

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **HAZARDOUS MATERIAL EXERCISE A SIGNIFICANT BENEFIT TO LOCAL AGENCIES AND BUSINESSES**

SUFFOLK, VA (December 4, 2018) A number of government and private agencies and businesses participated in a hazardous material spill exercise at the BASF Suffolk facility located at the 2300 block of Wilroy Road on November 9<sup>th</sup>.

The exercise, several months in the making, included personnel from Suffolk Fire & Rescue, the Suffolk Police Department and Emergency Communications, Sentara Obici Hospital, Sentara BelleHarbour Emergency Department, Virginia Department of Emergency Management, Virginia Department of Health, Portsmouth Fire Department, Chesapeake Fire Department, Norfolk Southern Railroad, HEPACO, Genesee Wyoming Railroad, Commonwealth Railroad, and BASF Corporation. BASF also donated the use of a highly specialized railcar that was invaluable in providing real world emergency response experience to exercise participants and first responders.

The training exercise simulated a leak of an unknown chemical substance from a valve on a railcar. This scenario required the mock evacuation of the BASF facility and emergency response personnel and medical providers administered simulated

emergency treatment services to personnel acting as though injured participating in the exercise.

Speaking on behalf of BASF, Scott Veselicky, Environmental, Health and Safety Specialist, stated, "Exercises like these are a fundamental part of processes to make certain that first responders are prepared and practiced in the necessary skills that will protect the public in the event of a real emergency."

Richard Stephens, Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator with Suffolk Fire & Rescue further noted, "An important component of these exercises is getting to know the other agencies involved, as it is vital that relationships are forged in advance rather than at the scene of an actual emergency."

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