EAST-WEST GATEWAY
Council of Governments

Creating Solutions Across Jurisdictional Boundaries

2012 Annual Report

and 2013 calendar, the early years of firefighting

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Washington, Missouri Fire Company No. 1 was organized in 1858 and built its first brick engine house in 1859 on the corner of Town Hall lot on Jefferson Street. The company disbanded several times due to interruptions during the Civil War and then later from financial problems. In 1873 they reorganized as the "Washington Fire Brigade." The brigade had permanent officers, a constitution and bylaws. Their motto was "One for all, all for one!" Minutes from the first meetings were in the German language. They quickly renamed themselves the Washington Fire Company. In 1884 the city purchased a new fire engine and cart for $520.

The 1935 Dodge two-ton fire engine (cover) is equipped with a 500 G.P.M. pump and 100 gallon water tank. It was delivered to the company in January of 1936. Henry Schulte drove the truck in May of that year in a parade to dedicate the new Washington Bridge. The truck is now owned by the "Washington Blaze Chasers" and housed at the Firehouse Museum.

The museum's old trucks are beautifully restored and are featured in annual parades. They can be seen at the museum at Fifth and Stafford, open Saturdays and Sundays by appointment.

To our colleagues

Sometimes we here at the region's federally designated metropolitan planning organization are asked a fundamental question —what does East-West Gateway do?

There are short answers and long answers to that question, but there is no better, more hopeful answer than to point to what happened this year with the Poplar Street Bridge. Out of an impasse came a solution, one that helps the entire region.

This spring, the board considered a proposal meant to ease congestion and increase access on the Poplar Street Bridge. The proposal was to add a lane to the Interstate 55 ramp to the bridge, reconstruct westbound ramps from the bridge, and eliminate the eastbound ramp from Interstate 70.

That plan drew understandable opposition from Illinois leaders because of the elimination of the I-70 ramp, which could mean decreased access to communities in St. Clair and Monroe counties.

Missouri's leaders were worried if the East-West Gateway Board of Directors did not approve the ramp changes, $30 million of the project's $55 million investment would be spent outside the region.

In mid-May, we called a special board meeting to have both state's transportation departments present their ideas. Later that month at the regular meeting, the board hired an independent engineering firm to examine the alternatives, and potentially develop some new ideas.

Out of an impasse in May came a September compromise that should go a long way to improve access to Illinois, ease congestion, and keep investments in the region needed for infrastructure.

By adding a fifth eastbound lane to the Poplar Street Bridge, providing a new ramp from the Martin Luther King Bridge to Route 3 in Illinois, and making the single-lane I-55 ramp to the bridge a double-lane ramp, residents on both sides of the Mississippi River came out ahead.

What the media had described as a "regional spat" in which area leaders "continued to squabble" turned into a healthy compromise that was approved unanimously by the board. East-West Gateway board members met, they planned, problem solved.

Yet as that issue drew most of the public attention, the rest of this annual report will show you that transportation is not all we do at East-West Gateway.

This year an aerial photography project we managed will help 911 response times. Our supervision of regional security expenditures also helped set up a virtual medical operations center that coordinates care during disasters.

Left to right: Ed Hillhouse, Steve Ehlmann and Alan Dunstan

The ongoing regional plan for sustainable development is helping assure we leave behind a region as good, if not better, for our children as was left for us. We also are responsible for monitoring air quality, where we have documented significant progress in recent years in curbing ozone levels.

