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Guardsmen to train at Mesa Community College

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Submitted by Mesa Community College spokeswoman Angela Askey.

Twenty-two members of the Arizona National Guard, 91st Civil Support Team will participate in virtual training at Mesa Community College's Virtual Incident Command Center in mid-December.

For three days, the CST members will learn about the latest technologies in incident-management and emergency-operations centers. They will be tested on their staff functions, decision-making processes and methods they would use during a catastrophic event.

Using footage taken at the University of Phoenix Stadium, various crisis situations will be created. During the first day of training, the team will focus on hazmat response. Crises will become more advanced. The third will culminate with training for a catastrophic event.

Each year, the 91st CST provides support to the Fiesta Bowl and also has provided assistance during the Super Bowl. This training will allow the CST to interact and train as a team without disturbing day-to-day stadium operations.

Lt. Col. Brian J. Murphy said, "As the 91st CST commander, I am looking forward to the training opportunities offered by the VICC. An exercise in a virtual environment opens up a vast menu of disaster situations and environments that are difficult or prohibitive to train for utilizing actual responders and venues."

The center provides true-to-life incident-command and emergency-operations training through state-of-the-art, customizable simulations. Trainees will experience everything they would experience in the field.

Larry Thacker, virtual-command center manager, said the "realistic and valuable training environment" for the Guard "not only improves their emergency response skills but it also challenges the creative skills of the staff and technicians of the (command center) to recreate a truly unique experience."

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