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COMCARE Praises Approval of "Distribution Element" as International Emergency Data Standard

Washington, DC – May 1, 2006 – On April 30, OASIS, an international standards-making body, ratified a standard for emergency messaging called the Emergency Data Exchange Language (EDXL) Distribution Element. The primary purpose of the Distribution Element (DE) is to facilitate the routing of emergency data messages of all kinds.

In the past, emergency agencies and organizations have lacked a standard format to send and receive messages, making it much harder to accomplish data interoperability. The Distribution Element eliminates this problem providing a standard package for key routing information such as agency type, affected geography, incident type, and sender/recipient IDs to disseminate the message to the appropriate agencies.

"The adoption of the DE as an international emergency standard is an important step towards achieving interoperable communications," said Richard Taylor, COMCARE's Chair and Executive Director of the North Carolina Wireless 911 Board. "COMCARE is proud to have been a part of the development of this standard."

David Aylward, COMCARE's Director, praised "the active participation of national practitioner leaders and emergency response organizations in developing the detailed specifications for the DE, the support of the Department of Homeland Security's Disaster Management program, and the tireless, uncompensated work of the OASIS Emergency Management Technical Committee and its Chair Elysa Jones, in perfecting and ratifying it."

The DE provides a common format for the distribution of one or more emergency-related messages based on certain key parameters. It provides for a targeted dissemination capability that can facilitate efficient information sharing and exchange during and after emergencies. The Distribution Element has successfully been demonstrated during various interoperability field tests by COMCARE members and other technology companies.

COMCARE, funded by the Department of Homeland Security, facilitated the Standards Working Group of emergency response leaders that produced the detailed specification for the Distribution Element that was submitted to OASIS.

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