



FEMA

State: Alabama

Project Name: Tornado Response

Project Type: Strategic Technology Reserve

Total PSIC Award: \$13,585,399



EXERCISE PREPARES ALABAMA FIRST RESPONDERS FOR TORNADO DEPLOYMENT

This spring, several strong tornados moved through cities in Alabama, which prompted the State to deploy PSIC-funded Strategic Technology Reserve (STR) equipment to aid in response efforts. Specifically, the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) designated a communications equipment trailer for use by Alabama Task Force 1, an urban search and rescue (US&R) team.

This team, comprised of search and rescue specialists, structural and mechanical engineers, and other command and support personnel, traveled to the devastated areas of Hackleburg, Tuscaloosa, and Birmingham to conduct search and rescue efforts. The communications trailer supplied satellite communications capabilities, mobile repeaters, and interoperability gateways to interface with public safety agencies across the State. It contained a cache of radios and laptops to be used for response efforts. In addition, the State purchased three 100-foot portable towers to attach to the trailers to extend communications.

One week prior to the storms, Alabama conducted a week-long planned exercise with the eight Alabama Regional Law Enforcement Teams to train them on the STR equipment. During the exercise, the State tested the STR equipment functions and the Communications Unit Leader functions. Upon completion of the exercise, Alabama documented best practices and updated the STR's standard operating procedures. Because some members of the US&R team had trained on the STR equipment, they more effectively responded to the tornado devastation.

Based on lessons learned from the exercise and tornado response, AEMA will outfit three STR trailers before pre-positioning them in their designated locations across the State. This will ensure that the trailers are consistently set up, including equipment located in the same positions, and software is tested before deployed.



PSIC-funded to enable response.

To read more PSIC-identified best practices and check out more PSIC success stories, please see <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/psic/news.html>.