



FEMA

Briefly

Region V Newsletter

Recovery Continues Following Fatal Illinois Tornadoes

FEMA/State disaster teams continue to work to register applicants and disburse funds to help meet the recovery needs of Illinois families and businesses ravaged by the string of deadly tornadoes that hit the northern part of the state April 20. On April 23, President George Bush declared four counties a Federal Disaster Area (DR-1513). Disaster Recovery Centers were opened in three counties to assist victims and a Disaster Field Office was opened in Ottawa, Illinois to provide a base of operation for the FEMA/State recovery team.

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A teddy bear sits in the middle of a makeshift memorial on the sidewalk in front of the site that once housed the Milestone Tavern. Eight people were killed and four others injured when the building collapsed after a tornado struck the downtown section of Utica, Illinois.

The disaster declaration was approved for Individual Assistance to homeowners, renters, and business owners. An amendment to the declaration was approved late last week to provide Public Assistance for LaSalle and Putnam Counties. Three Disaster Recovery Centers were established to provide detailed program information to those who have already applied for assistance. Disaster recovery specialists staff the centers to answer questions and provide information on recovery, restoration and rebuilding. Even those who have not suffered damages from this disaster may visit a center to receive information on ways to reduce potential future disaster damages. Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) Lee Champagne was appointed by President Bush to oversee the Federal recovery effort.



ABOVE; Administration and Resource Planning Branch Chief Bob Colangelo (left) and FCO Lee Champagne (center) listen to a resident of Utica, Illinois describe the horror of the tornado that destroyed her home.

Disaster Recovery Centers opened in Will, Putnam, and LaSalle counties within days of the Presidential Declaration. A total of 558 teleregistrations have been received and more than 300 people have visited DRC's to date.





Illinois Emergency Management Deputy State Coordinating Officer Bill Ryan (LEFT) and Federal Coordinating Officer Lee Champagne conduct a staff meeting at the Disaster Field Office. BELOW; A member of the Mobile Emergency Response System (MERS) team installs temporary communication equipment at the Disaster Recovery Center in Utica.





Damaged homes in Utica, Illinois carry a grim reminder of the tornado that struck April 20. Residents and local officials have vowed to rebuild the downtown area where most of the damage occurred.

Disaster Volunteer Organization Conference Held

On April 20-21, the Region hosted a Leadership Meeting of the Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD). Representatives from several states and National VOAD leaders attended the two day meeting, designed as a workshop to provide updates and training. One of the highlights of the meeting was donations management planning. Details were provided regarding cash donation guidelines, policies, and overall donations management. NVOAD Executive Director Ande Miller reviewed the Coordinated Assistance Network software (CAN). The software is offered free of charge by a collaboration of Volunteer organizations such as NOVAD, United Way of America and American Red Cross. It is designed to help disaster communities coordinate case management to avoid duplication of effort among volunteer groups.

Craig Nemitz, America's Second Harvest, provided a Donations Management Committee Update. Region Volunteer Agency Liaison Susan Jensen led an overview and discussion of Unaffiliated Volunteer Management. Region V state VOAD representatives provided briefings on the status of issues and best practices in their respective states. "It was a great opportunity to hear from divergent groups of volunteer organizations," said Susan Jensen. On April 22-23, Region staff from various divisions attended a Donations Management Workshop. They learned about the volunteer donations process and were able to ask questions of the VOAD state liaisons.

Labor Management Council Names New Officers

On May 4-6 the Region hosted the quarterly meeting of the Labor Management Partnership Council (LMPC). Sixteen members of LMPC met to discuss current employee issues and appoint new officers. Pat Stahlschmidt served her last meeting as Chairperson, and was replaced by Shirley Buterbaugh, a labor representative from Region IV. Region Administrative and Resource Planning Division Director Michael Moline was named Vice-Chairperson for the upcoming year. Highlighting the meeting was a videoconference with DHS Undersecretary Michael D. Brown, who praised the LMPC for their continuing efforts to improve relations with labor and management throughout the federal system. The LMPC is comprised of representatives of each of the labor union presidents and each bargaining unit, who meet quarterly to discuss employee/management issues, review current policies and attempt to find resolutions before they become major issues.

Federal Law Enforcement Officials Meet

Senior law enforcement officials from more than a dozen federal agencies located in Chicago, met May 4 at the Region office to discuss DHS initiatives regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) or a terrorism event. Senior Chicago Police Department officials also attended. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the WMD/terrorism impact on various areas of responsibility of the agencies. Topics included Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5) the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and the National Response Plan (NRP). Regional Director Ed Buikema and selected staff participated in the meeting, which also included discussion of the Joint Field Office (JFO) concept, the role of Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC) and the Principal Federal Official concept. The meeting also included a brief tabletop exercise. Staff from the FBI's Critical Incident Response Group from Quantico, Virginia acted as facilitators for the discussion and led the tabletop exercise.



Regional Director Ed Buikema (left) and Jerry Wheeler of the FBI Incident Response Group discuss agenda for the Law Enforcement Meeting. Agent Wheeler was one of the facilitators for the tabletop exercise.

CSEPP Exercise Features Mobile JIC

The Newport Community CSEPP Exercise 2004 (NECD CSEPP EX 04) was conducted April 21 to demonstrate the emergency response capabilities of the Newport Community CSEPP and to validate correction of findings identified during past CSEPP exercises.

The Army Exercise Planning Co-Director and representatives from the Newport Chemical Depot (NECD) accomplished exercise design and planning for Newport CSEPP EX 04 for DA. Design and planning for off-post play were accomplished by the FEMA Region V Exercise Co-Director and representatives from, the State of Indiana, Parke County, Vermillion County (IN), Fountain County, and the State of Illinois, representing Edgar County and Vermillion County (IL).

This year's exercise was the first opportunity the Region has had to demonstrate the capabilities of new mobile Joint Information Center (JIC) equipment. The equipment includes wireless laptop computers and cell phones that can be used to set up a JIC at an alternate location. As part of the exercise the primary JIC location was simulated to be unavailable and the new equipment was implemented at Vermillion High School, the alternate location. Headquarters personnel were present to monitor the Mobile JIC operation. The equipment is stored at the depot and was purchased using CSEPP funds.

The exercise was evaluated using the Integrated Performance Evaluation methodology. Evaluation comments have been organized according to an evaluation method based upon six Response Operating Systems (ROS). Those included are: Emergency Assessment; Accident Site Hazard Mitigation; Emergency Management; Protection; Victim Care and Evacuee Support. The scope and substance of play for the Army and off-post jurisdictions are described in individual Extent of Play Agreements and are summarized in the Exercise Plan.

Northern Illinois and Indiana were affected by numerous tornadoes during the evening of April 20, 2004. The tornadoes in northern Illinois caused extensive damage in multiple communities and eight fatalities, resulting in a Presidential Declaration. The State of Illinois, Vermilion County (IL), and Edgar County Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) did not participate in the CSEPP exercise due the real world emergency, however, planned field and hospital play in Vermilion County (IL), and Edgar County was conducted and evaluated.

For the exercise scenario on April 21 the first transport of VX from the chemical agent storage site to the Newport Chemical Disposal Facility (NECDF) was planned. The convoy included three vehicles and all personnel wore masks and level-C Personal Protective Equipment.

*Briefly is published by DHS/FEMA Region V
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