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## AAEM's Strategic Vision — 3 Year Goals

In October, 2013 AAEM Board members held a one-day retreat to discuss the future path of the organization. In our first newsletter, we stated that we would share with you the outcome of this meeting. What we set out to do was build a consensus for AAEM's vision, mission, and 3 year goals. Through the efforts of a facilitator, we started the process by conducting a **SWOT** analysis. Here is the outcome of that analysis with regard to EM professionals within the State of Alabama and AAEM as a whole:

**Strengths** – Communication within; Relationships with ACCA and NWS; and, AAEM Legislative Committee activities

**Weaknesses** – Our certification program; Lack of participation by members; Awareness within EM profession; and, Inconsistency of Local EM position titles

**Opportunities** – Quarterly newsletter; Defining our brand; Outreach to stakeholders; and, Leveraging the media

**Threats** – EMPG funding; Relevance of AAEM to EM professionals in the State; Scarce resources (money, people, time)

From this point, the discussion turned to describing AAEM's vision and from that crafting a mission statement. This is what the group came up with:

**Vision** – *AAEM shall be recognized as the preeminent organization of EM professionals*

**Mission Statement** – The Alabama Association of Emergency Managers is an association of professionals serving its members by promoting professional development, providing networking opportunities and advocating for the profession of Emergency Management.

Board members then broke up into three small working groups. Each group was asked to come up with a list of ten goals that were informed by the outcome of the SWOT analysis and AAEM's newly agreed upon vision and mission statement.

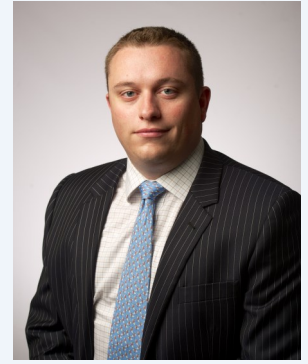
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# A Place for Warning Sirens in the Wireless Emergency Alert Era

By Eric Best, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

Jacksonville State University

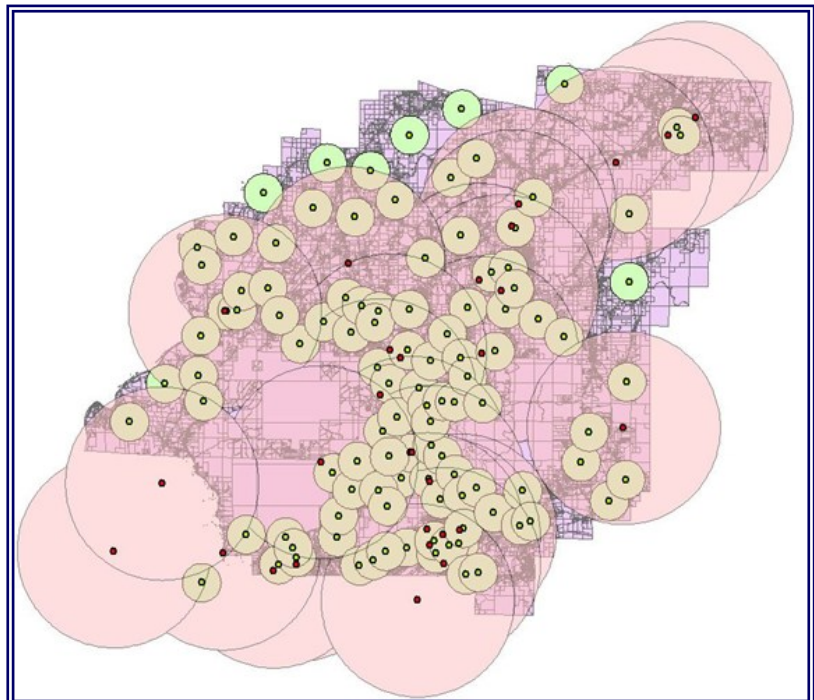


In downtown Birmingham or Mobile, Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) are an efficient way to disseminate geographically targeted emergency warnings. However, in the medium and low-density population areas making up most of the land mass of Alabama, powerful and sparsely placed mobile phone towers can render targeted WEA messages ineffective, sending warnings far beyond the intended alert areas while simultaneously missing residents in valleys or areas with spotty mobile phone coverage nearby.

JSU EM Department has been working collaboratively with Calhoun County EMA Director Jonathan Gaddy to try to improve alerts in suburban and rural areas using some surprising technology, legacy emergency sirens. Using everything from decades old field recordings of sound levels to state-of-the-art mobile phone tracking software, we developed maps comparing the relative reach of siren and WEA systems in Calhoun County (see figure below).

