



NEWS FROM **ULSTER COUNTY** County Executive Jen Metzger

******For Immediate Release******

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Emergency Services Conduct Full-Scale Mass Casualty Training Drill in Ulster Park

KINGSTON, NY - On Saturday, July 12, Ulster County Department of Emergency Services, in coordination with local fire and EMS agencies, conducted a full-scale Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) exercise at Headless Horseman Hayrides and Haunted Attractions in Ulster Park. The drill simulated a high-impact emergency scenario in a wooded campground setting and included active response to a mock plane crash and vehicle entrapment.

More than 125 participants from 15 agencies took part in the training, which ran from 8 AM to 12:30 PM and spanned approximately half an acre. Responders faced real-world conditions including extreme heat, humidity, and rugged terrain, and practiced triage and patient extraction techniques using a range of simulated injuries. The scenario involved one deceased patient, 15 critically injured (classified as red and yellow), and several minor injuries (green or "walking wounded"). Community volunteers served as patients, and two participants were extracted from a vehicle using the jaws of life after a tree strike.

Agencies participating included:

- NYS Office of Emergency Management
- Ulster County Department of Emergency Services
- Columbia County Office of Emergency Management
- Columbia County Department of Health
- Esopus Fire Department
- Hurley Fire Department
- Rifton Fire Department
- St. Remy Fire Department
- Esopus Volunteer Ambulance Squad
- Marbletown Rescue Squad

- Olive First Aid
- Rhinebeck Fire/EMS (Dutchess County)
- Greenport Rescue Squad (Columbia County)
- Ulster County Sheriff's Office
- HealthAlliance/WMC, which simultaneously conducted an ER surge drill for trauma center certification

"By training together under challenging conditions — extreme heat, rugged terrain, and complex scenarios — they are prepared to offer the highest level of coordination and care that our residents can count on in a real emergency," **said Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger.** "I want to thank every agency and volunteer who participated. Your work strengthens our collective readiness and ensures that, should the unthinkable happen, we are prepared to respond swiftly, effectively, and with compassion."

"It went great, everybody did a great job," **said Mike Madison, Deputy Director / Emergency Manager for Ulster County Department of Emergency Services.** "Bringing all these agencies together is so important. We need to have the ability to communicate and work together as one single unit to simulate a mass casualty incident so we can better prepare for the future if this ends up happening in real life. This is essential, so our first responders are prepared and trained, and know exactly what needs to be done."

"Coming out here, we were hoping that crews would get where they needed to be, identify all of the patients that we have, and form communications between command and all of the crews that are responding, and then treat and transport the patients to the local hospital," **said Chief of Esopus EMS Taylor VanVliet.** "And I think the exercise went very well, better than we expected it to go. Everybody was really doing their critical thinking and working together as one team with all the agencies that were involved."

"I think it's very important — first responders are lifesavers! And these trainings just make you better at what you do," **said Mike Jubie, co-owner with his wife Nancy, of Headless Horseman Hayrides and Haunted Attractions.**

"In my eyes the purpose of the drill is strictly a learning experience and is meant to be very proactive," **said Matthew VanVliet, Assistant Chief of Esopus Ambulance.** "In the event of an actual mass casualty incident — that may not happen ever — when they do happen it's imperative that everyone is prepared. In terms of the new members, they get to practice triaging patients and treating them, so it's win for win for everyone."

Ulster County conducts a large-scale MCI exercise annually to maintain readiness and strengthen interagency coordination. The July 12 drill marks one of the most complex and collaborative efforts to date.

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