

Focus on Emergency Preparedness



We hope this special focus on emergency preparedness will prompt you to review your emergency management plans or take advantage of knowledge already acquired by counties across the country in preparing for a natural or manmade disaster.

Of particular importance is the federal program NIMS, or the National Incident Management System, intended to standardize responses to extreme emergencies. There are several important deadlines that counties must meet in order to qualify for federal funding under NIMS.

Inside ... December 26, 2006

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Federal preparedness funding dependent on NIMS compliance

The Department of Homeland Security launched the National Incident Management System, or NIMS, in March 2004. NIMS is a comprehensive system intended to improve local response operations through the use of the incident command system (ICS) and the application of standardized procedures and preparedness measures.

It promotes development of cross-jurisdictional, statewide and interstate regional mechanisms for coordinating response and obtaining assistance during a large-scale or complex incident.

A Presidential Directive, *Management of Domestic Incidents*, requires all federal departments and agencies to adopt and implement the NIMS, and requires state and local jurisdictions to implement the NIMS to receive federal preparedness funding.

NIMS is based on the reality that tribal and local authorities, not federal, have the primary responsibility for preventing, responding to and recovering from emergencies and disasters. The overwhelming majority of emergency incidents are handled on a daily basis by a single jurisdiction at the local level.

NIMS compliance should be considered and undertaken as a community-wide effort. The benefit of NIMS is most evident at the local level, when a community as a whole prepares for and provides an integrated response to an incident. Incident response organizations (to include local public health, public works, emergency management, fire, emergency medical services, law enforcement, hazardous materials, private sector entities, non-governmental organizations, medical organizations, utilities and others) must work together to comply with NIMS components, policies and procedures.

Implementation of NIMS in every tribal and local jurisdiction establishes a baseline capability that once established nationwide, can be used as a foundation upon which more advanced homeland security capabilities can be built.

Small or rural jurisdictions will benefit from a regional approach. In many instances smaller communities may not have the resources to implement all elements of NIMS on their own. However, by working together with other localities in their regions, these jurisdictions will be able to pool their resources to implement NIMS.

When NIMS is fully implemented, your local community or jurisdiction will be able to:

- Ensure common and proven incident management doctrine, practices and principles are used to plan for, protect against, respond to and recover from emergency incidents and preplanned events.
- Maintain a response operation capable of expanding to meet an escalating situation and the ability to integrate resources and equipment from intrastate and interstate mutual aid agreements,

■ See NIMS on page 4

NIMS Implementation Matrix for Tribal and Local Jurisdictions

FY06 Compliance Activities

Required Local Jurisdiction Action for FY06 Compliance	Guidance and Technical Assistance Resources	Future Activities
Community Adoption		
Adopt NIMS at the community level for all government departments and agencies; as well as promote and encourage NIMS adoption by associations, utilities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector incident management and response organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt NIMS through executive order, proclamation, resolution or legislation as the jurisdiction's official all-hazards, incident response system. Develop a baseline assessment of the NIMS implementation requirements that your jurisdiction already meets and using that baseline, develop a strategy for full NIMS implementation and maintenance. The NIMS Capability Assessment Support Tool (NIMCAST) is available at: www.fema.gov/nimcast/index.jsp Sample templates for executives: www.fema.gov/nims/nims_toolsandtemplates.shtm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend or re-authorize, as necessary.
Command and Management		
Incident Command System (ICS): Manage all emergency incidents and pre-planned (recurring/special) events in accordance with ICS organizational structures, doctrine and procedures, as defined in NIMS. ICS implementation must include the consistent application of Incident Action Planning and Common Communications Plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutionalize ICS: Terms and definitions: www.fema.gov/txt/nims/institutionalizing_ics.txt Incorporate concepts and principles of NIMS Chapter II, Command and Management including ICS characteristics such as common terminology, modular organization, management by objectives, incident action planning, manageable span of control, pre-designated incident facilities, comprehensive resource management, integrated communications, transfer of command, unity of command, unified command, personnel and resource accountability, and information and intelligence management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to manage incidents and events using ICS.
Multi-agency Coordination System: Coordinate and support emergency incident and event management through the development and use of integrated multi-agency coordination systems, i.e develop and maintain connectivity capability between local Incident Command Posts (ICPs, local 911 Centers, local Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) and state EOC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NIMS Chapter II, Command and Management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise and update processes and plans. The Emergency Management Institute (EMI) is currently developing an independent study and classroom course on NIMS Multi-Agency Coordination Systems. Additional information will be posted on the NIMS Integration Center Web page when available. See www.fema.gov/nims. The NIMS Integration Center will feature best practices on the NIMS Web page. See www.fema.gov/nims.
Public Information System: Implement processes, procedures, and/or plans to communicate timely, accurate information to the public during an incident through a Joint Information System and Joint Information Center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NIMS Chapter II, Command and Management. Public Information Training (E388, Advanced Public Information Officers and G290, Basic Public Information Officers). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise and update processes and plans. The Emergency Management Institute (EMI) is currently developing an independent study and classroom course on NIMS Public Information Systems. Additional information will be posted on the NIMS Integration Center Web page when available. See www.fema.gov/nims. Information on who should complete these courses also will be posted on the NIMS Web page. The NIMS Integration Center will feature best practices on the NIMS Web page. See www.fema.gov/nims
Preparedness: Planning		
Establish the community's NIMS baseline against the FY 2005 and FY 2006 implementation requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess which NIMS implementation requirements your community already meets. The NIMS Capability Assessment Support Tool (NIMCAST) is available to facilitate this: www.fema.gov/nimcast/index.jsp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update strategy as appropriate and close capability gap.
Develop and implement a system to coordinate all federal preparedness funding to implement the NIMS across the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A list of the Federal preparedness grant programs that have been reported to the NIC are available on the NIMS Web page at: www.fema.gov/nims 2005 Homeland Security Grant Program Guidance: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/fy05hsgp.pdf National Preparedness Goal and National Preparedness Guidance: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/assessments/hspd8.htm Catalog of Federal Domestic Preparedness Assistance (CFDA): www.cfda.gov 	
Revise and update plans and SOPs to incorporate NIMS components, principles and policies, to include planning, training, response, exercises, equipment, evaluation and corrective actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2005 Homeland Security Grant Program Guidance: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/fy05hsgp.pdf National Preparedness Goal and National Preparedness Guidance: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/assessments/hspd8.htm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update plans and SOPs, incorporating lessons learned and best practices from exercises and response operations. Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) guidance is under development and will be posted on the NIMS Integration Center Web page at: www.fema.gov/nims
Participate in and promote intrastate and inter-agency mutual aid agreements, to include agreements with the private sector and non-governmental organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMAC model state-county mutual aid deployment contract: www.emacweb.org/?123 EMAC model intrastate mutual aid legislation: www.emacweb.org/docs/NEMA%20Proposed%20Intrastate%20Model-Final.pdf 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand mutual aid agreements beyond support services and equipment to include information sharing. Support and adopt the ongoing efforts of the NIMS Integration Center (NIC) to develop a national credentialing system. Credentialing guidance is under development by the NIMS Integration Center. Throughout the development process, drafts will be posted on the NIMS Web page for review and comment by interested stakeholders. Credential first responders in conformance with national standards.

