

PRESS RELEASE

May 24, 2001

For Immediate Release:

A Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan for Cuyahoga County will be tested on May 31, 2001 from 9:00 A.M. until 12:00 Noon in cooperation with Praxair Distribution, Inc. and emergency responders throughout the County's southwest side. The North Royalton Fire and Police Departments will be participating in the hazardous materials training exercise. It was organized by the Cuyahoga County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) and the Division of Emergency Services and is an annual test of the LEPC's emergency response plan for hazardous materials. The annual exercise is conducted at local facilities that store Extremely Hazardous Substances. These facilities must be included in the LEPC plan under Ohio emergency planning laws as well as Title III of the federal Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act. "Having a Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan for Cuyahoga County is indeed important for the citizens of our community. Who would have ever thought a train carrying hazardous materials would break free and travel on its own in our State. By having a plan in place, Cuyahoga County will be prepared to handle an emergency should one arise," said County Commissioner Jane Campbell.

This year the drill is being conducted at the Praxair Distribution Center located at 14788 York Road in North Royalton. Praxair, a manufacturer and distributor of compressed gas products including oxygen, acetylene, helium, nitrogen and other industrial and medical use gases has agreed to participate and serve as the 2001 training site. Praxair's industrial safety team, as well as North Royalton Safety forces and the Southwest Emergency Response Team will have an opportunity to test their procedures and personnel. Chief Fabish of the North Royalton Fire Department and Praxair Facility Manager Dennis Bloom both agree that this is an excellent training opportunity for everyone involved and are grateful for the opportunity to participate. Commissioner Jimmy Dimora said "there is no way to anticipate how an accident involving hazardous materials will affect our citizens and surrounding environment, but an emergency response plan must be in place so damage can be contained. We hope we never have to use such a plan, but a practice run will help Fire and Police Departments understand the magnitude of what might occur. We commend Praxair for their commitment to safety and thank them for their cooperation. A plan must be prepared and ready, so a response to such an emergency is immediate and decisive."

According to Bloom "this type of exercise is one the many training tools used by Praxair to maintain its excellent safety record." Praxair has aggressively pursued and maintained a commitment to safety and excellence in the processing and distribution of these products. "The drill scenario the LEPC has planned is hypothetical and is not representative of any incident that might occur at our site," said Mr. Bloom. The LEPC has intentionally simulated a much larger than possible incident to insure that all facets of the County's plan can be practiced and evaluated.

Local business traffic along York Road, south of Route 82 will be maintained during the drill, however through traffic will be re-routed. The Ohio State Emergency Response Commission and regional emergency responders will monitor the procedures of Countywide emergency response organizations to evaluate performance and effectiveness.

North Royalton's location with respect to the Ohio Turnpike and Interstate Highways I-71 and I-77 makes it very important to maintain a high level of preparedness for possible hazardous materials incidents. Other participants in the exercise include Parma Community General Hospital and

EMS units from Parma, Parma Heights, Seven Hills, Brooklyn Heights and Broadview Heights, the Strongsville Fire Department, the Regional Transit Authority, the Red Cross, the Metroparks Police, the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, the Ohio Highway Patrol and the Ohio Turnpike Commission.

NOTE:

Praxair's North Royalton plant employs 40 people in the production of acetylene, the sale of carbide lime, specialty gas mixing and fill operations and industrial and medical gas repackaging. Medical gases are supplied to hospitals for patient use and research; specialty gases are used in welding applications. Products are delivered by flat bed trucks and pallet trailers.

Praxair is the largest industrial gas company in North and South America, and one of the largest worldwide, with 2000 sales of \$5 billion. The company produces, sells and distributes atmospheric and process gases, and high performance surface coating. More information on Praxair is available on the Internet at www.praxair.com/healthcare.

Any Questions Contact:

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