

**Agency being nominated** City of Bellevue Fire Department

Provide the program name and a brief description in this box.

**Name:** Multi-language Emergency Preparedness Videos

**Description:** The Multi-language Emergency Preparedness Videos project was developed in response to lessons learned from a major windstorm that severely impacted the community in December 2006. Following the storm, residents were without power for up to eleven days. Although no Bellevue residents lost their lives during this storm event, a number of individuals within the region died due to carbon monoxide poisoning while cooking or trying to keep warm using fuel-fired cooking and heating devices and generators indoors. Storm-related deaths disproportionately affected limited-English speaking individuals and demonstrated the need for additional educational efforts within these communities. Videos featuring native speakers of the most common languages spoken in Bellevue were developed to address this need and were posted to the City website and made available at no charge on DVDs.

Date the nominated project/activity was originally implemented March 2008  
Month/Year  
*Minimum one-year operational period required for submission*

Nominator's name and title Steven P. Thomas, Battalion Chief

Agency or organization City of Bellevue Fire Department

IAFC Division Western

Address 450 110<sup>th</sup> Ave NE

City Bellevue State WA Zip 98004 Country USA

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**The fire chief or chief executive officer must sign this nomination form.**

Name of fire chief/EFO Michael Eisner, Interim Fire Chief

Chief/EFO's signature  Date 5-26-09

Phone 425-452-6896 Email meisner@bellevuewa.gov  
*(if different from nominator)*

1. Please describe the nature of the project/activity being nominated, using the space provided. Be specific.

A severe storm in December of 2006 left residents without power for up to eleven days. Although no Bellevue residents lost their lives during this storm event, a number of individuals within the region died due to carbon monoxide poisoning while cooking or trying to keep warm using fuel-fired cooking and heating devices and generators indoors. These storm-related deaths disproportionately affected limited-English speaking individuals and pointed out the need for additional educational efforts within our limited-English speaking communities.

Instead of simply having existing materials translated and printed in various languages, we looked at how we could deliver the message in a way that was efficient, well-received by the intended audiences, and cost-effective. The idea of developing emergency preparedness videos in various languages spoken in the community was proposed to and validated by our Neighborhoods Outreach group and the City's Diversity Coordinator. Since we did not have the budget, staff, nor the language skills to complete the project on our own, we sought out other community partners who shared our interest in educating the diverse groups within our community. A proposal was also developed by the Bellevue Fire Department Emergency Preparedness Division which resulted in a grant through the Urban Areas Security Initiative to partially fund the project.

Working with our Cultural Diversity Coordinator and Community Outreach employees, we utilized demographic information and their experience in the community to determine which language groups to target and how best to deliver the message. After interviewing, selecting, and contracting with qualified presenters, a script was developed and a presentation filmed in English. The English script was professionally translated into six other languages, reviewed by the appropriate presenter, edited as needed, and then formatted for use on a teleprompter. After rehearsing the script, each presenter was filmed presenting the information in their native language. Videos were filmed in Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin, English, and an open-captioned version was developed for the Deaf and hearing impaired community. Each presentation was combined with other video footage to effectively illustrate each preparedness point. Music was added to the introduction and credits section of the final product and a contractor was then selected to duplicate a total of 26,000 DVDs for distribution.

To maximize accessibility, the videos were posted to the City's website and made available free of charge on DVDs for citizens to pickup from 15 different City facilities including all fire stations and community centers. News releases were sent out and posted on the City's website and articles were featured in various publications to promote the videos and stimulate interest within the community. Staff from the Emergency Preparedness Division also met with various community groups to promote the videos and distribute DVDs. A link to view each video is available in the Emergency Preparedness section of the City's website:  
[http://www.bellevuewa.gov/preparedness\\_educational\\_materials.htm](http://www.bellevuewa.gov/preparedness_educational_materials.htm)

The videos have been well-received and are an important tool in educating and motivating individuals and families to prepare for and effectively respond to disaster situations.

2. Why is this project/activity innovative and/or creative? Be specific.

Although we already had printed emergency preparedness information available in various languages, the uniqueness of this project is the use of native speakers of each language to make the presentations. By providing this critical information through individuals from within the community, the hope was that the message would be easily understood and well-received by the intended audience. A more common way of preparing videos in multiple languages would have been to use subtitles. While this would have been easier for us, it would not have provided the same impact as hearing the information spoken in an individual's own language.

To work within and maximize the limited budget, the project required the cooperation and collaboration of several City departments, the local community college, volunteers, and other community members. Gaining support and assistance from the college enabled us to utilize their television studio services without direct costs to the project which allowed the grant funds to be used for translation services, native language presenters, and duplication of 26,000 DVDs for distribution to the public.