■ MATRIX from page 2

Required Local Jurisdiction Action for FY06 Compliance	Guidance and Technical Assistance Resources	Future Activities
Preparedness: Training		
Complete IS-700 NIMS: An Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-line course: training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is700.asp NIMS National Standard Curriculum Training Development Guidance: www.fema.gov/pdf/nims/nims_training_development.pdf All personnel with a direct role in emergency preparedness, incident management, or response must complete this training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that NIMS training is part of the program for all new employees, recruits and first responders who have a direct role in emergency preparedness, incident management or response. The NIMS Integration Center is working to establish a mechanism that will allow State and local jurisdictions direct access to course completion data. Additional information will be posted on the NIMS Integration Center Web page when available. See www.fema.gov/nims
Complete IS-800 NRP: An Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-line course available at: www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/is800.asp NIMS National Standard Curriculum Training Development Guidance: www.fema.gov/pdf/nims/nims_training_development.pdf The NIMS Web page provides for who should complete this training. www.fema.gov/nims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that NRP training is part of the program for all-appropriate new employees, recruits and first responders. The NIMS Integration Center is working to establish a mechanism that will allow State and local jurisdictions direct access to course completion data. Additional information will be posted on the NIMS Integration Center Web page when available. See www.fema.gov/nims
Complete ICS 100 and ICS 200 Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICS 100: www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/is100.asp ICS 100: www.usfa.fema.gov/training/nfa ICS 200: www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/is200.asp ICS 200: www.usfa.fema.gov/training/nfa NIMS National Standard Curriculum Training Development Guidance: www.fema.gov/pdf/nims/nims_training_development.pdf The NIMS Web page provides guidance for who should complete this training. www.fema.gov/nims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete ICS 300 and ICS 400. Complete training that may be required to satisfy credentialing standards. Ensure that ICS training is part of the program for all new employees, recruits and first responders. The NIMS Integration Center is working to establish a mechanism that will allow States and local jurisdictions direct access to course completion data. Additional information will be posted on the NIMS Integration Center Web page when available. See www.fema.gov/nims
Preparedness: Exercises		
Incorporate NIMS/ICS into all tribal, local and regional training and exercises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NIMS training information: www.fema.gov/nims/nims_training.shtm NIMS National Standard Curriculum Training Development Guidance: www.fema.gov/pdf/nims/nims_training_development.pdf DHS ODP Exercise Information: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/exercises.htm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to incorporate NIMS into all local training and exercises, to include drills, tabletop exercises, functional exercises and full-scale exercises.
Participate in an all-hazard exercise program based on NIMS that involves responders from multiple disciplines and multiple jurisdictions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2005 Homeland Security Grant Program Guidance: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/fy05hsgp.pdf National Preparedness Goal and National Preparedness Guidance: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/assessments/hspd8.htm DHS ODP Exercise Information: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/exercises.htm NIMS National Standard Curriculum Training Development Guidance: www.fema.gov/pdf/nims/nims_training_development.pdf 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to participate in NIMS-oriented exercises, to include drills, tabletop exercises, functional exercises and full-scale exercises.
Incorporate corrective actions into preparedness and response plans and procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHS ODP Exercise Information: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/exercises.htm 	
Resource Management		
Inventory community response assets to conform to homeland security resource typing standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose modifications or new resource definitions to the NIMS Integration Center for inclusion in the resource typing effort. Resource typing definitions: www.fema.gov/nims/mutual_aid.shtm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a resource inventory, ordering and tracking system. The Emergency Management Institute (EMI) is currently developing a course on NIMS Resource Management. Additional information will be posted on the NIMS Integration Center Web page at www.fema.gov/nims when the course is available.
To the extent permissible by law, ensure that relevant national standards and guidance to achieve equipment, communication and data interoperability are incorporated into tribal and local acquisition programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ODP Equipment Program: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/grants_goals.htm 2005 Homeland Security Grant Program Guidance: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/fy05hsgp.pdf National Preparedness Goal and National Preparedness Guidance: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/assessments/hspd8.htm DHS SAFECOM Program: www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM 	
Communication & Information Management		
Apply standardized and consistent terminology, including the establishment of plain English communications standards across public safety sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incident response communications (during exercises and actual incidents) should feature plain English commands so they will be able to function in a multi-jurisdiction environment. Field manuals and training should be revised to reflect the plain English standard. '10' codes may continue to be used during non-emergency, internal department communications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue featuring common terminology and plain English commands for all response activities. The Emergency Management Institute (EMI) is currently developing a course on NIMS Communication and Information Management. Additional information will be posted on the NIMS Integration Center Web page at www.fema.gov/nims when the course is available.