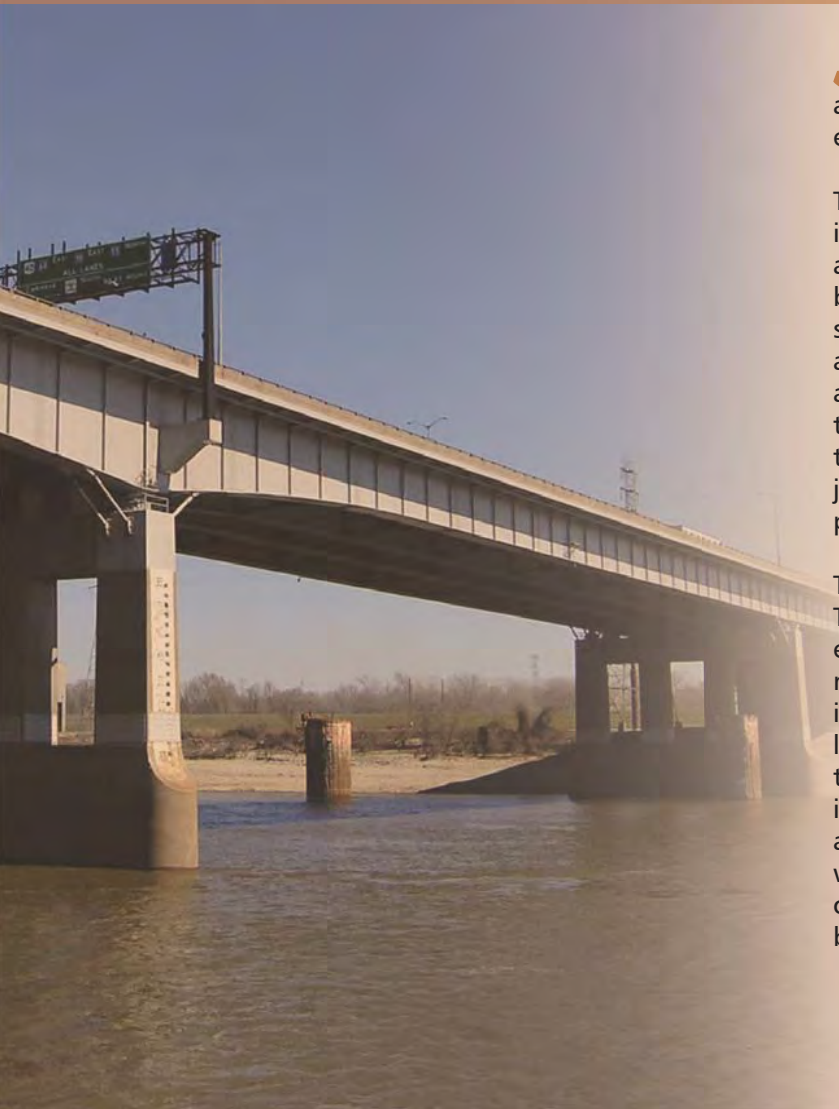
In all these efforts, East-West Gateway's goal is to make the region's interest its first priority. The resolution of the Poplar Street Bridge impasse reminds us the value of adhering to that goal.

Steve Ehlmann, Chair

Alan Dunstan, Vice Chair

Ed Hillhouse, Executive Director

Ramp remedy for bridges adds up for Illinois, Missouri



Simple arithmetic made the Poplar Street Bridge problem appear difficult. Two plus two equals four, anyway you look at it.

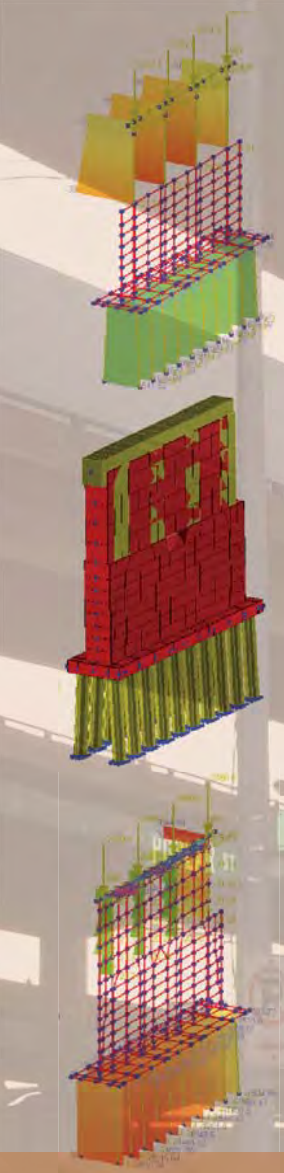
Throughout much of 2012, several ideas on how to ease congestion and increase accessibility on the bridge were not adding up to a suitable proposal for both Illinois and Missouri. The lack of an acceptable alternative was delaying the adoption of the region's transportation plan, and possibly jeopardizing ongoing and new projects.

