

TOWN OF VERNON

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Town of Vernon Hosts National Launch of New Virtual Reality Training System for Medical First Responders

VERNON, Connecticut – VERNON, Connecticut – The Town of Vernon will be the first community in Connecticut to use a cutting edge virtual reality training system for EMTs, police officers, firefighters and other medical first responders. The Town is hosting the national launch of the system on Wednesday, April 24 at 11 a.m. at Vernon's Fire Station No. 1, 724 Hartford Turnpike (Route 30) in Vernon.

The training system, called VRNA EMS, allows users to immerse themselves in virtual reality to prepare for real-life scenarios, including heart attacks, burns, child birth, lacerations, broken bones, overdoses and more.

In addition to providing training opportunities for a wide variety of scenarios, VRNA EMS assesses a user's response and performance, and tests their knowledge. The content aligns with best practices and response protocols.

VRNA EMS was created by VRSim of East Hartford. Vernon is hosting the national launch of VRNA EMS because the town and Vernon Public Schools have adopted it. The town will use it to train first responders, while Rockville High School will use it to teach students in the allied health and fire technology programs.

"Once again, Vernon leads the way," Vernon Mayor Dan Champagne said. "Training and refresher training are important in any public safety organization and we are always in search of creative and innovative solutions to meet today's ever changing public safety challenges."

Vernon is also partnering with VRSim to pursue grants for the research and development of a virtual reality mass casualty training system.

"This game changing technology exponentially enhances EMTs' and emergency medical responders' capabilities," said Michael Purcaro, Vernon's town administrator and emergency and risk management director. "This is just the beginning for this kind of technology. The sky is the limit as we search for new ways to apply virtual reality to our ongoing training needs."

VRSim President and Chief Executive Officer Matthew Wallace said VRNA EMS could also help address the national shortage of EMTs.

“It is our goal to make the critical training needed to attract a strong EMS workforce,” Wallace said. “VRNA EMS helps to train workers better, quicker and more efficiently. We are hopeful this will help to begin to address the shortage of EMS workers and significantly enhance public safety, both in Vernon and elsewhere.”

Virtual reality teaching systems are already in place in the Vernon Public Schools, Superintendent Dr. Joseph P. Macary said.

“Virtual technology systems are the next evolution of teaching for all learners,” Dr. Macary said.

Purcaro said he envisions using virtual reality as a tool for large-scale training exercises involving multiple towns and agencies.

“To have the ability to have multiple people working in the same virtual training environment would enable us to do large-scale training exercises more frequently and at a fraction of the cost in time and money it takes to plan and execute such an event,” Purcaro said.

Vernon organized two large-scale regional training exercises in the past that took several years and thousands of dollars to setup.

“To be able to carry out such an exercise with multiple players in multiple places simultaneously would greatly enhance preparedness training across the region, state and nation,” Purcaro said.

About the Town of Vernon

The Town of Vernon is a celebrated place to live, work and visit. From its beautiful parks and lakes, to its vast trails and historic homes and buildings, Vernon is a resilient and thriving community that promotes the health and wellbeing of its residents and values the natural environment. With a resident population of more than 30,000 and occupying 18.03 square miles, Vernon combines a balanced appreciation of history, and a strong economic base for growth, both residential and commercial. Located 15 minutes east of the Connecticut capital of Hartford, and 25 miles from the City of Springfield, Massachusetts, the Town of Vernon is strategically located in “New England's Knowledge Corridor” with close proximity to some of the top colleges and universities in the country.

Designated a certified Sustainable Community, the Town of Vernon offers a wide range of benefits and services to its residents. The Town of Vernon is a full-service municipality that practices a management philosophy of continuous quality improvement. To learn more about the Town of Vernon, please call (860) 870-3670 or visit www.vernon-ct.gov.

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