Leadership: Lessons learned from hurricane seasons past



Photo by Deborah Silver, copyright Scripps Treasure Coast. Reprinted with permission. Martin County, Fla. Board Chair Doug Smith surveys damage after Hurricane Jeanne, a Category 3 storm, struck his county in September 2004.

By DOUG SMITH
BOARD CHAIRMAN, MARTIN COUNTY, FLA.

During my first three years as county commissioner, Martin County was not subjected to hurricanes. During my term as commission chair Frances and Jeanne hit, teaching lessons in disaster-related leadership that will be with me for a lifetime. Fortunately multiple routine training sessions for staff, a fully staffed and compliant Emergency Operations Center, an up-to-date GIS system and a contingency debris removal contract were in place, but the complexity of two direct hits by hurricanes within 30 days were beyond the scope of normal preparedness.

Serious problems and issues arose. Expected assistance from outside sources would materialize, but not as quickly as needed or anticipated. Though well-intending, federal and state agencies could not respond to meet our needs. Local governments need to be self-reliant for at least 10 days after a disaster.

Following each hurricane, we found that infrastructure failed for 7-10 days, and conditions were

exacerbated by Florida's extreme summer heat. Preparedness should include:

- Communication for staff, volunteers and first responders
- Sufficient, compliant emergency shelters
- Back-up generators for traffic signals and lift stations
- Mandated back-up generators for hospitals, assisted-living and special-needs facilities
- Removal and storage of redundant traffic lights immediately prior hurricane
- Storage facilities for Meals Ready to Eat (MRE's), food and ice for residents and the influx of outside assistance personnel
- Stockpiling of sign materials to facilitate post-disaster transportation

The most crucial realization when preparing for a disaster is that all disasters are "personal." They are personal for you as the leader of your community because the personal relationships you've made will help you obtain assistance from unaffected cities or counties, and from state and federal officials you've

worked with in various capacities over time.

Emergency situations are personal for staff and volunteers. They will want to work 24/7 to do their personal best to expedite recovery, but leadership must insist they delegate effectively, take time to "recharge" and see to their family's personal needs as real recovery will require weeks and months of effort!

Disasters are personal for each resident and property owner. Whether local or out-of-state due to evacuation or seasonal residence, they'll want to be reassured that everything is going to be okay and to be kept abreast. This can be a daunting task. It necessitates a strong, experienced public relations staff or, if needed, a contract with professionals that know how to get regular, in-depth coverage of crucial information disseminated both locally and nationally via newspaper, radio and the Internet.

As the leader of your county, your personal support network and the emergency preparedness plan you have in place will make a crucial difference in your effectiveness following a disaster.

Feds aid state, local governments before and after natural disasters

By DALEN A. HARRIS
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The federal government provides aid to state and local governments before and after natural disasters to assist them in preparing, preventing, responding and recovering from disasters.

Principally, this assistance is provided by the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); however, various other federal agencies also provide assistance to local governments after a disaster.

FEMA and many other federal agencies' assistance to state and local governments is primarily triggered after a state has requested assistance and the president declares a disaster or emergency. However, the president can also invoke emergency powers under certain and specific instances and assist communities responding to disasters without a state's request.

For instance, in the event of massive civil disobedience in any given state during a disaster, the president can call on the military to quell

rioting, without the governor's consent.

Historically, U.S. presidents have been cautious to exercise these emergency powers, and instead declare a damaged area a disaster. Again, once this declaration is made, the state and local communities are eligible for FEMA and other federal agencies' aid.

Financing for this aid is appropriated by Congress to the Disaster Relief Fund, which is administered by FEMA. Through this fund, FEMA provides both individual and public assistance.

FEMA's Public Assistance aids state and local governments and assists in rebuilding a community's damaged infrastructure and includes funding for debris removal, emergency protective measures and public services, repair for damaged public property, loans for essential government functions and grants for public schools.

FEMA also provides assistance

■ See AID on page 6

NIMS compliance deadline, Sept. 30, 2006

■ NIMS from page 1

state-provided assistance and federal government response.

- Order and track response assets using common resource typing and definitions, and draw on mutual aid agreements for additional assistance.

- Establish staging and allocation plans for the re-distribution of equipment, supplies and aid coming into the area from other localities, states, or the federal government through mutual aid agreements.

- Conduct situational assessments and establish the appropriate ICS organizational structure to effectively manage the incident; and

- Establish communication processes, procedures and protocols that will ensure effective interoperable communications among emergency responders, 9-1-1 centers, and multi-agency coordination systems (Emergency Operations Centers).

NIMS compliance for FY05

In federal FY05, the secretary of homeland security provided guidance to each state, outlining initial actions that should be taken to implement the NIMS.

The letter to the nation's governors included a list of recommended actions for tribal and

local governments to help them work towards NIMS compliance. A copy of this letter is posted on the NIMS Web page at: www.fema.gov/nims/nims_compliance.shtm.

Recommended FY05 NIMS activities included:

- Institutionalization of the incident command system

- Completion of the NIMS awareness course IS-700 NIMS: An Introduction

- Formal recognition of NIMS and adoption of NIMS principles and policies

- Establishment of a NIMS compliance baseline by determining the NIMS requirements that have already been met; and

- Development of a strategy and timeline for full NIMS implementation.

By completing these activities, communities will have made substantial progress toward full NIMS implementation by the start of FY07 (i.e. Oct. 1, 2006).

FY06 compliance activities deadline Sept. 30, 2006

In federal year, FY06, tribes and local communities will be required to complete several activities to comply with the NIMS. The implementation matrix on page 2 describes the actions that jurisdictions must take by

Sept. 30, 2006 to be compliant with NIMS.

