



**SPEAKER** Frank Patterson, Waco-McLennan County Emergency Management Coordinator

**TITLE** **West, Texas Fertilizer Plant Disaster Response and Recovery**

**ABSTRACT** Presentation Description:

On April 17, 2013, a fire and explosion occurred at the West Fertilizer Company a fertilizer, blending, retail and distribution facility in West, Texas, eighteen miles north of Waco, Texas. Fifteen people were killed, 12 of them first responders, more than 300 were injured, and more than 150 buildings were damaged or destroyed. Investigators have confirmed that ammonium nitrate was the material that exploded.



The presentation will discuss the response to the incident from a local perspective as well as discuss challenges that presented themselves during the response and the days after. The presentation will conclude with lessons learned and ongoing objectives as we refine our planning efforts.

Learning Objectives: By attending this session, participants will be better able to build:

1. A community-wide involvement in emergency response preparedness
2. Increased understanding of emergency response risks in a rural community.
3. Improved awareness of hazards and how to address them.

Frank Patterson has more than 30 years' experience in the emergency response field and has served as the Emergency Management Coordinator for the City of Waco and McLennan County since 1999. As such, he is responsible for emergency operations plans and response for the City of Waco and the unincorporated areas in McLennan County. On the night of April 17, 2013, he served as Incident Commander for the vast multi-agency response following West Fertilizer Co. explosion.

Patterson began his career as a volunteer Firefighter with the City of Edinburg and his paid career with Pharr Fire Department working as both a paid and volunteer firefighter and in fire and safety positions in the petrochemical industry. He graduated from Lamar University with a degree in Fire Protection Technology and was the founding coordinator of the McLennan Community College Fire Protection Technology program in 1997.