

LEE COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT HELPS ENACT UNIFIED COMMAND FOR EDISON PARADE

Ft. Myers, Fla.- For the first time in history this year, operations of the Edison Grande Parade and River District Block Party Saturday, February 20, are organized under the Unified Command System.

The change is expected to save taxpayers money and enable operations to run more effectively. Edison Festival of Light officials say they are thrilled to have the Unified Command System integrate planning between their organization, Lee County Emergency Management, Fort Myers Police Department, Fort Myers Fire Department, Fort Myers Public Works, Lee County Sheriff's Department, and Lee County Emergency Medical Services for the day-long event.

"This is the perfect year to make a change like this," said J. Stakenburg, Operations Manager for Emergency Management, "and we hope to continue to use the Unified Command system for even more large events." The major change of the parade route reversal and the tight budgets of all agencies, including the festival association, created the need.

The system was designed to manage major emergencies, but is applicable to any large gathering of people, explained Stakenburg, and has been used successfully in Lee County for managing political rallies and the Presidential visit in January 2008. The plan includes, by design, a logical deployment of public safety resources, shorter road closures, and quicker, more efficient response in emergencies.