Completion of these actions will position tribal and local communities to better manage prevention, response and recovery efforts.

The matrix identifies activities that are underway by the NIMS Integration Center (NIC) to support the effective implementation of NIMS as well as activities that will be required for NIMS implementation in future years.

The matrix also provides information on where to find technical assistance resources to support these compliance actions. For example, the National Incident Management Capability Assessment Support Tool (NIMCAST) is an example of a product designed to assist communities in determining their current NIMS compliance baseline.

Future refinement to the NIMS will evolve as policy and technical issues are further developed and clarified at the national level. This may well result in additional requirements being issued by the NIC as to what will constitute continuous full NIMS compliance in FY2007 and beyond.

More information on NIMS, NIMS compliance, and answers to frequently asked questions are available on the NIMS Integration Center Web page (www.fema.gov/nims).

When waters rise, information can be the lifeboat

BY KEVIN NEIMOND
GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST

You have been monitoring weather patterns for the past week and all signs point to record rainfall amounts in your county and in neighboring counties upstream from your location. Where do you turn for the information you need to guide you through the decisions that will

ultimately impact the lives of your constituents?

Like a steadily growing number of their peers, Boulder County, Colo. enlists the assistance of information technology to provide the data and information leaders depend on to reduce the destruction caused by disasters.

"A lot changed after the Big Thompson River experienced a flash

flood in 1976, which killed over 140 people. We knew we had to develop the means for obtaining information about flood conditions much earlier in the game in order to mobilize citizens, as well as our emergency personnel," said Justin Dombrowski, acting director of the Boulder City and County Office of Emergency Management.

Working collaboratively with the City of Boulder and the Urban

Drainage and Flood Control District of Denver, the county developed and implemented a flood detection and warning system to reduce the loss of life if a similar flood should occur in Boulder County.

Real time data collection and reporting gauges were installed in waterways across the community, which feed a continuous supply of information on river and stream conditions to county officials. Meteorologists, both from the private sector and government, then take this data and combine it with weather data to more accurately predict when a flood will strike the county.

Getting an early lead on the location and timing of a disaster is a crucial, but not always a feasible component of reducing the impact of an event. Understanding your population, and the specific locations of your community's vulnerable citizens can save you valuable time during an emergency situation by allowing you to allocate resources to areas most in need of service.

When Hurricane Charley hit Florida in August of 2004, the Lee County, Fla. Department of Human Services found itself in an unexpected, but demanding situation for immediate disaster response and long-term recovery.

"Following the hurricane, everybody from our own local first responder community to out-of-state relief volunteers was coming to us asking for information on the locations of citizens with the greatest need." "Due to the nature of the programs that we administer in our department, our traditional clientele consists of citizens with disadvantages that require special focus in emergency situations. During the hurricane response, we used our existing demographic data to map out the locations of our vulnerable populations," said Karen Hawes, Human Services Director.

Following Hurricane Charley, the department has developed a GIS-based pre-disaster planning tool to map the concentrations of human vulnerability and risks to the social infrastructure. Dubbed the "vulnerability index," the tool

works by selecting indicators found in data freely available from the Census Bureau, such as income, transportation and physical vulnerability and assigning them a weight based on their predicted need for services. The results of the predictive model are mapped for each of the county's subdivisions, resulting in a color-coded map highlighting areas of greatest service need in disaster situations.

The Emergency Management Agency in Linn County, Iowa has also taken steps to identify the special needs citizens in a pre-disaster setting.

"We were fortunate in that we had the Special Needs Registration Program in place to capture data on the residents in our community that require additional assistance in a time of crisis," said Walter "Ned" Wright, director of the Emergency Management Agency.

The Special Needs Registration Program uses postage-paid cards to collect information on members of households in the county that would require special assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation. Once a resident returns the card to the county, his or her information is entered into a GIS database where the address information is used to map the location and type of assistance residents will need in a disaster. By using GIS technology, Linn County Emergency Management Agency staff members are able to quickly assess an emergency scenario and coordinate personnel according to the specific needs of the community.

"An emergency setting is not the time to learn about your citizens. Information technology allows us store, map and analyze our areas requiring special services so that we can easily plan out our strategies for assistance long before a disaster strikes us," Wright stated.

(For more information on how information technology is used for emergency management applications, please contact Kevin Neimond at 202/942-4247 or kneimond@naco.org.)

Howard County promotes public readiness

BY DAN MILLER
STAFF WRITER

Sometimes when disaster strikes, the best place to be is at home.

In an effort to help county residents care for themselves in case of an emergency, Howard County, Md. undertook a major promotion of individual and family disaster preparedness in October. Dubbed Community Readiness Week, the week featured daily events that addressed preparedness in the face of disasters, including a local flooding scenario tabletop discussion and "Get Ready Room" demonstration aimed to help senior citizens understand the value of planning ahead for emergencies.

"Whether the disaster is man-made as it was on Sept. 11, or natural as it was with Hurricane Katrina, they can strike quickly and, in some instances, with little or no warning," said Howard County Executive Jim Robey. "As local elected officials, it is our responsibility to make sure those who work here, those who call Howard County 'home' and even those who are visiting, are prepared and protected."

The destruction wrought by Hurricane Katrina gave the week added poignancy, although the county had been planning the event since last spring. The programs were sponsored in cooperation with the county's Community Emergency Response Network (CERN).

Many public entities contributed to the effort, including the library system, which hosted information booths, and the local community college, which conducted a safety awareness campaign aimed to the college community.

According to Victoria Goodman, Howard County public information administrator, many aspects of the program are replicable. In particular, Goodman pointed out that a chamber of commerce leadership summit is an easy way to reach out to the business community. The summit would talk to businesses about how they can continue to operate in the face of a disaster as well as helping their employees cope.

In addition to the responsibilities



Photo courtesy of Howard County, Md.

