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PRESS RELEASE

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LOCAL DIRECTOR TO SERVE ON NATIONAL BIOHAZARD PANEL

(LIMA, OH) – Allen County's local homeland security director, Russ Decker will leave for Washington, DC this weekend to participate on a national panel looking into effective protocols for response to biohazard threats in the U. S. mail system.

Decker was selected to serve as the representative for local emergency responders by the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) on the panel which is co-chaired by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the United States Postal Service. Decker's selection was based, in part, on his experience during the 2001-2002 mail irradiation project here.

Also serving on the panel from Ohio is Dr. William Becker, medical director for the Ohio Department of Health. Dr. Becker will be representing local and state laboratories on the panel.

A goal of the national panel is to draft and eventually recommend implementation of techniques and protocols for the detection, response and mitigation to biohazardous materials that could be distributed through the postal system.