The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) wanted to ease the daily logjam that forms on northbound Interstate 55 as cars inch over to the right for the single-lane ramp headed to Illinois across the Poplar Street Bridge (PSB). The idea was to tear down that ramp, and build a new two-lane ramp with traffic flowing unimpeded onto two eastbound lanes of the bridge.

The other two lanes crossing the river would come from eastbound Interstate 64. That left out the eastbound Interstate 70 ramp from downtown's depressed lanes. The justification for its removal was based on the opening of the new Mississippi River Bridge (MRB) in 2014, when truck and most other I-70 traffic headed for Illinois from Missouri would take the MRB.

The latest MoDOT daily numbers on the bridge show that 26,998 vehicles use the existing ramp from I-55 to the PSB, and 19,335 use the existing I-70 ramp to the bridge. After the new bridge opens, MoDOT estimated that I-70 ramp use would drop to 8,308 vehicles per day. MoDOT proposed a reconfiguration of the PSB ramps for a cost of $55 million.

Illinois leaders opposed the removal of the eastbound I-70 ramp that was planned as part of that new interchange. They contended it would diminish access to East St. Louis, Sauget and Cahokia for commuters and hinder truck traffic that was important to the growth of business and industry in those areas.



The new $55 million interchange was proposed as part of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for 2013-2016. When it was clear that lack of sufficient support for the new interchange might delay the adoption of the TIP, the East-West Gateway Board of Directors called a special meeting in mid-May to consider the issues involved. In addition to the possibility of losing $30 million of MoDOT money that would be spent outside the region if the new interchange were stalled, the delay of the TIP could adversely affect projects throughout the region.

In its special board meeting in May, the board recommended hiring a consultant to conduct an independent review of interchange options related to the MRB project, including the PSB ramps.

HDR Engineering Inc. was hired to do the independent review. When HDR issued its recommendation to the board in September, it consisted of three phases of improvements, including a new ramp from the Martin Luther King Bridge in Illinois to facilitate access to southbound Route 3, and described it as the "MLK Connector." Trucks headed to St. Clair and Monroe counties from Missouri on I-70 could use this route and avoid any possible PSB congestion. Another part of the first two phases would be to widen the PSB by adding a fifth eastbound lane. Also included in this recommendation were parts of the original proposal, which would give vehicles on I-55 a two-lane ramp to the eastbound lanes to the bridge, remove the eastbound I-70 ramp, and reconstruct the two ramps from the bridge that carried traffic from westbound I-70, I-64, and I-55. An extension of the 6th Street ramp across the PSB also was included in the first two phases.

The estimated cost of the first two phases would be $80 million and would be completed in 2015 and 2016 after the MRB is open. The already allocated $55 million from MoDOT and a $25 million commitment from the Illinois Department of Transportation would cover the cost of the first two phases.

The third phase, thus far unfunded, would cost an additional $31 million and provide a third lane of capacity for eastbound I-64 leading up to the bridge, by adding a third lane to the I-64 eastbound from the Sixth Street off and on ramps.

If the recommendation is completed, it will achieve the stated goals of easing congestion and increasing accessibility on the bridges across the Mississippi River. That is good news for the estimated 70,000 Illinois residents who travel to their jobs in Missouri, the 12,000 Missouri residents who head to Illinois for work, and the thousands who travel back and forth across the river for sporting events, shopping or personal reasons.

Gov. Pat Quinn of Illinois said the $25 million commitment showed he was "strongly committed" to the project. "This investment is an example of what we can achieve working together to improve life for the people of Illinois. I want to thank Missouri, IDOT, MoDOT, the East-West Gateway Council and legislative leaders from both sides of the Mississippi River for their outstanding regional cooperation to move this project forward."

Aerial photography project provides cost-free imagery to help 911 response

Viewed from 4,800 feet, St. Louis looks like one big city—and for most people, on most days, it is. They go to work, they eat, they shop, and they head home without much notice or regard of what jurisdictional lines they cross.