Ready Eddie, Howard County's Community Readiness Week mascot helped school-aged children learn about the concept of disaster preparedness. Howard County is willing to share the mascot with any county wishing to use him.

of the private sector, Howard County Fire Chief Joe Herr, who heads up the county's Office of Emergency Management, stressed personal responsibility.

"We want the public to understand that local officials will do all they can to help in an emergency; however, we may not be available to every individual immediately," he said. "By planning ahead, people can take some of the responsibility for their own safety."

Goodman advised other counties to inform the public of the limits of a county's ability to offer immediate assistance to every citizen.

"Be realistic with people and let them understand that this is what government can do and this is what

government can't do," Goodman said. "We'll do all we can, but there are times where we can't get to you right away and that's why we're here helping you now."

An important part of the week's success, Goodman says, was the utilization of Ready Eddie, a mascot aimed to introduce the concept of disaster preparedness to school-aged children.

Howard County used Eddie to get children the familiar with the idea of being prepared for an emergency, just like they would introduce the idea of fire safety or the dangers of smoking.

Goodman also indicated that Howard County was willing to share the Ready Eddie mascot.

ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR GRANTS??

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Talk between agencies ... Should start before – not after – disaster strikes

By JEFF ARNOLD
DEPUTY LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

As the nation continues to assess the implications of the terrible natural disasters that befell Louisiana and Mississippi in August, many observers have asked, "What happened to our emergency communications?"

There are no simple answers except one—they were blown away (or in the case of New Orleans, drowned).

County officials must be realistic as to communications capabilities after such a devastating event. Having stated the obvious, what can we do to be better prepared in the future?

It's a crucial question. Lives and property are put at risk because first responders at all levels of government are not able to communicate using existing voice or data channels in an emergency. Often, inadequate

technology becomes the scapegoat for these problems. Fortunately, wireless technology solutions are becoming widely available to public safety agencies to assist in facilitating communications operability and interoperability. However, technology is not always the issue.

The lack of coordination and partnerships among government leaders and public safety officials in planning

for, and implementing public safety land mobile radio systems has created a much more significant challenge. In fact, numerous studies indicate a significant need for coordinated approaches, relationship building and information sharing.

County officials need to truly "communicate" with their sheriffs and other public safety officials. These elements have long been

seen as critical to solving a number of key communications issues such as interoperability, spectrum sharing, funding, standards development and systems security — each of which is a critical element in implementing successful public safety radio communications systems.

The problems associated with the lack of coordination and partnerships in the public safety community cross all jurisdictional boundaries. For example, routine law enforcement activities, such as narcotics investigations, generally require participation by multiple local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.

Naturally, these situations require agencies to work together to ensure that information exchange, whether by voice or data communications, is available to assist public safety in performing its critical missions.

Key issues

As it stands now, several key issues have emerged as challenges to successful coordination and partnerships

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Federal, local officials work to ensure animal safety

By DAN MILLER
STAFF WRITER

Keeping humans safe after a disaster is a huge job that requires efforts from multiple agencies. However, federal and local officials have been working to maintain the safety of four-legged disaster victims and their owners both before and after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf coast.

On the national front, Reps. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) and Christopher Shays (R-Conn.) have introduced the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act (PETS), which would require local and state emergency preparedness authorities to include instructions on how to accommodate household pets or service animals in case of an evacuation.

The authorities would need to submit these plans in order to qualify for grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"The sight of evacuees choosing between being rescued or remaining with their pets, perhaps even having to leave behind the trained and faithful helping animals that some people with disabilities rely on every day, was just heartbreaking," Lantos said of the Katrina situation. "Our legislation will put an end to that."

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and other animal rights organizations emphasized their support for the initiative.

Counties have also taken the safety of animals into account.

The animal services staff of Lake County, Fla. took steps to helping animals in the face of disaster by establishing pet-friendly hurricane shelters.

After Hurricane Charley hit in 2004, officials established two shelters where pet owners could take their animals. By the end of the year, the county had established three more and today the county has a total of seven.

"We saw the need that a lot of people would not leave their home in emergency-type situations because they wouldn't take their animals,"



said Marjorie Boyd, director of animal services, for Lake County. "There are a lot of citizens who would rather risk their own lives than leave their animal. We want to save human lives and animal lives."

To check into a pet-friendly shelter, pets must be up-to-date with their shots and owners should be able to provide enough food and supplies for three to five days. Animals must be kept in their carriers and only taken out at designated times.

To date, the shelters have accommodated birds, iguanas and snakes in addition to cats and dogs.

"For numerous years there was a lot of hesitation about having animals in shelter-type situations but if it's done in a controlled environment it can run so smooth and be so reasonable for the citizens," Boyd said.

Meanwhile, Volusia County, Fla. officials have worked to ensure the safety of animals by establishing an animal disaster preparedness education and response unit.

The county remodeled a 14-passenger bus into a mobile command unit that could be activated in case of an emergency. Equipped with radio communications, the vehicle would serve as a command center to dispatch staff to rescue in-need animals.

When the county is not using the bus for an activation, which is most of the time, they use it as an educational unit to educate the public on disaster preparedness. Staff members set up table at public events with disaster preparedness brochures so people

are prepared whether they evacuate or stay home.

"It's a piece of valuable equipment in terms of a centralized command for animal rescue, but we utilize it more for education," said Becky Wilson, director of animal control services. "When we go out to festivals, people are interested. People are drawn to see what it's all about. When they do that we can share the information they need to be prepared for disasters. People can't be too prepared."

Federal grants can be used to strengthen structures in flood-prone areas

■ AID from page 4

to local governments for a variety of hazard mitigation projects. Both the Pre-Disaster Mitigation and Hazard Mitigation Grant programs assist local governments in preventing and recovering from future hazards. For instance, pre-disaster mitigation grants can be used for elevating or moving properties in flood-prone regions, bracing homes and businesses against future earthquakes, and installing shutters and other protections to protect homes from wind damage caused by tornadoes.

