



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **International Association of Fire Chiefs**

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#### **MUTUAL AID DEMONSTRATION AT FIRE-RESCUE INTERNATIONAL A SUCCESS**

*Initial review shows MABAS drill provides local and regional exercise, international education*

**Fairfax, Va., September 13, 2010...** On August 26, 2010 during the general session at Fire Rescue International (FRI) [[www.iafc.org/fri](http://www.iafc.org/fri)] in Chicago, the audience was witness to the largest multi-state deployment of resources to validate a state's mutual aid system ever attempted. The exercise was executed by MABAS-Illinois' Mutual Aid Box Alarm System [<http://www.mabas.org/Pages/WelcomeToMABAS.aspx>], and included the states of Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Indiana, and monitored live via satellite by nearly 3,000 fire and emergency service leaders from the U.S., Canada and beyond.

The MABAS Deployment and Validation Exercise began at 8:30 a.m., when the call was made for 33 task forces to report to one of three (3) reception sites, located on the north, west, and south sides of the city of Chicago. Over the next 90 minutes, a total of 297 engines, trucks, heavy rescues, ambulances, and chief officers involving 924 personnel, made their way toward the city as part of a multiple tornado scenario to assist the city and surrounding communities. Using helicopters and fixed cameras, footage was transmitted via satellites to the screens in the McCormick Center and the audience was kept informed as to the progress of units arriving at the reception sites.

Upon arrival at the reception sites, each member of the task force was checked in using the Tier II credentialing system for MABAS. This process uses a bar code assigned to each individual and is entered into a hand held scanner and transmitted to a secure off-site verification system for validation and accountability. The communications center in Northbrook, IL, known as the RED (Regional Emergency Dispatch) Center, served as the primary contact for all deployment communications and resource typing and credentialing of units and personnel. They also maintained contact with the communication centers from the participating MABAS Divisions and the State of Illinois Emergency Operations Center in Springfield.

During the validation drill, members of the IAFC's Emergency Management Committee (EMC) [[www.iafc.org/mutualaid](http://www.iafc.org/mutualaid)] and technical advisors from the Intrastate Mutual Aid System (IMAS) served as controllers and evaluators of the entire process at the three reception sites and the communications center. Support for the exercise was provided by the US Department of Homeland Security, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, the Illinois Terrorism Task Force, and the National Integration Center.

Following the exercise, the command officers and evaluators met to each review the activities of the drill and identify any major issues that had surfaced. While the complete after action report is forthcoming, the raw performance data and feedback show the participants met and exceeded the validation standards established for measuring the key components used to evaluate the readiness of a state's fire service resources. The outstanding performance confirms that Illinois and the surrounding area is served by a fire service system that has achieved a level of service, capacity, and capability enjoyed by only a very few states.

"The participants from MABAS and their neighboring states should be commended for their years of preparation and accomplishments which were clearly identifiable during the exercise," said Chief Jack Parow, IAFC president. "The IAFC greatly appreciated the efforts of MABAS to share this experience with the national and international fire service community at FRI. It added an extra layer to an already complex exercise, but was eager to contribute to the learning opportunity."

Using the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) guidelines, the IAFC Emergency Management Committee is developing a formal After Action Report (AAR) to work with the four states involved to identify strengths and weaknesses and make suggestions for any follow-up actions that may be recommended.

If you have questions or need additional information, contact Bill Bullock, program manager for the National Mutual Aid project at 703-537-4849 or [bullock@iafc.org](mailto:bullock@iafc.org) and Todd Clist is the program manager for the Intrastate Mutual Aid System (IMAS) project at 703-273-9672 or [tclist@iafc.org](mailto:tclist@iafc.org). Both are part of the IAFC's National Programs Department. Questions concerning MABAS can be directed to Jay Reardon, CEO of MABAS at 847-403-0500 or [reardon@mabas-il.org](mailto:reardon@mabas-il.org) .

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### **About the International Association of Fire Chiefs**

The IAFC ([www.iafc.org](http://www.iafc.org)) represents the leadership of firefighters and emergency responders worldwide. IAFC members are the world's leading experts in firefighting, emergency medical services, terrorism response, hazardous materials spills, natural disasters, search and rescue, and public safety legislation. Since 1873, the IAFC has provided a forum for its members to exchange ideas, develop professionally and uncover the latest products and services available to first responders.

### **MABAS-Illinois' Mutual Aid Box Alarm System**

MABAS, in partnership with the Illinois Emergency Management Association, have established a statewide mutual aid system for fire, EMS, hazardous materials, underwater rescue/recovery, technical rescue, fire investigations, and a state-sponsored urban search and rescue team. The system began in the late 1960's and has now expanded to Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Iowa, and Missouri.

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