That aerial view can be deceptive, because lines of demarcation not visible from an airplane can cause any number of problems on the ground. Something as basic and urgent as a 911 call from a mobile phone could be answered by a dispatcher not certain about the exact location of the caller in distress.

Some mobile phones provide a "x-and-y" coordinate for the origin of their calls. For other not-so-smart phones, the dispatcher might only receive the location of the nearest cell phone tower as a clue to the caller's whereabouts. For emergency calls when minutes are crucial, that vagueness of information can be deadly.

The shift from traditional 911 services to enhanced 911 (E-911) requires operators to respond to emergency calls from mobile devices, which means dispatchers at public safety answering points need access to geographic information from adjacent counties. Often answering points have slightly different computer software, and that complicates data sharing.

This year East-West Gateway, through funding from an Urban Areas Security Initiative grant, contracted with Surdex Corporation of Chesterfield to conduct a comprehensive aerial photography survey of the city of St. Louis and the surrounding seven counties in Illinois and Missouri. The Department of Homeland Security paid the $666,575 cost. The U.S. Geological Survey and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency helped defray some of the cost and assisted in the completion of the survey.

The new aerial photography is a key element in the modernization of the region's emergency response capabilities. If used as anticipated, this shared data will improve interoperable communications among the region's public safety departments, and in turn provide better life-saving services to citizens.

The key to the success of this project, aside from the usefulness and need for the data, is that it is provided at no charge—it is free to the governmental unit that uses it.

This is the first time an airplane equipped with a digital camera linked to an onboard Global Positioning System (GPS) completed custom flights for East-West Gateway to produce a seamless, common operating picture for E-911 and emergency response. The immediate goal is to provide this data set at no cost to any county-level emergency response agency that requests it. After that goal is met, the data set will be shared with other Geographic Information Systems (GIS) users in the public and private sectors.

Jennifer Reiman, GIS manager for East-West Gateway, says sharing the image files is an important step toward integrating data across jurisdictional boundaries. The aerial photography can be used, at no cost, for other purposes, too.

"We went into this without setting any limits on how it could be used," says Reiman. "There will be spill-over benefits, whether it is used for property assessment, asset management of infrastructure or environmental considerations such as looking at land use changes, stream banks and levees."

The photography was taken in February and March, so trees and bushes were barren of leaves that might have reduced visibility. Reiman also opted for a six-inch pixel and full color for the imagery, which provided a greater level of detail and accuracy.

As the UASI grant was a one-time opportunity, questions remain about how to fund any updates that are needed in the future. Options include applying for more grant funding, leading a cooperative regional group to share costs or leaving the expense to cities and counties.

For the short-term future, having a common, regional source of data is a big improvement. Now when a medical crisis or a natural disaster occurs, those in need should not be put in added jeopardy due to jurisdictional obstacles in attempts to locate them. The view from 4,800 feet does not differentiate Florissant from Ferguson, or Caseyville from Collinsville. The free, detailed and accurate imagery provided by new aerial photography will improve the interoperable communications among the region's emergency responders, and should hasten and improve the service to those citizens in distress.

SURDEX CORPORATION

Common concerns, common ground can lead to solutions

Planning for the future requires talking about the present, and when that happens among neighbors, progress is possible.

That progress does not have to be dramatic or drastic, it can come down to an aspect of life as frequent and common as rain.

