



Gov. Steven L. Beshear addressed the crowd of approximately 300 law enforcement officers at the opening of the Kentucky Fusion Center Forum April 24. Beshear reminded the group that law enforcement's mission to serve and protect hasn't changed since the days of the wild west, but today's officers should take advantage of the new technologies available to them through the Kentucky Intelligence Fusion Center.

FUSION CENTER FORUM

> Fusion Focused, Intelligence Driven <

/ Abbie Darst, Program Coordinator

Information sharing, intelligence gathering and interagency communication and cooperation are hot topics in Kentucky and important issues to Gov. Steve Beshear who addressed a crowd of approximately 300 law enforcement executives and personnel at the Fusion Center Forum April 24.

During his opening commentary, Beshear reminded the audience of how far law enforcement has come since the days of the wild west when law enforcement often felt alone, isolated and out of touch with the happenings of their community because there was no form of communication or information relay. He cited the invention of the telegraph as the vehicle that propelled law enforcement into an era of sharing ideas, information, training and much more.

"Our mission hasn't changed since then," Beshear said. "We're still here to protect citizens and fight crime and the best tools to accomplish that mission remain communication and technology."

The Fusion Center Forum provided law enforcement from across the commonwealth an opportunity to more fully develop the give and take of information, analysis and mutual assistance provided by the Kentucky Intelligence Fusion Center to law enforcement and the information law enforcement provides to the fusion center.

The forum, held in conjunction with the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security, offered a profile of the benefits and resources available through KIFC. The KIFC, like other fusion centers across the nation, was created as an answer to the issues presented in the 9/11 report, which called for increased communication and intelligence sharing in all avenues. The fusion center was founded on the premises that information sharing is a necessity, is valuable,

is efficient and depends on each officer and agency to contribute, Beshear said.

"I encourage each of you to take advantage of the fusion center and what it has to offer," he said to forum audience.

Adam Edelen, KOHS executive director, supports Beshear's emphasis on the importance and value of the fusion center's capabilities in Kentucky.

"I hope that events like this usher in cooperation among all entities communication affects," Edelen said. "The fusion center is a great way to come together and provide security to the commonwealth and its citizens. To accomplish that, each participant here today has to realize that the fusion center belongs to you and all your counterparts on the front lines in communities across Kentucky."

The Fusion Center Forum presenters focused on three main topics – the Intelligence Liaison Officer program, the information collection cycle and the intelligence sharing framework.

Presenters Shelby Lawson, deputy director of Operations and Prevention for KOHS, Supervisory Special Agent Alan Bradstock of the Field Intelligence Group with the FBI Louisville Office and Lt. Col. Brad Bates, commander of the Kentucky State Police Technical Services Division helped participants understand the difference between information and intelligence and expounded upon the various ways that the fusion center and other technology-based programs could assist their local agencies and officers.

"Information is just information until you do something with it, then it becomes intelligence," Lawson said, explaining the importance of not just gathering, but also analyzing information collected from various sources.

According to Lawson, the Intelligence Liaison Officer program will help Kentucky agencies share information directly with the fusion center. Each agency will designate a liaison to KIFC specifically as an information transporter. This individual would also participate in regional intelligence meetings, assist in developing local collection requirements and be a point of contact for dissemination of information.

Bates' presentation centered on the Kentucky Open Portal Solution or KYOPS and how this information-sharing framework for the commonwealth can best serve agencies throughout the state. In March alone, there were 32,031 queries requested from the KYOPS Web portal.

"The fusion center is there to help you all solve crimes," Bates said. "The information you submit helps with that. You all provide the source; we just need to build on the number of agencies using it."

Overall, the Fusion Center Forum served as a valuable tool to educate Kentucky's law enforcement community on the valuable resources available through the KIFC and how these resources can best be used to not only serve local agencies, but also how local agencies can serve other agencies across the commonwealth by sharing information with the fusion center.

"The role of the fusion center is to wade through the river of information that's out there coming in, go through it and figure out what's important, then, give it back out to the state," said Larry Rusty Willis, assistant special agent in charge with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. "When it comes to effectively accomplishing this task, working together is not the best option, it's the only option." J

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