



ALABAMA ASSOCIATION OF EMERGENCY MANAGERS

EXCELLENCE IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER

AAEM Newsletter
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Message from Incoming AAEM President, Anita McBurnett

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I am extremely honored to serve as your President of the Alabama Association of Emergency Managers for the 2014-2015 term of office. With the close of our annual conference, it is now time for us to turn our attention to the year ahead and the goals we can achieve by working together. It is important that our outstanding Board of Directors, Committee Chairs, the ACCA and the AEMA, all pull in one direction to forge a renewed vision for our association and our profession through “Unity of Effort”!

“Unity of effort” is certainly a term we are all familiar with, but as we start a new year I want you to take time to absorb the true meaning of this familiar phrase. “Unity of Effort” is the state of harmonizing efforts among multiple organizations that are working towards a similar objective. This “harmonizing of effort” prevents organizations from unintentionally working at cross purposes and it reduces duplication of effort. By unifying their efforts, multiple organizations – all with their unique roles – can collectively achieve objectives that benefit all organizations and all concerned.

“Unity of Effort” is my personal goal as your President this year. I challenge each and every member of this association to work toward laying the foundation for Unity of Effort that can become our operational motto. Clearly there are differences among our members and among the other groups that form the base of support for emergency management in Alabama. But we all share common issues and concerns. And I believe this year we must focus our collective talents, skills, determination and harmonized efforts toward our common objectives.

We all know that it is unwise to continue to rely exclusively on Washington D.C. as the cornerstone of operational funding at the county level. Our organization – can – and should – be the catalyst for bringing municipal and county officials together to forge a new partnership to ensure the financial stability of emergency management. I believe the central role of AAEM is also to bridge any operational continuity issues that may exist between State emergency management and our local members. This year my goal is to enhance the communication and working relationships between the state and local levels. AAEM has an excellent record of providing invaluable information, quality services and training for our membership, and I know those services will be continued and expanded through our “Unity of Effort.”

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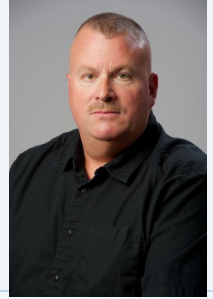
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Active Shooter Threat:

Preparedness and Mitigation Save Lives!

By Dr. Bill Lowe, Associate Professor

Department of Emergency Management; Jacksonville State University



The media, government officials, and citizens are well beyond the shock factor when new reports of active shooter incidents are broadcast. With the influence and power of social media, killers are taping videos and posting them on social media sites. These postings express their anger, emotions, and hatred justifying their attacks on innocent people who are attending school, visiting a mall, or sitting in a movie theater. Fortunately, there are occasions where planned attacks are discovered and law enforcement conducts searches and arrests suspects prior to the attacks being conducted. Sadly, too many attacks do occur and authorities learn of the attack when desperate 911 calls are received.

The author recalls watching for hours the evolving horror as the massacre at Columbine High School developed real-time. What a horrible event! Sadly, subsequent and more recent events have resulted in more deaths and fewer answers for what drives the rage and malice. There is every statistical forecast that attacks will continue. The author believes that active killers are learning and researching methods that will generate the highest body counts. Using improvised explosives, creating diversions to draw first responders to one location when the actual assault occurring somewhere else, and selecting the locations and time to maximize victims have all been previously employed.

The author strongly urges emergency managers to adopt active shooter training within their own agencies for all employees. There is a duty to ensure that local emergency management and first responders' work spaces are prepared. Don't assume that "nobody is stupid enough to attack a police station or 911 communication center!" On June 7, 2014 the Forsyth County Georgia courthouse was assaulted by a heavily armed man who was wearing two sets of body armor. He attempted to drive his vehicle into the courthouse but was killed by deputy sheriffs who repelled his attack.

Emergency managers should require all employees to complete "FEMA IS-907: Active Shooter: What You Can Do." This is at least an immediate, low cost, low logistical effort to ensure all employees have a baseline knowledge level. Furthermore, creating a committee with a budget and timeline to look at building security upgrades needs occur.

Photo captions Page 3



1. FEMA set up a mobile command center at the state EOC in Clanton, Alabama to assist in the response effort for the April 28 - 29 severe weather.
2. Alabama EMA Director Art Faulkner and Lee County EMA Director Kathrine Carson tour storm damage.
3. FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate in his visit the JFO in Montgomery, Alabama gives his staff directions to work as one team with the state. "Don't percolate, escalate. Get the right answer first".