The resulting data suggests that there is a promising future for warning sirens in Alabama, as the current generation of WEA alerts cannot target rural areas effectively for storm-based warnings. Using a hybrid system where select mobile phone towers could be employed to complement gaps in siren coverage, it would be possible to reduce the hated false warnings while making sure that everyone in the storm area is notified of potential danger.

We hope to increase the study area to include other counties in Alabama, and attempt real-world tests of the hybrid system in the coming years. If you would like to participate in this study please contact me at [ebest@jsu.edu](mailto:ebest@jsu.edu) or 256-333-2378 .



## AAEM's Strategic Vision — Goals and Objectives (continued from pg. 1)

The 30 goals were displayed on boards in the front of the room. Similarly worded goals were combined. Then, each board member was asked to place a check mark next to three goals they favored most from the consolidated list. The votes were tallied to determine the top five goals. There was a tie for 5<sup>th</sup> place. Hence, here are the six goals the AAEM Board has set its sights on for the next three years:

### Goals

- 1.) Develop a certification program that requires more commitment from the individual and includes practical experience (10 votes)
- 2.) Develop a successful marketing campaign – public information and education (10 votes)
- 3.) Become an information clearinghouse for local and state officials (6 votes)
- 4.) Increase membership by 10% each year (5 votes)
- 5.) Conduct annual analysis of 3 year goals/plans (4 votes)
- 6.) Make technological advancements - e.g., use of webinars (4 votes)

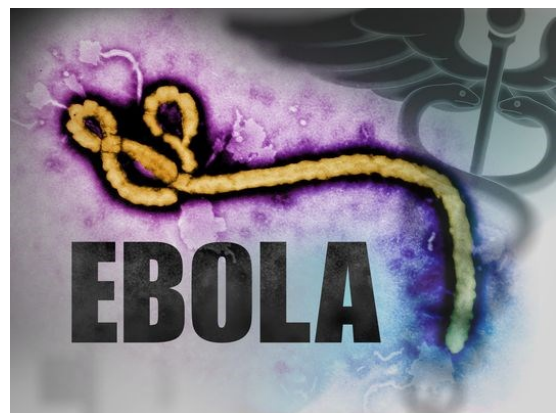
We appreciate the hard work that went into this strategic planning forum. AAEM board members and committee chairs are dedicated to its members and will now focus on achieving these stated goals. Future editions of the newsletter will keep you updated on any progress made.

## Ebola Virus – What All EMs Need to Know

Jeff Ryan, Ph.D.

The world will be dealing with Ebola virus for many months to come. The world situation is likely to get much worse before it gets better. The U.S. has had its first imported case and fatality. Rare, foreign, often fatal diseases get the media's attention. What is the role of EM professionals in this outbreak? At this point we all need to get informed about the problem. That information should come from reputable sources: the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Alabama Department of Public Health. If you have a good working relationship with your regional ADPH professional – that's great! If you don't – I urge you to get one.

State and local EMA may be asked to support them. Let's all work together to preserve the health and welfare of our citizens.

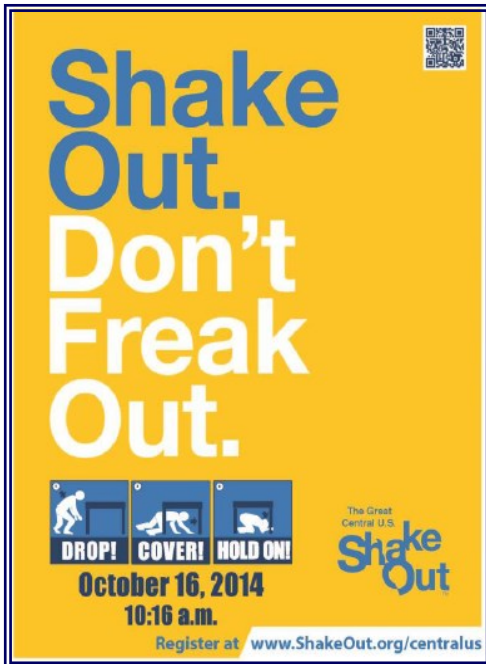


# Shake Out. Don't Freak Out

By Greg Robinson, Alabama Emergency Management Agency, External Affairs



As Alabama Emergency Management Agency operates with an *all hazards* approach, threats to our state that some individuals may not consider, remains a significant part of the agency's agenda. One such threat are earthquakes. When traveling to most places in the state and asking the question "Does Alabama have earthquakes?" most individuals



would say "no." However, "no" is not the correct answer. According to the USGS (United States Geological Survey), the last seismic event of significance occurred in Alabama on August 19, 2004. The earthquake's magnitude was 3.5 with an epicenter near Alabaster, Alabama. Although this event occurred ten years ago there have been other events which have occurred since then with a lower magnitude. An event occurred on September 9, 2014 six miles west of Russellville with a magnitude of 2.1.

