

CORONER ASSIST TEAM

As the result of the last election the State of Colorado now has a number of new coroners. With that we would like to familiarize everyone with the Coroner Assist Team as well as providing a review for our more seasoned coroners. It is quite possible that in the future some of you may find yourself confronted with some type of disaster. To some it may appear small while others may deem it too large to handle but no matter what, it will be your responsibility. You may find yourself asking, how do I know the difference between a large disaster or a small one. It can best be defined as “*Any situation which overwhelms the available resources.*” Obviously, this will vary from county to county. If confronted with a disaster many of you will rely on your neighbors in adjoining counties but if not the The Coroner Assist Team is here to help you. The Coroner Assist Team is comprised of volunteers from the membership of the Colorado Coroners Association and the following are guidelines of the Team.

The Coroner Assist Team will only respond at the request of the coroner having jurisdiction over the disaster situation.

The Assist team will work as a mutual aid agency, under the direction of the coroner who has requested assistance from the team members. Team members will support the needs and statutory requirements of the requesting coroner and never take control of the incident.

The Team will respond to assist any Colorado Coroner at the level of assistance needed. The Team will assist the requesting coroner by providing certified death investigators and resources for duties relating to the Coroner’s Office only.

The Colorado Coroners Association will have regional contacts to expedite the response time to a disaster situation. The Colorado Coroners Association will maintain a list of other statewide organizations and forensic specialists that can be available in a disaster situation.

For assistance or more information please feel free to contact:

Co-chair – Eastern Slope Region
Darrel Brenner
Washington County Coroner's Office
Eastern Slope Region
970-554-0404
darrelbrenner@mac.com

Co-chair - Western Slope Region
Steve Stogsdill, D-ABMDI
Western Slope Region
Delta County Coroner's Office
970-201-9015
sjstogsdill@bresnan.net

The Coroner Assist Team will soon be sending out a questionnaire asking for information regarding what resources each county has available in the event of a disaster. This could prove very helpful for those needing help in the future. We would appreciate your prompt response.

MASS FATALITY TRAILER

Don Heer and Mike Dahl of the Morgan County Coroner's Office would like to introduce to you their new Mass Fatality Trailer. The trailer was purchased with a \$50,000 Homeland Security grant from the Northeast All Hazards Region. The Morgan County Office of Emergency Management and Kevin Kuretich of the Colorado Division of Emergency Management were instrumental in assisting the coroner's office with the grant. The grant was approved and the trailer became reality in the fall of 2009.

Mounted on the outside of the trailer are area lights; inside are more lights and a vast array of equipment for handling remains and protecting and decontaminating workers in a mass fatality situation. The trailer can use 12-volt or 110-volt hookups or run off a self-contained generator. The contents in the 16' x 7' dual axle trailer is compartmentalized into disaster site equipment, support equipment, personal protection equipment and an administrative section. All of it is labeled and color-coded. The equipment could handle fatalities as large as 100 adults, 50 children and 25 infants. Don Heer, Morgan County Coroner, stated that the trailer is the first of its kind in the state built from the ground up for such situations. The setup is based on Disaster Mortuary Response Team (DMORT) needs; such teams are federalized and sent to mass disasters.

The trailer and its contents are available for statewide use. The following people can activate the use of the trailer:

1. The coroner of the county needing the use of the trailer
2. The local office of emergency management of that county
3. The Colorado Division of Emergency Management

Any of the above can call directly to:

1. 970-842-4955 - Morgan County Coroner's Office
2. 970-554-0404 – Co-chair Coroner Assist Team (Eastern Slope)
3. 970-201-9015 – Co-chair Coroner Assist Team (Western Slope)

Once activated, the trailer will be enroute to the site within 2 hours of notification. Someone from the Morgan County Coroner's Office will remain with the trailer throughout the incident. Intragovernmental Agreement forms will also be available to sign. In order to qualify for possible local, state, or federal funding, it is very important for the local OEM to be notified of the incident as it will be the responsibility of the county requesting the trailer to replace all items used. Following one operational period the requesting county will also pay for the person manning the trailer, which most likely will be room and board. Don and Mike stated, "It is ready when needed."

