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REGIONAL EXERCISE TO IMPROVE STATES' PREPAREDNESS FOR DISASTER AND TERRORISM RESPONSE

The states of Kansas, Iowa, Missouri and Nebraska (FEMA Region VII) are participating in an exercise this month involving disasters and terrorist attacks in the Midwest including the introduction of a foreign animal disease in Kansas and Iowa as well as various emergency response situations in both states.

The exercise, called Vigilant Guard 09, is a National Guard exercise, which involves local, state and federal emergency response partners.

The portion of the exercise involving the simulated introduction of foreign animal disease (FAD) occurs in Iowa the week of June 8. Then on June 18, the State Emergency Operation Center (SEOC) in Topeka will activate to address FAD as the exercise scenario moves the disease into Kansas.

"This exercise will provide us a great opportunity to test our planned response to foreign animal disease and a variety of disasters, and determine if changes are needed before such events happen," said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, director of Kansas Division of Emergency Management and Kansas Adjutant General. "The threat of foreign animal disease and the possibility of multiple, simultaneous large-scale disasters in the Midwest, whether natural or manmade, are an unfortunate part of our world today. We want to take every opportunity to ensure we are prepared for all of these situations."

The week of June 15, the exercise scenario involves various disaster response situations in Iowa followed by one in Kansas the week of June 22. This portion of the exercise will be played out in Kansas at Crisis City, a training venue at the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina. Crisis City's training layout includes a rail disaster venue which includes rail cars, tracks and services donated by Union Pacific, BNSF, RJ Corman, Mid America Cars Inc., OxyChem, Simplot, Energy Transportation Incorporated and Transcaer.

"The disaster scenario in Salina will be our first multi-agency training event at Crisis City since we began construction there, and will bring together local and state responders and National Guardsmen from Kansas, Iowa and Kentucky," Bunting said.

The Vigilant Guard 09 exercise is a 7 day (June 18-24), multi-state, multi-site exercise, which includes a series of training exercises designed to enhance operational relationships within Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region VII and identify gaps which may exist between civilian and military response organizations, National Guard leadership, and the Joint Staffs of participating states. Region VII VG09 is a component of Ardent Sentry 2009 (AS09), a National Level Exercise Program Tier III exercise.