

2008 National Awards in Excellence

Plans/Materials

Emergency Preparedness for Industry and Commerce Council (EPICC)

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In 1993 a group of visionary business leaders recognized that British Columbia, Canada was ill-prepared to cope with catastrophic events such as earthquakes. They banded together under the name of: EPICC - Emergency Preparedness for Industry and Commerce Council, www.epicc.org, to promote preparedness within the business community and to government. The model was based on the Business and Industry Council for Emergency Planning and Preparedness (BICEPP) organization in Los Angeles. Today we find that the need for our organization is as great as ever. Business survival is critical to the economic and social well-being of our communities.

EPICC is a nonprofit government-endorsed society, supported by and for the benefit of business and institutions throughout British Columbia, Canada to influence and help businesses prepare for emergencies and disasters and, in particular, earthquakes. The Premier of British Columbia is the honorary Chair of EPICC and the volunteer Board is comprised of business leaders, utility companies, and local and provincial government representatives. Membership is open to all sizes of business, levels of government and other organizations

A Creative Approach to assisting businesses prepare for disasters

To perform beneficial services to our members and link emergency management to businesses, EPICC has adopted the following approach elements:

Leadership: Managing the organization

Education: Preparedness and mitigation

Projects: Inspiring positive action

Communications: Creating Awareness

EPICC's strength is in its grass roots involvement with business and government in British Columbia and its many and varied partnerships with industry and as well as with like-minded organizations. EPICC enjoys a close working relationship with its counterparts in Washington State and California, and in particular with the Cascadia Region Earthquake Workgroup (CREW) and with the Disaster Recovery Institute.

Current and Past Projects

To further its mission and enhance earthquake preparedness and business survival, EPICC develops and conducts an annual planning forum focusing on Business Continuity and Emergency Preparedness. 2008 marked the 13th Annual EPICC Forum, held February 25-27. This year's Forum was very successful, welcoming 195 registered delegates and speakers from the United States, the United Kingdom, and across Canada. Not only has the EPICC Forum's success contributed to an increased awareness of the importance of business continuity; but the strong presence of government officials at the Forum has helped to influence government practice as well.

Recently EPICC has started a very successful Speakers Bureau, sending out members to speak to various business organizations and local governments. There was increased interest in 2007, somewhat fueled by the threat of a Fraser River Freshet Flood. Some of the presentations in 2007 included the Vancouver Board of Trade, Vancouver AM (a tourism-based business society), and "Breakfast with Mayor" in Pitt Meadows.

During the 2007 Freshet Flood, EPICC produced, in conjunction with the support from the British Columbia Provincial Emergency Program (PEP), a *Flood Recovery Guide for Businesses*. This guide has been made available on the PEP website free of charge. Additionally, EPICC has produced *Earthquake Planning for Business* (May 2003), a very popular emergency preparedness guide. It has been provided on a cost-recovery basis for \$20.

While EPICC itself was based on BICEPP, we believe that the concept of EPICC could be introduced at the community, state or provincial level. All it takes is an enthusiastic volunteer board, committed to lead businesses in preparing to survive a disaster and to work towards a mutually supportive business community, educated, trained and committed to effective emergency management and prepared to survive a disaster!