Local Agencies Work Together in Recovery of Body & Van From Chowan River.

In middle September, law enforcement agencies recovered a body and a van from the Chowan River in Gates County. The recovery effort was a perfect example of Intrastate Mutual Aid. Intrastate Mutual Aid or county to county mutual aid is a voluntarily agreement among counties and municipalities to provide assistance to other counties and municipalities during times of need. In the Chowan River recovery incident, Hertford County Emergency Management’s boat and personnel was used. Hertford County’s boat was equipped with Craven County’s sonar equipment, operated by Craven County Emergency Management Director Stanley Kite. Kite used the sonar equipment to find the location of the van, 75-feet from N.C. Wildlife Ramp 17, submerged 17-feet underwater. Perquimans County’s Search and Rescue Dive team dispatched two divers to attempt recovery but the attempt was stopped due to darkness. Suffolk, VA Police Department’s Underwater Search and Recovery unit was called in and divers used chains and belts to pull the van out. North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation and Gate’s County Sheriff’s Office investigators took pictures of the van’s interior and inventoried the van’s contents. Bertie County and Hertford County’s Sheriff’s Office also assisted in the investigation. Additional agencies involved were: Ahoskie (N.C.) police, Suffolk (Va.) police, Eure Volunteer Fire Department (N.C.). For more information, contact Charles Jones, Hertford County EM Coordinator at 252-358-7861.

Local EM responds to August 4 & 5, 2007 Spruce Pine Arson Fires.

Over a span of two days in Spruce Pine, NC, an individual set fires that forced 27 fire departments from five counties (Mitchell, Avery, Yancey, McDowell and Madison) to respond. The fires affected 25 businesses, four residences and left the small town shut down. The fires occurred while the 50th Annual Mitchell County Gem & Mineral Festival was in progress. The Annual Mitchell County Gem & Mineral Festival is Mitchell County’s largest revenue producing event. The lower Locust Street portion remained closed five days after the fires were put out causing businesses to lose essential shopping traffic. Lodging establishments were at full capacity prior to August 4th and because of the fires, only 25% of the area restaurants were operational. The Spruce Pine Chamber of Commerce is calculating the fire’s impact on the local economy. Due to the complexity of the fires and multiple crime scene investigation locations, the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigations requested support from the United States Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) law enforcement agency. The same Federal ATF team, involved with the Charleston, S.C. fires, assisted with the Spruce Pine investigation. Within five days, a suspect was arrested and charged with arson. North Carolina Emergency Management assisted Mitchell County and the town of Spruce Pine by requesting the Small Business Administration for economic impact declarations evaluations. Spruce Pine’s town budget was impacted with the costs of providing emergency protective measures for the response and recovery. A Type I State Disaster was declared on September 25, 2007 under Governor Easley’s Executive Order Number 130.

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For more information, contact Tiawana Ramsey at (828) 649-9793 or Tramsey@ncem.org.

**North Carolina Emergency Management Association Fall Conference & NCEM Training.**

The 2007 NC Emergency Management Association Fall Conference will be held at the Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center in Atlantic Beach, NC from October 28 – 31, 2007. This year’s conference includes presentations on The Federal Coordinating Officer’s role during a Federal response, Homeland Security’s Regionalization plan, a panel discussion on emergency management’s role with State Emergency Response Commission agencies and many others. At the end of the conference through the end of the week, NCEM’s Training and Exercise section will be holding training classes on NC FIRST Training: Winter Weather, Emergency Operations Center & Management, and Multi-Hazards Emergency Planning for Schools: Train-the-Trainer. Seats still remain available for the Multi-Hazards Emergency Planning for Schools: Train-the-Trainer class.

For more information or to register for the conference: [www.ncema.org](http://www.ncema.org). (Click on Conference, then Fall Conference links.)

For more information or to register for the Training and Exercise classes: [http://www.ncem.org/TRAINING/2007CAL.htm](http://www.ncem.org/TRAINING/2007CAL.htm)

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