

Indian Point Damaged by Earthquake – But It's Only a Drill

BY ERIC GROSS

Fifty federal, state and local officials crowded into the Putnam Emergency Operations Center located on the Donald Smith Governmental Campus in Carmel last Wednesday for a federally monitored exercise that tested the preparedness and capability of emergency services should a catastrophic event ever strike the Indian Point Nuclear Power Plants in northern Westchester.

Putnam County falls within the 10 mile radius of the plant and counties surrounding Indian Point drill twice each year making sure that resources are available should a terrible scenario unfold necessitating widespread evacuations.

The exercise began at 9:15 am when a report was received that an earthquake measuring 3.4 on the Richter scale with its epicenter on Long Island had resulted in a small release of radiation from a valve in Unit 3.

Alerts were sent not only Putnam but to Westchester, Rockland and Orange counties which also opened their emergency operation centers.

For the next six hours different scenarios unfolded necessitating the 'make-believe' shuttering of all Metro-North trains, banning boat traffic from the Hudson River from the Bear Mountain Bridge to the Hamilton Fish Newburgh Beacon Bridge, closing all parks and schools, and suspending all construction on area roads.

When an after-shock shook the plant around 11:30 am, Indian Point released a quantity of radioactive material forcing the evacuation of



Top, Dr. Michael Nesheiwat (right) Putnam's Commissioner of Health discussed the health impacts of the 'radiation leak' with Health Dept. Sanitarian Shawn Rogan and Supervising Public Health Nurse Kathy Percacciolo. Below, Michael Cunningham, Director of the county's Office of Senior Resources, discussed evacuations for the county's over 65 set with his staff by phone while Commissioner of Social Services Mike Piazza and B.J. Tompkins of the Red Cross Disaster Team planned their strategies. Photo/Eric Gross



communities surrounding the facility that included Lower Philipstown, Continental Village, Cortlandt, Peekskill and Buchanan along with Haverstraw, Stony Point and Tompkins Cove in Rockland County.

In the event of a real disaster, Brewster High School and the George Fischer Middle School in Carmel would serve as emergency evacua-

tion shelters for residents of western Putnam displaced by the radioactivity in the atmosphere.

Putnam Commissioner of Emergency Services Ken Clair thanked the participants from his county for taking part: "Exercises like this one reap dividends should God forbid the plant ever experience such a calamity."