

King County Office of Emergency Management Podcasts ***Disasters: Are you ready?***

Being proactive

Are you proactive or reactive? Are you driving the program or is the program driving you?

Which is better? To be proactive or reactive? Well, duh! No one wants to be seen as being reactive, and will definitely advocate for a proactive approach to life in general and how they do business.

I can tell you that ever since the implementation of Homeland Security grants it seems that I keep “feeling” like I’m no longer in charge, but reactive to each grant cycle as it comes along and chasing the dollars that come with them.

In fact, it is hard today to be totally proactive in our approach. If we ignore events around us then we will also miss what I call “windows of opportunity” and those “teachable moments.”

Just recently I had a great experience with a proactive company. Beacon Capital has acquired a significant inventory of commercial property here in the Central Puget Sound, specifically here in King County. Significant inventory translates to about ten million square feet of space that includes some of the premier buildings in the region.

Previously and to my surprise I got a call from Joe Donovan, who is with Beacon Capital and he was going to be visiting the region and wanted to get together with me and other emergency managers in the area. He and two of his associates spent several days on the ground in the King County meeting with and interviewing emergency managers and other first responders.

What I noticed first off was that they had done their homework. They understood the seismic risks and other hazards in the state and had done due diligence for their company. Their specific mission on this visit was to meet with and establish working relationships with key

people in the field of disaster preparedness and response. Having worked in other major metropolitan areas they were familiar with issues like the evacuation of buildings, credentialing of key private sector employees and specific threats to high rise structures.

In sum, it was refreshing to interact with a company that is being proactive about emergencies and disasters that could impact them, their properties and the people who they serve. I wish I could have more meetings like these with companies here in the region.

Sure, even Beacon Capital will at times be reactive to new threats as they are revealed through events. But, how much better prepared will they be for the unforeseen by their overall proactive approach? I can answer that—Way, way more prepared.

How about you, and your business or government? Let's resolve to change reactive behaviors, lets pledge to be proactive this week, and then the next, and not just reactive to the events around us.