West, Texas

- 2,700 Residents
- 70 miles south of Dallas
- 20 miles north of Waco
- Predominantly a Czech farming community
West, Texas Aerial Map

A house in flames after the explosion.

Town of West

Fertilizer Facility

Half mile radius from facility
West, Texas Explosion Proximity Map

- Fertilizer Plant
- Nursing Home
- Hospital
- Middle School
- Triage
- High School

Distances:
- 500ft
- 1500ft
Results of Blast @ Adair Grain, Inc.

• 15 people died (12 responders)
• 200+ injured
• $100 million in damages
• 50+ homes were destroyed
• 50 unit apartment building gutted
• West Intermediate School destroyed
• West High School severely damaged
Chemical Safety Board - Prelim. Findings

• Explosion resulted from a fire that led to the detonation of 30 tons of Ammonium Nitrate (AN).

• The building lacked a sprinkler system or other systems to automatically detect or suppress fire. Sprinklers are only mandated for 2,500 tons of AN or more.

• Texas has not adopted a statewide fire code, and state law actually prohibits most smaller rural counties from adopting a fire code.
Chemical Safety Board - Prelim. Findings

• No Federal, State, or local standards restrict the siting of (AN) storage facilities in the vicinity of homes, schools, businesses, and health care facilities.

• West volunteer firefighters were not made aware of the explosion hazard of AN at the fertilizer facility.

• The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA): exemption from hazardous chemicals reporting for “fertilizer held for sale by a retailer to the ultimate consumer.”
Current LEPC Activities

• An active SERC and LEPC that meets quarterly

• An LEPC Emergency Response Plan – Reviewed and amended annually

• Biennial Full Scale Exercise to test the Response Plan

• Hazards Analysis of facilities with EHSs on two year basis
Current LEPC Activities

- Train responders for hazardous materials response
- “How to Comply” training for facilities
- E-Plan training for electronic Tier II submission (facilities)
- E-Plan/CAMEO training for responders
Gaps: What Can We Do Better?

• **Plan for ourselves.** Patchwork of regulations at state and federal level but little oversight.

• Site Preplanning – Different by department, generally been reduced due to lack of funding.

• Only complete Hazards Analysis for facilities with EHSs.
Gaps: What Can We Do Better?

• Agricultural Use is typically exempt – gap in reporting.

• Responder proficiency with tools such as E-Plan and CAMEO.

• Review E-Plan for errors in facility reporting. We lack verification of information without site visits by LEPC staff or local FD.
Moving Forward

- Staff will meet with each County/Local FD to review Hazards Analysis. FD can make a determination as to what facilities require additional follow-up for preplanning.

- LEPC Staff will review E-Plan and paper Tier II’s, with local responders, for facilities with chemicals that pose a community risk but do not have a designated EHS (such as AN).
Moving Forward

• Provide Hazards Analysis information from throughout the region to the three regional HazMat Teams. Interlocal agreements allow for response in each of our 7 counties.

• Offer more responder refresher courses on topics such as EPCRA, and responder hazardous materials resources such as E-Plan and CAMEO.
NPR Radio Interview – 3 Months Later

Mayor Tommy Muska with Gov. Rick Perry
www.facebook.com/WestExplosion