Fort Bend County Opens Emergency Operations Center

(FORT BEND, TX) - Fort Bend County Judge KP George and the Office of Fort Bend County Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (HS&EM) today officially opened the new Emergency Operations Center (EOC) located in Richmond, TX.

The two-story, $9.8 million, 38,000 square foot building is equipped with state-of-the-art disaster management and public safety technology. The Office of HS&EM staff will be housed in the new building.

The EOC sits on the site of what was previously a 70-year-old jail facility. Following the devastation of Hurricane Harvey, county officials assessed the old EOC facility, which was heavily damaged during the Hurricane and was inoperable during Winter Storm Uri. The Emergency Operations Center was temporarily housed in the county's Information Technology Building.

"This building is what can happen when you combine intention and action," stated Fort Bend County Judge KP George. "It can be a thought, but you have to make it happen and that is what I came into office pushing for. Our County Commissioners approved the measure and here we are today."

Fort Bend County fully funded this project with the intention of it being a regional milestone to use during any time of emergency or disaster.

Built to withstand hurricane winds, the center is designed to operate independently during an emergency if county utilities become unavailable. With redundant internet circuits via multiple carriers that run over a pair of large redundant switches in high availability mode, the system is intended to have optimal uptime to ensure the site stays operational at all times.

Additionally, the new EOC network connects to the county network with over a 20GB connection that will allow the EOC to move data easily and rapidly. A new online dashboard will provide Fort Bend County residents with live information to track road closures, local and national weather, FBC shelters, evacuation information, water levels, and other information captured by the FBC Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

Following remarks from Fort Bend County Information Technology Director Robyn Doughtie, Paul Bonnette with PGAL International Design Firm, Sabir Fakhruddin with FS Group Architects & Developers, and Brad Craine with the Craine Group, HS&EM Manager Mark Flathouse led attendees to the front of the building for the raising of the flags. The flags flew over the former EOC building and were raised in recognition of retiring Emergency Management Coordinator Alan Spears. A tour of the facility immediately followed with food and beverages sponsored by Louisiana Famous Fried Chicken and HEB.

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