Also, the National Flood insurance program enables property owners in participating communities to purchase insurance protection against losses from flooding.

While DHS and FEMA are the chief federal agencies that offer assistance to state and local governments for natural disasters, various other federal agencies also provide aid. The following is a snapshot of some of the assistance available:

- The Department of Housing and Urban Development provides flexible grants to assist state and counties in recovering from declared disasters. State and local governments have used CDBG and HOME funds for recovery efforts involving replacement housing, economic development and

other community development needs. For additional details, county officials should contact a nearby HUD Field or Regional Office or go to the HUD Web site at www.hud.gov.

- The Department of Transportation (DOT) provides aid to states for the repair of federal roads or roads on federal lands through the Emergency Relief Program. For additional details, county officials should contact the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Division Office located in their state or go to the FHWA Web site at www.fhwa.dot.gov.

- The Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Utilities Service's (RUS) Emergency Community Water Assistance Grant program provides aid to states, local governments and nonprofit organizations to assist residents of rural areas that have experienced or are expected to experience significant declines in quantity and quality of water. For additional details, county officials should contact the local USDA Rural Development county, district or state office or go to the RUS Web site at www.rurdev.usda.gov.

- The Department of Justice's (DOJ) Community Relations Service (CRS) assists state and local governments during disasters and resolves disputes, disagreements and difficulties arising from discrimination based on race, color or national origin. For

additional details, county officials should contact a CRS Regional Office or go to the CRS Web site at www.usdoj.gov/crs.

- The Department of Commerce (DOC), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) provide project grants (cooperative agreements) to state and local governments for biological, economic, sociological, public policy and other research regarding coastal habitats and wetlands.

For additional details, county officials should contact a NMFS Regional Office or go to NOAA's Website at www.nmfs.noaa.gov.

Overall, these programs are just a few of the more than 50 programs available to state and local governments before and after a natural disaster. The federal government also offers a wide assortment of aid to nonprofits, community organizations, citizens and businesses before and after a natural disaster.

For a summary of the various assistance that is available FEMA has recently released a guide booklet entitled: *Disaster Assistance: A Guide to Recovery Programs*. NACo members can access the guide on the NACo Web site in the Technical Assistance section.

Emergency Preparedness Resources

Emergency Management Plans

New York State Guide for Emergency Management

The Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, offered by the state of New York, is a guide that county governments can use in preparing for emergencies. The sample plan offers suggestions to determining issues that a county may face in regards to emergency preparedness, and suggests possible formats to use in order to solve problems that a county might experience during an emergency.

For further information on this plan, contact the State Emergency Management Office, 1220 Washington Ave., Suite 101, Building 22, Albany, NY 12226-2251, 518/447-2200.

www.nysemo.state.ny.us/Planning/Empire%20County%20CEMP%202003%20tuffey.doc

Orangeburg County, S.C.*

Emergency Management Municipal Outreach is a plan implemented by Orangeburg County, S.C. to familiarize the 17 cities in the county with the county and state emergency management response programs and plans.

For additional information, contact J. William Clark, County Administrator, Administration, P.O. Drawer 9000, Orangeburg, SC 29116-9000, 803/533-6101.

County Emergency Preparedness Response

Collier County, Fla.* Disaster Response Units

Collier County has created Disaster Response Unit trailers, outfitted with all the necessary supplies and equipment to comfortably support its citizens in times of disaster, evacuation and shelter activation. The county purchased eleven trailers, fully equipped with backup generators, special needs and regular cots, sleeping mats, blankets, linen, stand up air coolers, fans and many more essential equipment and supplies. For more information, contact

Dan E. Summers, Director, Bureau of Emergency Services, Emergency Management, 3301 East Tamiami Trail, Naples, FL 34112, 239/774-8000.

Fairfax County, Va.* Emergency Response Planning Program

The Emergency Response Planning Program was created to assure the safety, welfare and protection of

County employees, visitors and property during emergency situations and County work sites. The goals of the program were to create consistent Emergency Response Plans (ERPs) for every work site, train on-site Emergency Response Teams (ERTs), train all County employees, and establish an effective decision making and communication structure to respond to emergency scenarios.

The program developed a countywide policy, a template ERP, and Employee Emergency Response Procedures brochure, a "train the trainer" program and an oversight and monitoring mechanism. More than 5,000 employee brochures have been distributed. More than 5,000 employees have been trained, and ERTs and ERPs have been established for approximately 150 facilities. Drills are now conducted on a semi-annual basis. For more information, contact James Patterson, Director Facilities Management Division, 12000 Government Center Pkwy., Ste. 424, Fairfax, VA 22035, 703/324-2881.

Okaloosa County, Fla.* General Populace Emergency Evacuation

The purpose of the program is to improve emergency evacuation procedures for residents and tourists during hurricane season. State roadways are marked as evacuation routes, but leave county-maintained/owned roads without signage. Essentially, the county marks specific roadways with low-cost, easy-to-install signage that can be quickly replaced if stolen or lost in high wind conditions.

For more information, contact Dino J. Villani, Public Safety Director, 1250 N. Eglin Prkwy, Suite G118, Shalimar, FL 32579, 850/651-7150

Platte County, Mo.* Citizen Corps

The primary focus of the Citizen Corps is to establish communication between local elected officials, emergency response organizations, charitable groups and citizens. Essentially, the Platte County Citizen Corps allows the county to call on citizen volunteers in time of crisis to augment or expand government services.

For more information, contact Kevin Kuzma, Public Affairs, 415 Third St., Suite 105, Platte City, MO 64079, 816/858-1906.