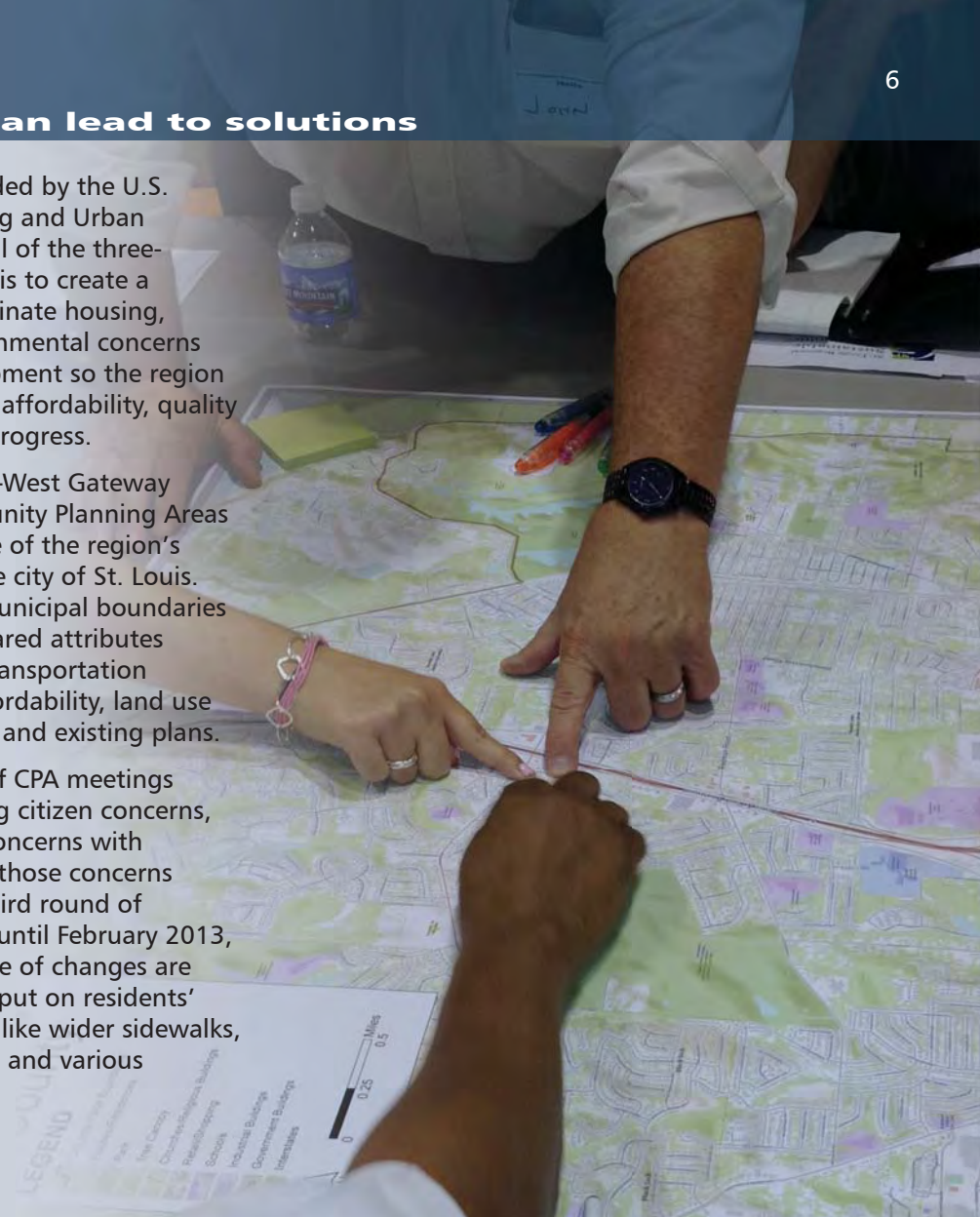
"You tend to find when people sit in a room together and discuss common concerns, they find common ground. If there is a storm water issue in Fairview Heights, chances are there is the same issue in O'Fallon," says Jennifer Howland, sustainability manager for East-West Gateway.

Storm water run-off and the ensuing problems of flooding and soil erosion were frequent topics of concern during the first two rounds of community meetings held this year as part of the $4.6 million grant for the St. Louis Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD). Part of the response to those concerns might be to retro-fit some parking lots with infiltration systems and try rain barrels, rain gardens and other drainage approaches elsewhere.

The RPSD grant is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The goal of the three-year planning process is to create a regional plan to coordinate housing, transportation, environmental concerns and economic development so the region can sustain its current affordability, quality of life and economic progress.

For that purpose, East-West Gateway designated 11 Community Planning Areas (CPAs) throughout five of the region's seven counties and the city of St. Louis. The CPAs cut across municipal boundaries and are defined by shared attributes such as job clusters, transportation corridors, housing affordability, land use development patterns and existing plans.

The first two rounds of CPA meetings centered on identifying citizen concerns, and matching those concerns with physical places where those concerns are manifested. The third round of meetings, which lasts until February 2013, will illustrate what type of changes are possible and gather input on residents' preferences for things like wider sidewalks, storm water solutions, and various building heights.



