



South Florida Regional Planning Council
Proudly serving South Florida since 1974

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SOUTH FLORIDA LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE CHAIR AND HOLLYWOOD FIRE RESCUE CHIEF JAMES RUSSO AWARDED THE 2022 THOMAS YATABE AWARD BY THE STATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMMISSION

HOLLYWOOD, FL – The [South Florida Regional Planning Council](#) and [South Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee \(LEPC\)](#) congratulates City of Hollywood Fire Rescue Division Chief of Training & Special Operations James Russo for his receipt of the 2022 Thomas Yatabe Award. Each year, Florida's ten Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) nominate one deserving individual, agency, or organization within their respective districts for the Thomas Yatabe Award for consideration of the State Emergency Response Commission. This Award recognizes outstanding contributions made in the implementation and support of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act through achievements, accomplishments, and superior participation in hazardous materials planning or response.



The [State Emergency Response Commission \(SERC\)](#) is responsible for implementing federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA) provisions in Florida. The SERC, along with the Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs), work to mitigate the effects of a release or spill of hazardous materials by collecting data on the storage of hazardous chemicals above planning quantities. The Technological Hazards Section at the Florida Division of Emergency Management provides programmatic support for the SERC.

This year Chief Russo was recognized by the State Emergency Response Commission for his instrumental role in planning the first hands-on propane flare-off exercise of the year. This training exercise took place at the Hollywood Fire Rescue Training Facility. First responders participating in the training exercise responded to a vehicular crash that resulted in damaging a large, 500lb liquid propane cylinder in close proximity to an occupied structure. Participating agencies included the Hollywood, Sunrise, Broward Sheriff's Office, and Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue Hazardous Materials Teams. AmeriGas provided an on-site propane tank to Hollywood Fire Rescue which will now be used in future trainings for responders within LEPC Region 10. Chief Russo dedicated significant time to coordinating the regional exercise and ensuring that all teams were able to participate, including the acquisition of the necessary resources and equipment for the exercise. Recently, Chief Russo was elected Chair of the South Florida LEPC District 10 where he continues to advance South Florida LEPC goals by bringing his extensive expertise and leadership to the Committee.

We would like to thank the Florida Department of Emergency Management and the State Emergency Response Commission for their invaluable partnership and funding support to the LEPCs. Since 1988, the SFRPC has served as staff to LEPC District 10 which serves Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe counties. The LEPC program was established pursuant to the Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA), Title III of the EPA Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA). Congress enacted EPCRA to help local communities protect public health and safety and the environment from chemical hazards. Council Staff coordinates regularly scheduled LEPC meetings, conducts How-to-Comply EPCRA workshops, answers public inquiries regarding EPCRA compliance, maintains chemical inventories for

public inspection consistent with the Community Right-to-Know Act provisions of EPCRA, promotes hazardous materials awareness, and prepares and updates the comprehensive emergency response plan for the Region.

Since 1974, the South Florida Regional Planning Council has served as the regional planning agency for Monroe, Miami-Dade, and Broward counties, 70 municipalities, and an estimated 4.8 million residents. The Florida Legislature has recognized that regional planning councils are the only multipurpose regional entity in position to plan for intergovernmental solutions to growth related problems and meet the other needs of communities in each region. The Council is governed by a public/private board of county and municipal elected officials and gubernatorial appointees. Ex-officio members include representatives from the Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and South Florida Water Management District. The Council supports the region's elected leaders and public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders through regional, collaborative planning and the development and implementation of programs and strategies shaping a better future for South Florida. For more information about the SFRPC and services offered, please visit our website at www.sfrpc.org.

For additional information about LEPC District 10, please contact Charlene Burke, LEPC District 10 Coordinator, at cburke@sfrpc.com.

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