January 27, 2020

USCG Sector Mobile hosts SARSAR winter training sessions

MOBILE, Alabama — While there are many types of disasters and emergencies, they often share one trait: unexpected arrivals. The best way to deal with the sudden situations is through preparation and training.

This was the inspiration behind the South Alabama Rescue Search and Recovery (SARSAR) group sponsored by the U.S. Coast Guard Sector Mobile and supported by the Mobile County Health Department.

With a mission statement “To train and facilitate coordination of search rescue and recovery groups of southwest Alabama,” specialized exercises take place twice a year for governmental and volunteer agencies along the northern Gulf Coast.

Last week, Sector Mobile hosted various search-and-rescue agencies and law enforcement from Mobile, Baldwin and Escambia counties at their base on the Mobile River. Welcoming the volunteers to the Adm. Stewart Training Building were Dr. Bernard H. Eichold II, Health Officer for Mobile County, and Capt. Austin Ives, deputy commander of Sector Mobile.

Lt. Cmdr. Trevor Blount discussed Sector Mobile’s assets and Area of Responsivity (AOR) along with USCG’s response to policies and procedures updates. Alabama State Trooper Micah Smith talked about the aerial assets across the state including new FLIR (forward-looking infrared) thermal cameras. Dr. Rendi Murphree, an epidemiologist who oversees MCHD’s Bureau of Disease Surveillance and Environmental Services, gave an update on the recent outbreak of Coronavirus in China. The meeting concluded with a discussion about the search, rescue and recovery involving the shrimp boat The Chief that capsized near Dauphin Island.

Special guests included Boy Scout Troop 113 of Saraland, which was working on its Search and Rescue Merit Badge with the aid of the SARSAR group. The Mobile County Health Department’s Emergency Preparedness staff played a key role in organizing the event.

To learn more, visit www.SARSAR.org.

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