



MEDIA RELEASE

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Sr. Dir. Holden Participates in National Homeland Security Panel

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.—Knox County Senior Director of Grants and Community Development Jenny Holden was a panelist this summer at the 2023 National Homeland Security Conference in Chicago where she discussed the largest emergency response exercise ever conducted in Knox County and the importance of family assistance center planning.

Since 2012, Holden has managed the Tennessee Homeland Security District 2 Office which administers federal grand funding for the sixteen counties that make up the district. She has also served as the project leader on a school-based Active Shooter/Stop the Bleed program that the Tennessee County Services Association recognized as a “success story” at their 2018 annual conference.

“It’s no surprise Ms. Holden was asked to share her experiences and expertise at the conference,” said Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs. “She is widely recognized for her contributions to the improvement of local emergency management and response activities and she’s a great representative of Knox County.”

In 2017, the county was awarded one of 18 competitive grants from the Department of Homeland Security under the *Program to Prepare Communities for Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attacks (CCTA)*. Those funds were used to develop and implement effective and sustainable regional approaches for enhancing preparedness for complex coordinated terrorist attacks that identified capability gaps, updating plans, implementation training, and conducting an emergency exercise to validate capabilities.

With extensive planning efforts across local response agencies as well as those in Blount, Sevier, and Hamblen counties, District 2 did just that over the summer. July’s emergency exercise was intended to test the ability of emergency management personnel to effectively conduct emergency operations in the event of a large-scale, multi-jurisdictional event.

Knox County was the only Tennessee County to receive funding and the exercise was incredibly successful thanks to support from District 2 Homeland Security, FEMA’s National Exercise Division, The University of Tennessee, Knox County Parks and Rec, and many others.

“The best way to successfully respond to an emergency, is to prepare,” said Holden. “With significant collaboration across the region, Knox County, with others from Homeland Security District 2, was able to do just that.”

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