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# The Time is Right for Treasure Coast Public Safety Complex

**As part of IRSC, the complex provides emergency training for individuals responsible for public safety**

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**By Kim Berndtson, Assistant Editor**

The cliché "timing is everything," seems to ring true in the case of the Treasure Coast Public Safety Complex (TCPSC) at Indian River State College (IRSC) in Fort Pierce, FL.

Officials of the college's original police and fire academy facilities had contemplated a new training facility for a decade or more before the new Complex's actual completion in September 2008. But manmade and natural disasters--including the 9/11 terrorist attacks and Hurricanes Frances, Jeanne and Katrina--changed the direction from a more simple, upgraded public service training complex centralized at one location to the current \$40 million, eight-building, 50-acre complex.

"After these disasters, the need for a program and facility that provided a good education in public safety and emergency management was fresh in people's minds," says Bryan Beaty, coordinator of marketing and special projects at TCPSC. "When September 11 happened, more ideas and opportunities started coming from faculty and area agencies as well as from state and local levels. They evolved into this Complex, which is unlike any other training center in the U.S. The cliché that timing is everything, really applies."

The Complex--funded with State of Florida educational construction funds, state and federal grants and private donations--is home to the Center for Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Assistance and is designed to meet the needs of vitally important branches of public safety, including criminal justice, fire science, homeland security, paralegal and human services as well as emergency administration and management. It gives individuals responsible for public safety extensive training for emergency situations by providing indoor and outdoor training for virtual and realistic training scenarios. Students can experience potential real-life situations within a safe environment.

Some individual features include a judicial crime lab complete with simulated booking center with jail cells, a 9,600-square-foot training fire station that includes three apparatus bays and a fire-suppression lab, a multi-acre burn field and six-story training tower and a "Tactical Village" complete with a traffic intersection, facades for retail shops and residential units and outdoor training fields for search-and-rescue missions.

## **Learn to be Effective in an Emergency**

Specifically, the Emergency Administration and Management Program is a two-year program that

culminates with an Associate of Science degree. Based on an all-hazards approach, the program emphasizes effective operating procedures under emergency conditions. Typically, graduates will find employment as aid agency operators, emergency managers and planners, and homeland security specialists.

Curriculum requirements include training in principles of emergency management, incident command system, disaster operations, psychological management of disasters, exercise design and evaluation and an internship. Electives include a sampling of vehicle maintenance, terrorism and U.S. security, weapons of mass destruction and human resource management among others.

Two one-year programs--which culminate in certificates in Emergency Management and Homeland Security--prepare students for entry into the emergency management workforce and provide a foundation for the Associate Degree program.

The Associate Degree program also offers the opportunity for students to attend a four-day field training event, ATLANTIC HOPE. It provides realistic opportunities to apply the skills and concepts learned in the classroom in simulated disaster environments.

"It's an action-oriented opportunity to determine what students have learned throughout the course," says Beaty. "We replicate a national incident such as civil unrest with a natural disaster such as a flood or earthquake. Students have to set up food distribution points, live in tents, set up a mobile medical unit, etc. They have to work together using skills they've learned."

After completing this training, they are eligible to participate in the two-week Summer Institute in International Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Assistance Program, which is carried out in partnership with the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Macedonia. Students participate in an intensive and austere learning environment to practice prevention and alleviation of human suffering through disaster relief and humanitarian service.

"It's interesting to partner with another country," he says. "It brings an added level of realism to the training. When students return, they are energized to use what they've learned in real-life situations.

"Overall, the complex is designed to teach skills that will prepare students to work in disaster relief and humanitarian operations," Beaty continues. "Our mission is to provide skills so people are able to respond to local agency and community needs here, throughout the U.S. and abroad. Our emergency management program is quickly becoming recognized as one that provides skills necessary for managing disaster situations.

"We're receiving interest from FEMA and DHS. And as the war in Afghanistan moves from a military effort to one of stabilization and reconstruction, more and more peacekeeping individuals will be needed to move the country in the right direction. There is a need for programs that give people an understanding of the conditions and security situations in these types of environments. There's a need for programs like ours to provide those services."

For more information, visit [www.tcpublicsafetytraining.com](http://www.tcpublicsafetytraining.com).



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