The goal of the RPSD is to initiate changes that are generated by citizen input. By concentrating on "place making" and enhancing communities, Howland says, the goal is to retain current residents and attract others to move to an area and infuse it with renewed energy and commitment.

In addition to the CPA meetings and two surveys of the public, more than 200 committee members are part of this process, as well as 10 other organizations that are consortium members.

During 2013, one CPA in each of the five counties will be selected for a pilot study. In these studies, local ordinances and codes will be analyzed to identify which ordinances might hinder efforts to address citizen concerns. The pilot studies will be in the form of a three-to-five page memo.

In addition to a new round of CPA meetings and upcoming pilot studies, more than 80 studies related to the RPSD will be completed by the end of 2013. A regional housing assessment has been completed, and other study topics include transportation, transit-oriented development, economic development, and conservation planning.

A draft of the St. Louis Regional Plan for Sustainable Development is due in July, with the final plan expected in December 2013. Any recommendation from the plan will not include any mandate to require local governments to adopt new rules or ordinances to conform to state or federal goals.

Todd Swanstrom, the Des Lee Professor of Community Collaboration and Public Policy at the University of Missouri at St. Louis and member of the RPSD Steering Committee, believes that sustainability basically means citizens should leave the community as good, if not better, for their children as it was left for them.

"That means not 'eating the seed corn,' depleting the environment, or wearing out the built environment," Swanstrom says. "Sustainability also means social sustainability—which means that the level of trust and cooperation in society goes up, not down. Even though the value of trust is hard to monetize, it matters. Trust enables us to get a key from our neighbor when we lock ourselves out—and it also enables local governments to invest in clean air and traffic calming—trusting that neighboring municipalities won't push dirty air and traffic congestion on them.

"People should care about sustainability in St. Louis because sustainable places are cool places—and if we don't create sustainable places our children won't want to stay here and in the long run, investors won't want to invest here."

Medical Operations Center coordinates care during disasters

Disasters occur regardless of anyone's schedule or expectation. That, in part, is what makes them more disastrous. What can make them less disastrous is being prepared, and knowing where to look for help.

On the Fourth of July this summer, a water main broke just outside the 17-story Queeny Tower of Barnes-Jewish Hospital, possibly due to the buckling effect of the 105-degree heat on street pavement. The city of St. Louis Water Department responded to the scene, but due to the rush of water its workers had difficulty locating which water main broke, so it was hours later before the water was shut off.

By then an estimated eight million gallons of water had gushed out, much of it ending up in the sub-basement of Queeny Tower, where that building's electrical and power infrastructure is located. That forced the decision to shut off the building's power, which included its lights and air conditioning.

Well before that happened, Debbie Mays, BJC director of Emergency Preparedness and Safety, already had reached out to the St. Louis Medical Operations Center (SMOC) to prepare for the worst. With the power out, there might be a need to evacuate patients to other hospitals, and that posed logistical and medical problems. She contacted the SMOC duty officer, Jeff Hamilton, of Mercy Hospital St. Louis, to initiate a bed count of all hospitals in the metropolitan region.

"Through the efforts of SMOC we knew exactly what hospitals could take what patients and had a contingency plan to address additional patient influx," Mays said. "SMOC had several conference calls which included hospital representatives and other key regional health care personnel who came to our aid on a holiday weekend."

The SMOC is designed to provide health care resource coordination and communication so that services can be shared during situations when a facility becomes overwhelmed and needs assistance. The triggering event could be any disaster, including a terrorist attack, a tornado, a winter storm, or even a water main break.

Nick Gragnani, executive director of the St. Louis Area Regional Response System (STARRS), says this collaboration can trace its origin to a memorandum of understanding hospitals developed in 2004. That mutual aid agreement was considered groundbreaking at the time, as hospitals worked out liability and financial considerations to set up guidelines for cost and resource sharing.

From that, STARRS helped develop the SMOC as a "coordination body" that includes emergency management agencies, hospitals and public health departments. A duty officer is on call at all times and acts as a team leader when the SMOC is activated.

