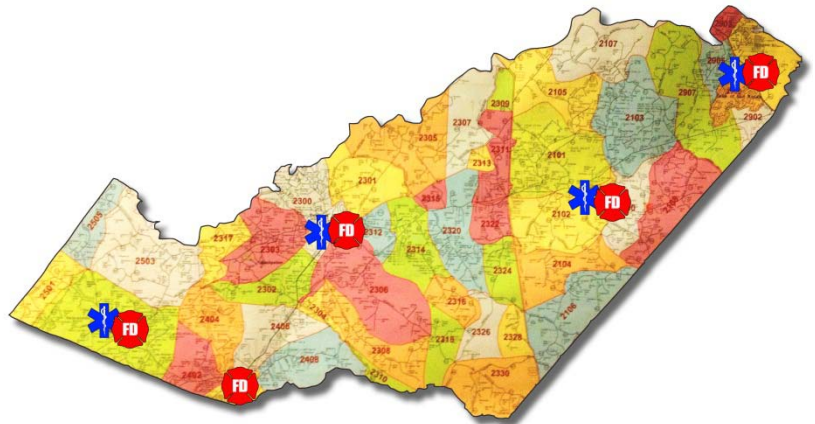
In the fictional story above, the event, as horrible as it seems, usually has a less fortunate ending. This story was composed with the purpose to demonstrate how multi-media training can indeed save lives. First, the influence of a public service broadcast that prompted the homeowner to change the batteries in their smoke detector. Second, a sticker supporting a lifesaving skill taught to an elementary school child that then influenced the actions of an adult. Third, the volunteer firefighter who used the skills he had learned from watching a training video about performing

search and rescue operations in a residential structure fire. Fourth, the EMS provider who had recently participated in a live web cast on the current treatment practices of smoke inhalation. And fifth, the two children who escape the burning home because of what they learned watching a movie at school about the E.D.I.T.H. program (Exit Drills In The Home). This illustrates how the use of multiple media channels available in today's world can influence and change the outcome of rural living catastrophes. This is the foundation of County of Orange Department Fire and EMS', Project M.I.T.I. Through the production of multi-media products, as a department, we can better serve, educate, and protect the citizens of Orange County, neighboring counties and cities, and even create state and national interest.

Background

Orange County is located in Virginia's north-central Piedmont region. The county is graced with a rolling landscape, rich in our country's history, and blessed with gracious southern hospitality. Orange County is centered between Charlottesville, the state capitol of Richmond, and the national capitol of Washington D.C. The county consists of 355 square miles that back

right up to the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The county is host to two Towns, Orange and Gordonsville. The county is populated by over 33,000 individuals, which make up over 12,500 households, with more than 7,600 children. County of Orange Department of Fire & EMS (COFEMS) is the primary emergency medical provider and supports the two volunteer rescue stations with advanced life saving (ALS) personnel as needed. COFEMS also supports the five volunteer fire departments with certified drivers and manpower, again as needed. The 36 men and women that make up the department spend a majority of their time responding to medical emergencies. In addition to their EMS training,



each member of the department is trained and can be called to operate as a primary attack firefighter, vehicle extrication technician, or a hazardous material operator. The department's mission statement, "The County of Orange Department of Fire and EMS is committed to protecting the life and property of the citizens of Orange County and surrounding areas, to provide instruction and demonstrations in life and fire safety to the public, and to promote positive working relations among all county Fire and Rescue Departments", truly defines our day to day operations. In the current economic state of the country, volunteer

