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EKU Grant Program Trains First Responders in Preparation for Republican National Convention

Eastern Kentucky University's Justice & Safety Center recently trained first responders from Ohio in preparation for the Republican National Convention, which is expected to draw in thousands of participants, protesters, and media personnel. As a member of the Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium, a federally-sponsored grant program, the Justice & Safety Center has developed and delivered certified homeland security training to first responders across the country in event security planning, media relations, disaster recovery, isolation and quarantine, and emergency management issues.

The Justice & Safety Center, a university-based center focusing on providing quality research, project management, and expertise in the areas of training and learning, technology and innovation, security and resilience, and special studies, is a part of the College of Justice & Safety. The center has a long history of working collaboratively with external organizations and partners to strengthen justice and safety initiatives at the local, state, national and international levels.

Hosted at the Northeast Ohio Regional Fusion Center, the training on Event Security Planning for Public Safety Professionals included first responders from the local police department, sheriff's department, the emergency management agency, city and county fire departments, the office of public health, the county health department and several private sector businesses. The focus of the training included increasing cooperation and coordination of personnel and resources in response to emergency situations involving multiple agencies.

The training was delivered by instructors Dr. Jerry Wells and Bobby Day. Dr. Wells, a 32-year law enforcement veteran, received his MS in criminal justice from Eastern Kentucky University and serves on the EKU College of Justice & Safety Alumni Society Board of Directors. Mr. Day, a veteran of the Kentucky State Police, has taught military and law enforcement personnel throughout the United States and abroad.

“In any organized special event, but in particular a large and high profile event such as the RNC, there is always the specter of chaos and disruption whether it comes from a terrorism attempt, protest interference with the freedom of movement or even an intoxicated attendee,” said Dr. Wells.

Instructor Bobby Day said in events similar to the RNC there will also be a merging of multiple agencies, disciplines and jurisdictions which alone could create issues. “Add to these concerns – planning, staffing, logistics, intelligence gathering, risk assessments, crowd control, access management, traffic and transportation while still being able to respond to non-event calls for service,” Day continued.

According to Wells, practice and preparation for any situation is important and the Event Security Planning course allows first responder agencies to better prepare for any outcome.

The Republican National Convention will take place on July 18-21 at the Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland, OH.

For more information on the training, contact the Justice & Safety Center at 859-622-8825 or firstrespondertraining@eku.edu. For more information on the Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium, go to www.ruraltraining.org.