

May 18th, 2011

The Province of Alberta has called in hundreds of extra firefighters to battle a fire that was still considered out of control Monday after destroying 40 per cent of the Town of Slave Lake. The fire was officially considered out of control as of Monday 6 pm mdt.

Most of the destruction happened in the south-eastern section of Slave Lake, where half the homes were consumed by flames Sunday. Town hall and many downtown businesses were destroyed.

Almost all 7,000 residents have been evacuated from the town, hundreds going to evacuation shelters in Athabasca, Westlock and Edmonton.

According to the Province--as of Monday evening, about 800 to 1,000 people were at the Athabasca shelter, 195 were in Edmonton and 46 people were staying in the town of Westlock.

Westlock and Athabasca, both communities receiving the Slave Lake evacuees, have been extremely proactive in preparing for emergencies. On October 19th, 2010 Athabasca County conducted an exercise in which they practiced setting up a reception centre and receiving simulated evacuees from an effected wildfire area. They actually trained for an identical emergency to what they experienced this week. Last month, the County of Westlock completed developing their new Municipal Emergency Response Plan (ERP) and trained key personnel in its activation.

Both the Athabasca exercise and the County of Westlock ERP were accomplished with the consulting assistance of ERMCM, an Edmonton based emergency preparedness professional consulting firm. While ERMCM regrets the fact that these events have occurred, and we are proud to have helped prepare these communities in their proactive response.

Westlock and Athabasca were prepared to quickly respond to the displaced people of Slave Lake. The forward thinking of these communities means that they are proactively ready to help their neighbours in the most trying of situations.

AUDIT • Computer Based Training (CBT) • Full Scale Exercises • Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)
Business Impact Analysis • Table Top Exercises • Crisis Communication • Security • Plan Familiarization
Software • Emergency Response Plan (ERP) • Incident Command System • Risk Assessment • Maintenance