San Diego County, Calif.* Site Emergency Response Plans (SERPs) 2005

San Diego County's site evacuation plans incorporate a fill-in-the blank

system, with standard formatting, sections, language, emergency roles, area team rosters, maps and personnel rosters. Employees visiting other San Diego County buildings understand the plan, emergency team roles, and evacuation procedures. Management can quickly locate information and give clear directives. The template can readily be adapted for use by other agencies.

For more information, contact Renee Sherrill, Health and Human Services Agency, 1700 Pacific Highway, San Diego, CA 92101, 619/515-6515.

York County, Va.* Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program focuses on organizing neighborhoods to encourage the creation of self-sufficient neighborhoods in disasters.

For more information, contact Stephen Kopczyński, Fire Chief, York County Fire and Life Safety, P.O. Box 532, Yorktown, VA 23690, 757/890-3600.

Special Needs Populations

City of Dunedin and Pinellas County, Fla.

Assistance to shelters for those with special needs within an evacuation zone or in a mobile home park.

For more information, contact Pinellas County Emergency Management Department, 400 S. Fort Harrison Ave, Suite 111, Clearwater, FL 33756, 727/464-3800.

www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/Local.htm

Lake County, Fla.*

Pet-Friendly Hurricane Shelters in Lake County, Fla. an award-winning program that addressed concerns raised by many residents of the community during the hurricanes of 2004. The program sheltered people and their pets under the same roof.

For additional information, contact Gary E. Kaiser, Department of Public Safety, 315 West Main Street, Tavares, FL 32778, 352/343-9458.

Miami-Dade County, Fla. Emergency Evacuation Assistance Program

Shelter and transportation for elderly and disabled individuals who require assistance, need to pre-register.

For information, contact the Miami Dade Office of Emergency Management, 9300 NW 41 Street,

Miami, FL 33178, 305/513-7700.

www.co.miami-dade.fl.us/oem/hurricane/EEAP_program.asp

Monroe County, Fla.*

The Special Needs Registry Pet-Friendly Sheltering program focuses on the most vulnerable in our community – the frail and elderly. The program caters to registered clients who have pets. If a hurricane or other emergency threatens the area, clients with their pets are picked up and taken to a shelter, where their pets are cared for in a separate building.

For additional information, contact Anna Haskins, Special Needs Coordinator, Social Services, 1100 Simonton St., Room 1-180, Key West, FL 33040, 305/292-4591.

Montgomery County, Md. Health Care Facilities**

Montgomery County, Md.'s award-winning program for disaster planning for licensed health care facilities.

For further information, contact Susan Quast, Health and Human Services, 255 Rockville Pike, 2nd Floor, Rockville, MD 20850, 240/777-3831.

Suffolk County, N.Y. Joint Emergency Evacuation Program

Emergency evacuation transportation assistance to a local shelter for elderly and disabled who are not in nursing homes, must pre-register.

For more information, contact the Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services at 631-852-4900 or the Office of Handicapped Services at 631/853-8333.

www.co.suffolk.ny.us/webtemp3.cfm?dept=23&id=348

Household Emergency Preparedness Response Plans

American Red Cross

The Red Cross has produced a six-step plan for family disaster preparedness, which includes checklists of activities every household should undertake.

For more information from the Red Cross, contact the American Red Cross National Headquarters, 2025 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006, 202/303-4498.

www.redcross.org/prepare/makeplan.html

DHS Ready Plan

A Department of Homeland Security Web site that has special

instructions for businesses, homes and kids to get prepared to respond to an emergency. It features lists of activities and checklists for items that everyone should have on hand.

For additional information contact the Ready Campaign, Office of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Washington, DC 20528, 202/282-8010.

www.ready.gov/

Macomb County, Mich.* Community Emergency Preparedness Workbook and Guidelines

A workbook and guideline addresses all of the planning and preparedness issues that a citizen must undertake to ensure that they are prepared, not only for a terrorist attack, but for any disaster event. Easy-to-follow steps lead the reader through the many issue of home, car and work preparedness, understanding security advisories and suspicious activity guidelines.

For more information, contact Louis Mioduszewski, Director Office of Emergency Management, County Building, First Floor, Mt. Clemens, MI 48043, 586/469-5270.

Montgomery County, Md.

The Montgomery County, Md. Home Guide to Emergency Preparedness focuses on preparing citizens for a bio-terrorism attack. The guide gives suggestions for households in preparing a personal family protection plan, so that in the event of an attack, everyone remains safe and calm.

For copies of this guide, contact the Montgomery County Office of Public Information at 240/777-6530.

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Content/PIO/news/emergnov.pdf

Federal Resources

Centers for Disease Control

Centers for Disease Control Web site features emergency preparedness for chemical, health and natural disasters. It also features information about programs and activities to have in place after the disaster has occurred.

For additional information, contact Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1600 Clifton Rd, Atlanta, GA 30333, 888/232-6348.

www.bt.cdc.gov

Citizen Corps

The Citizen Corps' Web site provides a description of Community

■ See RESOURCES on page 8

Community safeguards against predatory contracting

By DIANE W. CARR

What Floridians learned in August and September 2004 is that Miami's National Hurricane Center was on target with its prediction for a season of frequent and intense hurricanes. Charley hit first on Aug. 13, followed in rapid succession by Frances, Ivan and finally Jeanne on Sept. 25. Reeling from the storms' effects, state and local officials were faced with many millions of dollars in property damage and thousands of homes and buildings unsuitable for use and habitation.

Property damage on such a large scale translated into an immediate need for new and repaired roofs. This increased need for roof repair and replacement created a demand for roofing contractors that outstripped the supply of licensed roofers available to do the work. State and local officials were then left to carefully gauge how to increase the supply of available contractors needed for roofing jobs.

The situation called for a measured relaxation of contractor licensure

requirements so that supply could be increased to meet demand without leaving the public prey to contractors lacking sufficient skill and experience to perform the required work. Too much regulatory relaxation too soon would only ensure that Floridians already suffering property damage and inconvenience would potentially suffer again as a result of shoddy workmanship and jobs left undone.