Each year the Alabama Emergency Management Agency and millions of people participate in an earthquake drill called ***The Great Central U.S. Shake Out.***

Sandy Ebersole of the Geological Survey of Alabama offers this advice; "The Great Shake Out is a good opportunity for citizens, families, schools, businesses, organizations, and agencies to learn more about the earthquake hazards in their area and how best to respond in the event of a moderate to strong magnitude earthquake. Although the Great Shake Out is earthquake-specific, this is also an excellent occasion to impress the importance of natural hazards awareness in general and disaster planning for individuals and organizations. The Geological Survey of Alabama will participate in the Great Central U.S. Shake Out with staff practicing the "Drop, Cover, and Hold On" technique and will also review our earthquake response plan on this day. We encourage others to explore our earthquake webpages online at [http://gsa.state.al.us/gsa/geologichazards/Quakes\\_Intro.htm](http://gsa.state.al.us/gsa/geologichazards/Quakes_Intro.htm) and are happy to provide any additional earthquake information we can to those with further questions."

## Responsibility

By Michael Posey, M.S.

Deputy Director, DeKalb County Emergency Management Agency



The Federal Emergency Management Agency deems that all disasters begin and end at the local level of government. Much of the public see this responsibility residing with the county and city elected officials. I would like to offer an opinion that the county and city elected officials and emergency managers are not only responsible for management of disasters after they occur, but are also responsible for providing the public with the knowledge and tools to prepare the public for disasters **before** they occur.

The family unit is just as responsible; actually more so, for ensuring that the household is prepared for disasters. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the family for making disaster plans, exercising those plans and making the home more resilient. It is irresponsible for Americans to be totally dependent on any level of government for disaster readiness with the wealth of knowledge and educational materials available at their fingertips. This is where we as emergency managers fail!

Emergency managers educate our government counterparts about safeguarding for continued operations during and after a disaster. We instruct them to create redundancies for their critical facilities, technologies and equipment used to carry out day-to-day operations. Should the heads of American households not take the same precautions? Of course they should. Therefore, we as emergency managers are responsible for taking the steps necessary to educate and persuade our citizens to better prepare their homes and families for disaster.

Offering education is easy; unfortunately, getting the public to participate in it is not. Therefore, I would like to offer the "Take It to the Public" (TIP) campaign. The TIP campaign is an idea designed to promote the use of every cost effective public outreach program available to enhance disaster preparedness and education. This idea is nothing new, but is widely underutilized by emergency managers. It is not necessary to spend hundreds or thousands of dollars in advertising and promotional items, but simply use the outreach systems already in place and widely available.



For example, presenting the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Basic Training to community clubs, churches, civic and community organizations is an excellent opportunity to promote disaster preparedness while at the same time build additional trained personnel for disaster response. These classes allow ease of scheduling and can be location specific based on the needs of the organization. Furthermore, these courses can be delivered by volunteer staff members who have taken the free train-the-trainer course offered by the Emergency Management Institute.



## AAEM Committee Chair Appointments



**AAEM Newsletter  
Volume 1, Issue 4**

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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**Go to <http://aaem-online.us/online-store/>**

**Simply print out the PDF Form and place your order.**



## Important Dates for AAEM Business

**AAEM Board Meeting\* Dates:**

**December 2, 2014 - 5:00PM—Winter Conference Montgomery**

**February 6, 2015, - 10:00 AM—ACCA Office**

**April 9, 2015, - 10:00 AM—ACCA Office**

**June 22, 2015 – AAEM Summer Conference Mobile**

**\*All AAEM members are invited to attend board meetings.**

**Committee Reports due to the President:**

**November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

**January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**Please share your thoughts and comments with your Area Director on ways to improve our Association. Any training requests and ideas that you have will also be beneficial. Remember, we will be as successful as the time and effort that our members dedicate to our growth. Please, get involved in your future today!**