



E. "BEN" ZAHN III
MAYOR

CITY OF KENNER

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 8, 2018

HOMELAND SECURITY TRAINING HELD IN KENNER

Kenner, LA. – Kenner’s Office of Emergency Management hosted a three-day regional federal training conference this week at the Emergency Operations Center that culminated with national drone experts providing federal stakeholders and Kenner key staff members with Unmanned Aircraft Systems (“UAS”) training.

Mayor Ben Zahn welcomed the new training partnership with federal agencies. “As Kenner moves forward in our vision, this three-day training was the first-of-its-kind hosted by the City of Kenner with homeland security and transportation partners. We work and train together regularly, including our teams in emergency management, law enforcement, fire, public works, and others.”

Mayor Zahn said there are many opportunities available for Kenner: “It’s important that we utilize this technology responsibly to make government more efficient for the community.”

Working with two national experts - Dr. Richard Ham, Associate Director in the Department of Industrial Engineering at the University of Arkansas, and Mr. R. George Rey of COTS Technology, LLC - attendees from the United States Coast Guard, United States Department of Homeland Security, Transportation Security Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Kenner Fire Department, Kenner Police Department and others utilized Kenner’s Emergency Operations Center to learn the newest information on drones along with a host of other topics.

On Wednesday, attendees participated in a drone demonstration, which operated under educational authority as Kenner is within the five-mile restricted air space around the International Airport. Federal protocol requires notification to the Federal Aviation Administration to gain specific clearance, which was completed before the training flight.

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"This cooperative effort allowed this training opportunity to be a success for Kenner, its businesses and residents as well as our federal safety and transportation partners," Mayor Zahn said. "Our city administration works continuously to create these types of partnerships that will continue to provide learning and collaborative opportunities with federal, state, and local partners. The ultimate goal is to employ cutting-edge information and technology to address our local roadway, waterway, rail, and air safety initiatives."

Unmanned Aircraft Systems, or drones, provide first responders with the ability to safely perform tasks in areas that could pose risks to people. As a recent example, the Kenner Fire Department utilized UAS during a fire origin investigation at Kenner High School. The historic property remains restricted for entrance as determinations regarding the structural soundness are finalized. The facility remains unsafe for personnel to enter.

According to Acting Fire Chief Joseph Sunseri, who was present for a portion of this training, the advancing technology brings the Kenner Fire Department rapidly forward to serve the community. "The life and property of our community and the safety of our personnel is paramount to our mission. Our Fire Department welcomes the opportunity to use these strategic tools as one of the city's ways we approach improving response and reducing risk every day."

Mayor Zahn noted the Office of Emergency Management has shown the role this technology can play in public works construction, code enforcement inspection, as well as on dangerous first responder scenes, or search-and-rescue operations.

**** NOTE:** Three photos attached with this release.

Photo 1 information: (Photo listed as IMG_2918) Dr. Richard Ham, Associate Director in the Department of Industrial Engineering at the University of Arkansas, Mayor Ben Zahn (in the middle), Randall A. Reddin, Assistant Federal Security Director of Inspections for TSA at the New Orleans Field Office and organizer of the training summit hosted in Kenner, and members of the Kenner Office of Emergency Management.

Photo 2 information: The drone

Photo 3 information: Attendees of the Homeland Security Summit, with Kenner Mayor Ben Zahn, federal staff and city workers.

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