3. Describe community or citizen participation in the planning or initiation of the project/activity. Be specific.

Community and citizen participation in this project was essential. The effectiveness of the message hinged on the use of credible presenters from each community we intended to reach. One City employee presented both the Cantonese and Mandarin versions of the video on her own time. A City volunteer delivered the Korean presentation. The Fire Chief presented the Spanish version of the video. The Russian and Vietnamese versions of the video were also presented by individuals from the local community. Two other community members who work with the Deaf and hearing impaired community provided information on developing appropriate captioning of the video and assisted with distribution of DVDs within that community. Staff from Bellevue Community College participated with our Information Technology Department in filming, editing and posting the videos to the City website. Volunteers at City Hall and Community Centers will continue to participate in the distribution of DVDs along with City staff. Community members organized meetings which enabled Emergency Preparedness Division staff to provide written information as well as DVDs to groups of our limited-English speaking population.

4. Describe any improvements in the delivery of services and cost savings that resulted from this project or activity.

The Fire Department's Emergency Preparedness Division has a small staff with one public educator who has other assigned duties. As such, it is always a challenge to meet the ongoing requests for emergency preparedness education. We have also been limited to printed materials to serve our limited-English speaking populations. Making these emergency preparedness videos available in multiple languages on both the City's website and on DVD have enhanced the department's capability to spread essential emergency preparedness education to a much wider audience. The web presence enables on demand viewing – 24 hours per day and the 26,000 DVDs, which are being distributed throughout the community, are in many cases being passed on from one family to another. In just the first three months that DVDs were available, more than 3,000 DVDs were distributed and the online videos were viewed by more than 700 people.

Various community groups, especially in non or limited-English speaking communities, have requested and received presentations from our emergency preparedness staff as a direct result of this project. This also provided increased opportunities to distribute multi-language printed materials which were updated in conjunction with this project. New contacts and relationships have been developed within these communities as a result of our effort to reach out to these groups and demonstrate to them our interest in actively working to promote their safety and preparedness. This has been especially true in the Spanish speaking community and with new contacts in the Deaf and hearing impaired community.

All eight versions of the video are available for viewing on the Emergency Preparedness section of the City's website ([http://www.bellevuewa.gov/preparedness\\_educational\\_materials.htm](http://www.bellevuewa.gov/preparedness_educational_materials.htm)) and will remain there indefinitely.

This project was completed with a very limited budget by utilizing approximately \$35,000 in UASI grant funds and by partnering with other City departments and the local community college to develop the videos. On-going cost savings are achieved by the constant availability of the videos on the internet to deliver a message that would otherwise require presentations by individuals fluent in the various languages featured in the videos.

# SUMMARY SHEET

## Contact person

Name Steven P. Thomas Title Battalion Chief

Organization City of Bellevue Fire Department

Address 450 110<sup>th</sup> Ave NE

City Bellevue State WA Zip 98004 Country USA

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## Other contacts for media purposes (if not nominator/contact)

Name Eric Keenan, Lt./PIO

Phone 425-452-6995 Email ekeen@bellevuewa.gov

### Name of project/activity:

Multi-language Emergency Preparedness Videos

### Description of project/activity:

The Multi-language Emergency Preparedness Videos project was developed in response to lessons learned from a major windstorm that severely impacted the community in December 2006. Following the storm, residents were without power for up to eleven days. Although no Bellevue residents lost their lives during this storm event, a number of individuals within the region died due to carbon monoxide poisoning while cooking or trying to keep warm using fuel-fired cooking and heating devices and generators indoors. Storm-related deaths disproportionately affected limited-English speaking individuals and demonstrated the need for additional educational efforts within these communities. In response to this identified need, emergency preparedness videos featuring native speakers of the most common languages spoken in Bellevue were developed and posted to the City website and made available at no charge on DVDs.

### Describe planning and/or initiation of the project or activity:

After receiving support for the idea of developing multi-language emergency preparedness videos using native speakers, a project budget and schedule were developed and a UASI grant was applied for and successfully received to fund the project. Working with other City staff, we identified the most common languages spoken within the community and selected qualified presenters for each language. A script was developed and a presentation filmed in English. The English script was professionally translated into six other languages and then formatted for use on a teleprompter. After rehearsing the script, each presenter was filmed at the local community college presenting the information in their native language. The presentations were combined with other video footage to effectively illustrate each preparedness point. Each video was posted to the City's website and a contractor was selected to duplicate a total of 26,000 DVDs. DVDs were provided to 15 City facilities for distribution and the videos were promoted via the City's website and several local publications.

### Briefly summarize the cost effectiveness or improvement of service delivery:

This project was completed utilizing approximately \$35,000 in UASI grant funds and by partnering with other City departments and the local community college to develop quality videos in a cost effective manner. On-going cost savings are achieved by the constant availability of the videos on the internet to deliver a message that would otherwise require presentations by individuals fluent in the various languages featured in the videos.

The Fire Department's Emergency Preparedness Division has a small staff with one public educator who has other assigned duties. Making these emergency preparedness videos available in multiple languages on both the City's website and on DVD have enhanced the department's capability to spread essential emergency preparedness education to a much wider audience. The web presence also enables on-demand viewing - 24 hours per day.