



## **Dallas Emergency Response Team Holds First Conference** ***DERT set to expand citywide***

**For Immediate Release**

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**(DALLAS, TX – March 3, 2008)** - The City of Dallas Office of Emergency Management, Dallas Police Department, Dallas Fire-Rescue Department and DOWNTOWNDALLAS are proud to partner together to host the first ever Dallas Emergency Response Team (DERT) Conference. The conference, open to the public, will be held at the Dallas Convention Center (Ballroom A) on April 1, 2008 starting at 8:00 am. The conference is the first step towards expanding DERT citywide.

DERT is a unique public-private partnership created to improve communication between business organizations and public safety departments before a disaster happens. DERT brings together City officials, building owners and managers, security professionals, and other emergency planners from the private and non-profit sectors to deal with the special challenges posed by disasters and emergencies (critical incidents). Whether it's the threat of a tornado or a terrorist attack, the group works together to prepare for, respond to and recover from critical incidents. This partnership model has had great success in Downtown Dallas, and will soon be replicated throughout the entire City of Dallas.

"There is a national trend toward public-private partnerships in public safety and emergency preparedness," says Kenny Shaw, Director of the Office of Emergency Management for the City of Dallas. "The lessons learned from events like 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina showed us that we must rely on help from our sister cities, state and federal agencies, and the resources available from the private sector in order to manage major catastrophes."

"DERT is an integral component of DOWNTOWNDALLAS' public safety efforts, and we are pleased to see the model we created for Downtown going city-wide," says John F. Crawford President/CEO DOWNTOWNDALLAS. "The upcoming DERT conference will both showcase the program and be an educational resource for property managers, security teams and anyone interested in knowing how to 'prepare, respond and recover' in an emergency."

The conference program is targeted towards: property and business owners and managers, security directors, building engineers, business continuity planners, and disaster recovery specialists. At the conference participants will:

- See the unveiling of, USP3, the City's new communications tool for DERT
- Hear our vision for how DERT will grow and expand
- See the emergency response equipment used by the experts
- Meet the Police and Fire personnel with key responsibilities for DERT
- Schedule exercises with the Office of Emergency Management to test your plans, procedures, and training in real life or simulated events
- Learn about the training opportunities that are open to DERT members throughout the North Central Texas region
- Understand the City's commitment to fostering and expanding its partnership with the business and non-profit communities

DERT has received recognition from the Department of Homeland Security, which asked the group to devise a template of its program that can be used by other cities throughout the nation. In addition, the Government Accountability Office has included the DERT project in an audit of best practices in disaster response planning.

"It's all about relationships and Dallas is leading the way in building a strong public safety partnership among the City and our private businesses and industries," says Shaw.

"It is an invaluable tool for dealing with emergencies," adds Crawford.

Register today using the convenient online registration at [www.dallasalert.org](http://www.dallasalert.org). Registration is first come, first served and seating is limited. Parking is available in the Dallas Convention Center underground garage for the discounted rate of \$5.00 per vehicle and additional parking at market rates is available on surface parking lots surrounding the Dallas Convention Center. Sponsorship opportunities for the conference are also available on the website.

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