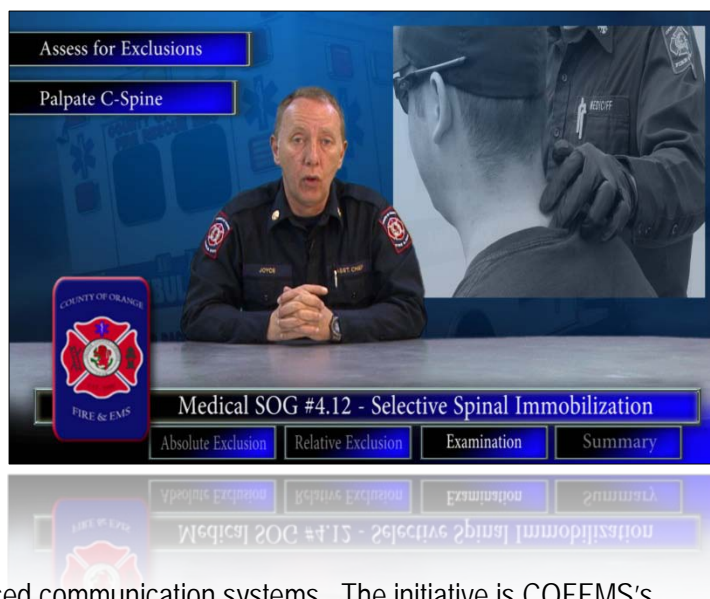
departments across the nation have seen a large drop off of their members, creating a missed or lack of response in the areas they serve. Orange County can account for this trend amongst its volunteer membership dropping to a low of 222 roster members with only a small percentage of them actually responding when called. Fortunately, COFEMS has been able to fill those voids and takes pride in the high standards by which it operates. However high the standards are kept, the department is still limited by its small size. COFEMS staffs four medic units and three response units, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It also staffs two daytime fire engine drivers during daylight hours to supplement volunteer fire agencies. With the department so spread out, it is difficult to maintain its high standard in proactive care, such as prevention, health and wellness, and general services to the community. Even with the highly dedicated staff presently at COFEMS, there are not enough hours in the day to get out and teach safety to children and volunteers, promote health and wellness to the elderly, or even get out into the community to be seen.

The Challenge

The inherent nature of rural emergency service departments nationwide can be argued to be reactive to an occurring incident. In the rural setting, adequate prevention, preparation, performance, and timely resources all start with considerable deficiencies due to lack of experienced man power, department cohesion, unified practice, and the distance of response. Orange County, like many rural counties in the state of Virginia, is facing the challenge of providing the best possible care over a vast geographical area with limited manpower and marginal financial resources. On a daily basis, the eleven men and women on duty are required to traverse over 355 square miles to support the 33,000 citizens of the County. With such limited resources, how does a municipal department answer the conundrum of taking the time to enhance its service capability. How does that department build its relationship with its volunteer organizations and create a harmonious cohesion in response? These are the questions that have lead COFEMS to the development of "Project M. I. T. I."

Project M. I. T. I.

To mitigate the above stated challenges, COFEMS has developed Project M. I. T. I., the department's multimedia interactive training initiative. Through the use of multimedia channels, social networking, and physical media distribution, the project is closing the gap of our geographical span and allowing our staff to train in station during their down time, therefore minimizing the threat of missing a call in their first due response area. Project M. I. T. I. in its simplest form is the production of educational resources broadcasted through today's advanced communication systems. The initiative is COFEMS's avenue to extend educational resource into the community, the department, the county volunteers, and neighboring

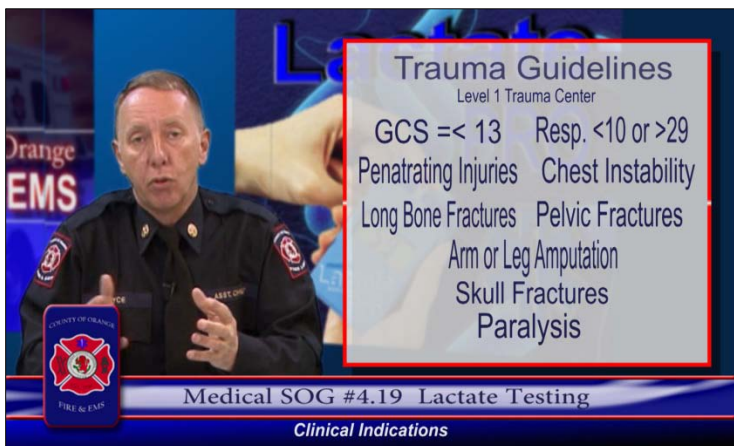


municipalities. Project M.I.T.I. is COFEMS answer for a small department to create the training and prevention practices of a large metropolitan department. COFEMS provides the same impact through Project M.I.T.I. and its multi-media products as larger departments which have more capital and manpower.