This coordination is enabled by a web-based software called E-Sponder, that allows 2,000 users from 800 agencies in the region to collaborate virtually during a major incident. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security funding, administered by STARRS, made local use of E-Sponder possible.

"There are not many areas in the country that have something like this," Gragnani says, referring to the SMOC. "Hospital, health and emergency management personnel work better together now, they instinctively collaborate and coordinate when something happens."

During the emergency at Queeny Tower, E-Sponder was used to link close to 50 representatives from regional hospitals, public health departments and area emergency management agencies. Several conferences during that day kept the region's medical establishment updated and ready to help if needed.

Ultimately, Barnes-Jewish Hospital was able to accommodate its 106 patients in Queeny Tower by a "horizontal" evacuation to the adjoining Rand Johnson building, so transferring them to other hospitals was not necessary. The communication through the SMOC did lead to the acquisition of a large number of portable cooling units that were used for patient comfort and to cool key communication and information technology equipment.

By Friday evening, the water had been pumped out of the sub-basement, the power was restored, and the patients were returned to their original rooms.

Anna Taylor, a safety specialist at Barnes-Jewish Hospital who was working on that Fourth of July, said the planning started early. "We had to start planning early for the what-ifs," Taylor says. "If we had to move patients, where to move them, and identify teams to move them. We had to be ready to go."

Taylor, who had worked at STARRS before going to work at Barnes-Jewish Hospital, knew about SMOC and its capacity for coordination.

"Knowing what regional resources are out there and that we could work through SMOC was very helpful," Taylor says. "We kept them updated. If other buildings would have been affected we would have needed help."

Statement of Resources and Expenditures

	2011* (audited)	2012 (estimated)
Resources:		
Federal grants	$11,876,444	$25,962,039
State appropriations and grants	300,952	196,454
Local contributions:		
Cash—per capita	321,407	321,407
Transportation project assessment fee	294,366	380,466
Cash—other	356,339	1,250,558
In-kind services	696,622	1,237,992
Miscellaneous income	18,052	16,473
Total Resources	**$13,864,182**	**$29,365,389**
Expenditures:		
Salaries, benefits	$ 4,126,936	$ 4,369,090
Public agencies, planning consultants	3,765,439	12,811,775
In-kind services	696,622	1,237,990
Grant funded equipment and software	4,207,472	9,817,070
Other grant expenses and operating expenses	804,585	858,950
Total Expenditures	**13,601,054**	**29,094,875**
Change in Net Assets	**$263,128**	**$270,514**

**Full financial statement available upon request*

Background photo: © 2012 Wampa-One

Kirkwood Fire House No. 2, located on Big Bend was designed by architect Dan H. Mullen in 1929. This Craftsman-Tudor Gothic style is further pushed toward a Spanish Colonial look. Tudor elements include steeply pitched cross gables, arched window openings, stucco and half-timber wall treatments with flagstone window surrounds. The front features a wide gable and a crenelated hose tower. An addition to the back of the building now houses fire trucks and equipment. The original building is used as a training facility.

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Background photo: Lafayette Square Fire House No. 7 on LaSalle Street.

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Council of Governments

Creating Solutions Across Jurisdictional Boundaries

One Memorial Drive, Suite 1600
St. Louis, MO 63102-2451
314-421-4220
618-274-2750
Fax 314-231-6120
www.ewgateway.org

The East-West Gateway Council of Governments provides a forum for representatives of local governments in the bi-state area to meet on a monthly basis to discuss regional issues and decide how best to use resources to meet common needs.

East-West Gateway is the only federally designated metropolitan planning organization for the region. Its 24-member board consists of representatives from Madison, Monroe and St. Clair counties in Illinois; Franklin, Jefferson, St. Charles and St. Louis counties in Missouri; and the city of St. Louis. Its primary mission is to develop a comprehensive transportation plan for the region. Other East-West Gateway duties include monitoring air and water quality issues, overseeing homeland security expenditures, and assisting local governments in community planning.

The council's staff is available to assist local governments by providing research, analysis and support in their efforts to more efficiently and effectively service the needs of their citizens on a wide range of metropolitan issues.