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Food Industry Holds Security Threat Exercise With Government, Health Officials, Aiming to Develop a Preparedness Model for All States

WASHINGTON, DC — April 2, 2004 — The food industry joined government and health officials in a security threat exercise in Maryland that “will be developed into a model program we hope will be repeated in every state over the next 18 months,” said Tim Hammonds, president and CEO of the Food Marketing Institute (FMI).

In the March 31 exercise, nearly 100 participants simulated four aspects of a restaurant-related security situation, moving through the threat, event, response and recovery. Those involved included industry representatives; local, state and federal homeland security, food and health officials; local law enforcement and emergency first-responders; public health information officers; and association staff. The Uriah Group, a security consulting company, coordinated the exercise.

“We are now preparing a similar simulation to take place a supermarket setting,” said Hammonds. “As soon as funding can be obtained, we will hold another exercise in another state. Our goal is to complete the exercise before June 1.”

This project was the result of a public-private partnership, bringing together the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Domestic Preparedness, Maryland Emergency Management Agency, Maryland Restaurant Association, National Restaurant Association, FMI and Food and Agriculture Information Sharing & Analysis Center (ISAC).

An after-action report will be prepared within the next 60 days so that the participants can use the lessons learned to improve their ability to coordinate an effective response should an actual attack ever take place.

“We believe every state will eventually want to hold exercises using the model we have developed as they implement the new Presidential Directive – 9, which directs that a national policy be developed to protect the food system against terrorist attacks, major disasters and other emergency situations,” Hammonds said.

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Food Marketing Institute (FMI) conducts programs in research, education, industry relations and public affairs on behalf of its 2,300 member companies — food retailers and wholesalers — in the United States and around the world. FMI’s U.S. members operate approximately 26,000 retail food stores with a combined annual sales volume of \$340 billion — three-quarters of all food retail store sales in the United States. FMI’s retail membership is composed of large multi-store chains, regional firms and independent supermarkets. Its international membership includes 200 companies from 60 countries.