

### **Rep. Sloan Participates in DOE White Prairie Exercise**

Rep. Tom Sloan (R, Lawrence) participated in the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) White Prairie Midwest Regional Energy Assurance Exercise. White Prairie was a workshop where information on challenges to energy security and reliability were provided and tabletop exercises to determine if state and local emergency energy plans and planning processes are adequate.

The State of Kansas previously returned DOE emergency planning grant money and no representatives from the State's emergency planning operations attended the workshop. Representatives from the City of Manhattan, KS, did participate in addition to Rep. Sloan and Rep. Carl Holmes.

"Because of the absence of state emergency response planners, it was doubly important that I participate," said Sloan. "Two of the primary messages in the workshop were that while most states and communities have plans to address weather-related events, cyber attacks on key infrastructures are an increasingly frequent and potentially dangerous threat and that increased communications and coordinated planning between states and other stakeholders about the interdependency of public and business community interests are necessary."

The exercises were designed to elicit conversations about how prepared states and communities are to meet inter-agency coordination challenges. One of the examples used was seeking U.S. Environmental Agency (EPA) fuel blen waivers to use 11-pound gasoline in non-attainment areas if supplies of 9 pound gas are not available. Lessons were exchanged about emergency situations in which plans were discovered to have "holes." An example provided was a refinery that did not have adequate supplies of cash on hand to pay workers when local banks and ATMs were unable to operate because of electric system failures.

"Having a robust plan and communication process is key to being prepared for ay natural or man-made emergency," said Sloan. "While no plan is ever entirely adequate in a crisis, training exercises are as necessary for civilians as for the military so that personnel know what to do, whom to contact, and how to adapt to changing conditions."

Emphasis was placed on ensuring that emergency plan contact lists are kept up-to-date and that public and private emergency plans are coordinated. "I will be asking questions about the State of Kansas' emergency planning process, especially our preparedness regarding cyber attacks on critical infrastructures and coordination of state, local government, and business emergency plans," Sloan said. "The evolving of business operations to the 'just in time' delivery of supplies, instead of maintaining longer term inventories, increases the need for coordinated emergency planning.

Rep. Sloan is serving his 9th term in the Kansas House of Representatives. He is Chairman of the Vision 2020 Committee, and a member of the Energy & Utilities, Local Government, and Agriculture and Natural Resources Budget Committees. He also is a member of the Joint Committee on Energy and the Environment.

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