Project M.I.T.I. has defined two primary target audiences, at risk residents, both youth and elderly, and rescue personnel, both EMS and fire. With these targets in mind, this initiative has developed to separate campaigns to focus its efforts. These campaigns are defined as: Fire and EMS Training and Comprehensive Public Safety Campaign.

Fire and EMS Training

Public safety is an evolving field and incorporating Project M.I.T.I. into the training process will supply the educational information needed for COFEMS and any participating group to stay up to date on procedural changes and even get a glimpse at what is coming in the future. Project M.I.T.I. has allowed COFEMS to host interactive panel discussions where controversial questions are addressed and answered by some of the state's most influential medical minds. The same capabilities are available for fire service training. These broadcasts are recorded and archived on the department's Facebook and You Tube pages, so that anyone can download and review a particular topic. With this media available on-line, COFEMS personnel can now view the training information at their leisure. In using the marketing capacity of both Facebook and You Tube, COFEMS is able to then share this information with its partner institutions. It is the goal of Project M. I. T. I., upon completion of its development stage, to host live broadcasts of these panel discussions in parallel with an open blog site, thus allowing viewers to ask direct questions within the specified topic. In addition to the panel discussions, training videos are being produced to orientate staff, volunteers, and our partnering groups on new tactics, practices, and equipment. These training films are vital in keeping



COFEMS a leader in the field of EMS operations and to help unify our volunteer response on the fire side. Many of our partnering groups have already adapted this shared information into their organizations as standards of practice, thus creating uniformity across central Virginia.

Comprehensive Public Safety Campaign

Through the production of educational videos, public service broadcasts, and on-line educational support, COFEMS plans to increase the community's knowledge of what to do during an emergent situation and in turn reduce the number of injuries and deaths. This campaign encompasses information relative for all age groups, but primarily targets children and elderly residents. COFEMS will partner with local schools, doctor's offices, retirement communities, and social clubs, providing them educational materials that can be viewed and distributed to their students and members. This campaign has the challenge of producing media that meets the criteria of our public education system, as well as interesting content to captivate the younger generation. On the other hand, media is produced to incline the interest of our elderly citizens and summarize life changing practices for a demographic well set in their ways.



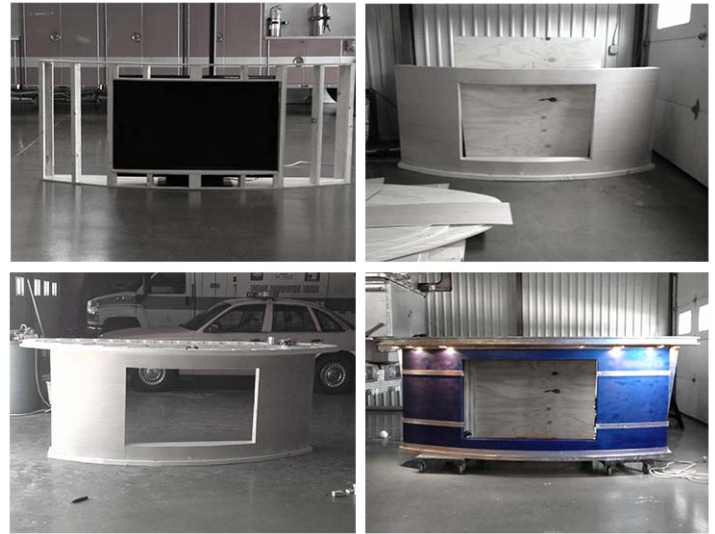
Overview

Project M. I. T. I. was conceptualized after COFEMS made good on the promise of creating a video discussing Rappahannock EMS Council's new guidelines in June of 2012. It was at this time, the department realized what a valuable tool it had stumbled upon. The project was headed up by Assistant Chief Tom Joyce. With Chief Joyce's years of public service in the emergency medical field as well as law enforcement, he has become the driving force in deciding the topics of discussion as well as recruiting some of the top providers in the field to participate. He has provided the

vision for the creation of every video and has filled the role as our on air talent. Firefighter/EMT Tim Bullock has taken on the role of producer/director utilizing his prior twenty years of experience in the commercial photography field. With his knowledge of still imaging, he undertook the task of learning the programming needed to create the final products. The project started with the use of a video camera the department received from a grant some time prior to the project's conception. Lake of the Woods