Alabama's Fourth Worst Tornado Outbreak

By Gregory Robinson, Alabama Emergency Management Agency, External Affairs

As a severe weather system progressed slowly eastward across central Alabama producing widespread damage from straight-line winds and tornadoes on April 28th 2014, Alabama EMA and its Federal and Local partners prepared to respond to what the National Weather Service (NWS) labeled as the fourth worst tornado outbreak in the State's history.



1

The system impacted the state and produced 28 tornadoes. That number almost equals the average number of tornadoes that affects the state each year. According to the NWS, the total number of tornadoes to affect the state thus far is 33. The 50 year average from 1964 to 2013 is 34. The 10 year average from 2004 to 2013 is 68. The ten year average is heavily influenced by the 145 tornadoes in 2011. The system also produced a record amount of rain in south Alabama counties.

In some parts of Baldwin County estimated rainfall totals were between 22 and 26 inches. The NWS

office in Mobile recorded 23.67 inches in parts of its coverage area.

As this system moved across the state, official reports showed 31 counties received damage, 16 individuals were injured and 4 fatalities occurred. Federal, state and local officials would soon learn that the state received more than the 6.7 million dollars in damages needed to request help of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Governor Bentley requested an expedited major disaster declaration to provide Individuals, businesses and public facilities assistance for impacted areas.



2



3

On May 2, 2014, President Obama issued a major disaster declaration for the State of Alabama triggering the release of Federal funds to help people and communities recover from the severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding. By May 20th 2014, 18 counties were eligible for federal assistance. FEMA stood up a JFO where more than 300 state and federal employees began working to bring a sense of normalcy back to the lives of those affected by the storms. FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate visited the JFO to encourage his team to work efficiently and professionally, and bring the project to a close as soon as possible. By May 21 FEMA approved

\$11.1 million in individual assistance grants and \$1.6 million in Small Business Administration Loans. It is likely that millions more in Public Assistance will help with the impact to municipalities and government agencies.

Etowah County Receives Community Shelters!

By Mike Bryant, Etowah County EMA

After more than 6 years and numerous delays, three community safe rooms were finally placed on their respective, prepared sites during a one week period beginning May 13, 2014. Safe-T-Shelter, the contractor who was the winning bidder for this project, placed the first shelter on the concrete foundation behind the Gallant Volunteer Fire Station in Gallant, Alabama. Additional sites are located in the communities of Pulltight in Northeastern Etowah County where the second shelter was placed next to the Coates Bend Volunteer Fire Station. The third shelter was then placed on a site located across from Macedonia Baptist Church in Coates Bend.



Each of these shelters is FEMA 361 Certified and has a capacity of 50 persons.

These shelters will provide excellent protection for residents living in these areas during severe weather. These shelters were provided through a FEMA Mitigation Grant, administered through the Gadsden-Etowah County EMA, with a 25% match from the local Volunteer Fire Departments which includes donated In-Kind services and property from the community.

Message from Incoming AAEM President, Anita McBurnett

(continued)

As we start a new year, I want to thank all of our outgoing Board Members and Committee Chairs for their service and leadership. We have a huge responsibility to continue with our goals established at the Retreat last year, but more importantly, we must work together to establish future vision and cut a path that will bring emergency management to the forefront in the eyes of the public and those who fund our activities.

What a wonderful family the EMA community is! I solicit and welcome any and all positive ideas and suggestions that you may have. I will work closely with the Board and the Committee Chairs to see that your topics are addressed. But our success depends on your personal and positive involvement. I ask you to be a part of our "Unity of Effort" this year and beyond.

Warm Regards,

Anita McBurnett
Director

AAEM Committee Chair Appointments



Committee	Committee Chair	Employed with
Nominations and Credentials	Margaret Bishop-Gulley	Sumter County
Public Affairs	Deborah Gaither	FEMA
Conference/Training	David Brunson	Elmore County
Membership	Patrice Kurzejeski	St. Clair County
Legislative Co-Chair	Roy Waite	Clarke County
Legislative Co-Chair	Ricky Little	AEMA
Technology	J.T. Johnston	Monroe County
Awards and Recognition	Kathy Carson	Lee County
Past Presidents/Scholarship	Phyllis Little	Cullman County
Constitution and By-Laws	Ronnie Adair	Mobile County
Business & Industry	Hub Harvey	Shelby County
Certification (Non-Committee)	Eddie Hicks	Morgan County

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Rita Weeks Retires from Morgan County EMA



Rita Weeks (center, left) of Morgan County EMA retired on April 29th, 2014. Pictured in the photo with Rita is Eddie Hicks, Morgan County EMA Director and Phyllis Little, Immediate Past President, AAEM.

We wish her all the best and thank her for her service to the profession and dedication to her community.