Regulators at the state level responded to Gov. Jeb Bush's Executive Order declaring a state of emergency by first relaxing contractor requirements to fit the needs of the state as a whole given the widespread devastation. They recommended that roofing work reserved exclusively to licensed roofing contractors should also be performed by general, building and residential contractors licensed by the state. Thus upstream contractors credentialed for a broader scope of work were no longer required to subcontract roofing work to roofing specialists. This loosening of

the regulatory scheme was then monitored to determine if contractor supply sufficient to meet demand had been achieved.

Next, as particularly hard hit cities and counties expressed a continued need for more contractors for roof work, state and local officials worked to further relax contractor requirements by allowing local governments to issue specialty roofing licenses to out-of-state contractors, as long as they satisfied certain insurance and experience criteria.

As Florida continues to recover from the 2004 hurricane season, the lessons learned by its regulators are noteworthy for sister states along the Gulf coast and up the eastern seaboard—anywhere hurricanes can strike. In 2005, Katrina and Rita again demonstrated how vulnerable people are to the weather that is a hurricane. Rebuilding in the wake of these storms need not result in home and business owners overly exposed to unqualified contractors as long as state and local

governments carefully balance the need for more contractors with the public's need for protection from those who would take advantage of them.

(Diane W. Carr is a shareholder with Hopping Green & Sams PA in Tallahassee, Fla. She led the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation from January 2003 through August 2005. She can be reached at 850/222-7500 or dcarr@hgsllaw.com.)

Interoperability necessary for counties

■ **COMMUNICATE** from page 6

activities. These issues include "turf issues" over the management and control of radio systems, the lack of a shared priority for interoperability and limited sharing of interoperability solutions within the public safety community.

Jurisdictional boundaries and unique missions often create false barriers that hinder cooperation and collaboration in situations where they are necessary.

Historically, individual communications managers and technical radio specialists were solely responsible for providing communications for their agency. As such, they developed a sense of ownership during these projects that now creates "turf issues" as planners attempt to facilitate interoperability by developing shared systems.

Older (and, yes, even newer) systems that served the mission of a single agency or jurisdiction often were developed at the expense of interoperability.

The changing mission of the public safety community and the scarcity of public safety resources have necessitated coordinated system planning efforts. September 11 should have made that quite plain. However, these efforts are still hindered by perceptions that management control of radio system development and operations will be lost. As a result, coordination and partnership efforts do not evolve, and "stop gap" measures are implemented to address specific interoperability requirements.

The importance of, and need for, interoperability is not sufficiently understood by county officials. Raising the priority of the communications interoperability issue with senior government executives has been difficult. Often, it takes natural or man-made disasters, like Katrina and Rita, to bring the issue to the front burner.

Elected and appointed officials are routinely faced with prioritizing issues affecting their jurisdiction. Without sufficient knowledge of the importance of communications interoperability, critical coordination and partnerships may never evolve at this level.

NACo has begun working to raise awareness of its position that supports multi-jurisdictional, "horizontal and vertical" interoperability as a high public safety priority.

Horizontal interoperability is across the jurisdiction, vertical is up

through the jurisdictions, from local to state to federal.

Finally, information sharing and best practices regarding interoperability are not established or available at all levels of government, and they should be.

Although public safety agencies have found "on-the-spot" solutions to deal with the lack of communications interoperability on scene, they generally do not have strategies or the financial resources to establish forums that would regularly address communications interoperability issues.

Emergency Preparedness Resources

■ **RESOURCES** from page 7

Emergency Response Teams, how they are developed and where special training can be obtained.

For additional information, contact Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Fire Administration, 16825 S. Seton Ave., Emmitsburg, MD 21727, 301/447-1000.

www.citizencorps.gov/programs/cert.shtm

■ **Department of Education**

The U.S. Department of Education provides resources for and information on Emergency Response planning for schools across the nation.

For additional information, contact, Department of Education, Office of Emergency Planning, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, 400 Maryland Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20202, 800/437-0833.

www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/index.html

■ **FEMA**

FEMA provides guidelines and information on establishing and maintaining Community Emergency Response Teams.

For additional information, contact Federal Emergency Management

Agency, U.S. Fire Administration, 16825 S. Seton Ave., Emmitsburg, MD 21727, 301/447-1000.

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/CERT/>

■ **National Hurricane Center**

Provides information about preparing for hurricanes and other important disaster preparedness issues.

For more information, contact National Hurricane Center, Tropical Prediction Center, 11691 SW 17th Street, Miami, Fla., 33165-2149, nhcwebmaster@noaa.gov.

www.tpc.ncep.noaa.gov/HAW2/english/disaster_prevention.shtml

■ **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

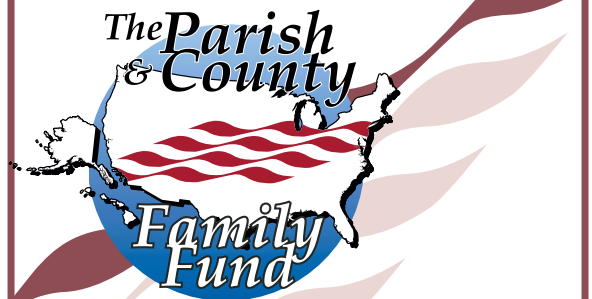
The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Hurricane Preparedness Web page highlights things citizens can watch and do to prepare.

www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/english/intro.shtml

* Information about these and other Model County programs in Emergency Preparedness can be found on NACo's Web site, www.naco.org/Template.cfm?Section=Model_County_Programs/.

Help Your Family...

Help your colleagues that have been devastated by the storm. Make a donation today!



To donate online to the fund, go to www.naco.org and click on The Parish and County Family Fund.

Or send a check made out to the fund to: NACo, 440 First St., NW, Washington, DC 20001

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