Association, a gated community in the eastern part of the county, was gracious enough to lend the department two additional cameras and microphones. Mr. Bullock provided his personal studio set equipment to complete the initial videos. In September of 2012, COFEMS invested \$2600.00 in a video production software that is the foundation of all the project's productions. During the same time frame the department spent \$350.00 in materials needed to build the set desk used in the discussion group videos. The desk itself was designed and built by Mr. Bullock incorporating a 55" flat panel television that is used for viewing training films. In April 2013, the department made an investment of \$5500.00 in three HD SLR cameras and tripods that allowed Project M. I. T. I. to start capturing images in 1080p high definition. As funding is made available, the initiative will continue to build its repertoire of equipment and capabilities.



As of May 2013, Project M. I. T. I. has created and released the following videos to the staff and community:

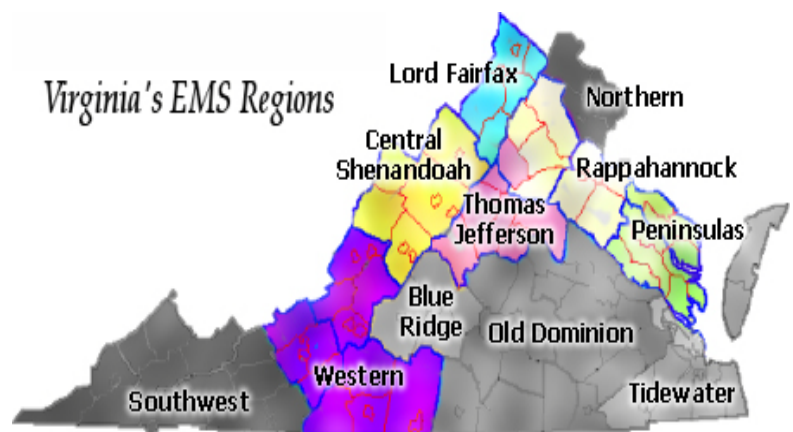
- REMS – Discussion of New Guidelines
- Lactate Testing in the EMS Field
- 2012 Virginia OEMS Guidelines
- Public Service Announcement

- Selective C-spine Training
- Lactate Meter Training
- Cardiac Arrest – A Family's Perspective
- Cracking the Code – Pre-hospital Cardiac Arrest

These videos have been released and added to the department's Facebook and You Tube pages. With Assistant Chief Joyce's networking and marketing diligence, numerous neighboring agencies now use these videos for their own training purposes. Project M. I. T. I.'s emersion into the Virginia EMS community is far beyond what was expected. The project's productions have now been adopted and shared throughout the following organizations:

- Virginia Department of Health Office of EMS
- Thomas Jefferson EMS Council
- Western EMS Council
- Lord Fairfax EMS Council
- Peninsulas EMS Council
- Central Shenandoah EMS Council
- Charlottesville – Albemarle Rescue Squad
- UVA Pre-Hospital Program
- HCA Hospital Group
- Bon Secour Hospital Group

- Virginia Association of Volunteer Rescue Squads
- Rappahannock EMS Council





Future Goals

Project M. I. T. I., in its infancy stage has far surpassed the department's expectations in reaching the EMS community. With the diligences of the two members driving the future of the project, it is anticipated that the initiative will reach its full development well before the projected three year timeframe. The project is not far off from achieving its goal of producing a live interactive discussion group broadcast each month of the year, as well as producing the feature film style educational videos for the county's civic leagues and school

system. The department anticipates continue success in sharing its video resources throughout the state and looks forward to obtaining nation recognition.

To take a look at the work described in this application, please go to the following sites:

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/countyoforangefireandems>

YouTube

<http://www.youtube.com/user/COFEMSVideos>
or by putting cofems videos in the search on top of the page.

