



US-Mexico Cross Border Contingency Plan Updated: Presidio, Texas – Ojinaga, Chihuahua

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On Tuesday, September 10, 2013 the cities of Presidio, Texas and Ojinaga, Chihuahua came together to celebrate the update of the Cross Border Contingency plan. The two sister cities originally signed the binational emergency response plan in 2004 as part of the US-Mexico Border 2012 Program Goal 5: Enhance Joint Readiness for Environmental Response. The update to the plan incorporates an all-hazards binational response, unlike the 2004 plan which primarily focused on emergency response and preparedness associated with hazardous materials only.

The update of the bi-national plan came about from funding provided by EPA Region 6 Border Program thru a Border Environmental Cooperation Commission (BECC) \$50,000 grant. The Rio Grande Council of Governments (RGCOG), recipient of the funding, worked with local, state and federal stakeholders in both the U.S. and Mexico in the Presidio-Ojinaga region to ensure that this agreement serves as the appropriate guide for responders when an incident occurs that requires a bi-national response.

In addition to updating the plan, the grant helped to support conducting a risk analysis for Presidio, Texas and training for responders from Presidio and Ojinaga. The RGCOG working with the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service and Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium, was able to help provide the HazMat Awareness (H100 – 9h), HazMat First Responder Awareness/Operation

(H204) and (H204 – 24 hr course) and Rail Car Incident Response (AWR 147 – 8hr course). Approximately 30-35 responders from Ojinaga and Presidio County were able to participate in each of these training courses. These courses increased responder's knowledge on understanding hazardous materials and associated risks; types of personnel protective equipment when responding to hazardous material incidences; how to perform operations concerning control, containment and confinement; decontamination; brief overview of the Incident Command System (ICS) and terminology.

With the closing of this project, the Border 2020 Texas-Chihuahua Rural Task Force will continue to work with stakeholders in this region to address bi-national response and updates to the plan when appropriate.



Mayor John Ferguson of Presidio (*left-front*) shakes hand with Mayor Juan Carlos Valdivia (*right-front*) of Ojinaga after signing the updated plan. *Photo courtesy of Brad Newton, City of Presidio, Texas.*