



# ALABAMA ASSOCIATION OF EMERGENCY MANAGERS

EXCELLENCE IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

January 16, 2015

Volume 2, Issue 1

AAEM Newsletter  
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### Officers

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## North Alabama Mutual Assistance Association (NAMA) Celebrates 40th Anniversary

By Paige Colburn

EM Officer, Huntsville-Madison County EMA



It's not technically the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, though NAMA celebrated the association's history on December 17, 2014 at the NAMA Christmas meeting in the Huntsville National Weather Service forecast office. Just stepping into the room, you could tell this was more than a Christmas party. There was Civil Defense memorabilia from several counties lining the walls; everything from Eddie Hicks' impressive collection of Civil Defense signage to an exercise bike with a giant fan blade instead of a front tire- an original fallout shelter ventilation system. The NWS provided severe weather event posters dating back to an ice blizzard in 1951.

The formation of NAMA took nearly a decade, from 1969 to 1978. Several Civil Defense Directors from North Alabama assisted in Hurricane Camille relief efforts in 1969. They recognized the need for a system of county-to-county support that could respond to disasters both in peace-time and in the event of nuclear attack. These directors worked together with their respective regional planning agencies to secure \$265,000 in federal funding in 1969. That's over \$1.7 million in 2015 dollars! The pilot project's goal was "to develop a workable and effective mutual assistance plan... to define the mechanics of how such a system would operate and guidance on how similar systems could be developed by other areas of the country." Thirteen counties participated: Colbert, Cullman, DeKalb, Franklin, Jackson, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Morgan and Winston.

In 1972 and 1973 the project involved a field survey of over 2000 agencies to catalog all emergency response resources in North Alabama. The final document was a computerized resource inventory of 478 types of resources available in all 13 counties. In November 1974, the counties held a mutual assistance exercise utilizing the resource inventories. Though the original member counties were meeting and working together for nearly a decade, the adoption of a constitution and by-laws forming the "North Alabama 13-County Civil Defense Mutual Assistance Association," didn't take place until December, 1978. So, perhaps the association should throw another 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary party in 2018?

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# Developing Media Partners Before the Event

By James Coker, M.S.; MEP, ALEM, CLEM

Director, Jefferson County, EMA



We live in the information age; we receive news and data via smart phones, computers, televisions, radios, tablets and other sources. Information about a serious event in a community can be spread at the speed of a Tweet. This provides a challenge to the Emergency Manager; information which reaches the public must be the correct information.

It is important to develop partnerships with the media who serve your community in advance of a day of crisis; it is also vital that public information officers from multiple disciplines learn to work together. Yes, this could become a Joint Information Center (JIC), but the time to develop a smooth rhythm of information flow is before the event.



A very productive way to build relationships is to host a panel discussion between members of the media and the public information officers who have a critical role during an event. The panel discussion provides two-way communications; both the members of the media and the PIOs learn about topics such as deadlines, best methods of contact, and how to verify information. This is an avenue to explore concerns on a day when there is, thankfully, no urgent story.

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## **NAMAA Celebrates 40th Birthday (continued from pg. 1)**

The success of the pilot program led to similar projects throughout the country with federal Civil Defense funding. The statewide AEMA mutual aid program is largely based on the original results of North Alabama's 13 county pilot project. The association has grown to 16 member counties, adding Blount, Cherokee and Walker as full members. Now there are also six affiliate member counties of: Calhoun, Cleburne, Etowah, Fayette, Lamar and St. Clair. The name changed over the years to North Alabama Emergency Management Mutual Assistance Association; and recently shortened to North Alabama Mutual Assistance Association; or NAMAA as we know it today.

During the December, 2014 meeting, the association discussed commemorating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with an upcoming NAMAA Regional Resource Guide. The new resource inventory won't be as painstakingly detailed as the massive tome which formed the foundation of the association, but the new guide will serve much the same purpose for its members.

Over forty years of emergency management mutual assistance in North Alabama is certainly worth celebrating, even if you can't quite nail down the right date to throw the party!

## **Developing Media Partners Before the Event (continued from Page 2)**

The panel discussion should include television media as well as print (or electronic) media; the public information officers should be from Emergency Management, Fire, Law Enforcement, Public Health, Hospitals, Schools, Utilities and any other local community partner. This group of professionals will end up working together on the day when the skies darken, when the highway is closed, or when the school is locked down. A critical event will be more easily managed if the group has already met, and determined the "game plan". The game plan will also build a relationship of trust, which will be very much on the mind of the public.



The panel discussion also provides an opportunity to discuss the local impact of social media on the traditional media; how is information received, how is it vetted (is it from an official source?) and can include photographs and video which could assist in building the overall event picture.

A solid relationship with the media can enhance public response, as well as the reputation of all agencies involved.

## Severe Weather Preparedness Sales Tax Holiday

A Reminder



Alabama's fourth severe weather preparedness sales tax holiday begins at 12:01 a.m. Friday, Feb. 20, 2015 and ends at midnight, Sunday, Feb 22, 2015.



Spread the word and take advantage!

## Message from Anita McBurnett & the NWS-Huntsville

President, AAEM

Congratulations! All 11 north Alabama counties have successfully renewed their *StormReady* designation! With the exception of Madison county (our inaugural *StormReady* county in 2001), this is the 4th renewal for north Alabama counties -- a very proud accomplishment! *Anita McBurnett*



[From NWS-Huntsville – North Alabama Counties StormReady Ceremony!](#)

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the process in gathering/updating information related to the application & guidelines, and meeting with me to review these important capabilities. Like you, I take the *StormReady* program very seriously and appreciate the diligence on your part to set the standard high for other counties/groups/agencies to follow.

To officially recognize your efforts, I propose we hold a ceremony for all 11 counties in the coming weeks. My suggestion is to have it on Thursday, February 19th -- which is during Alabama's Severe Weather Awareness Week. I'll need some help with a location so if anyone knows of a nice, public venue that is willing to host this ceremony, please let me know. In 2012, we did it here in Huntsville at Sci-Quest but they have since moved to a smaller venue in town.

# AAEM Certification Recipients

Submitted by Anita McBurnett



The following individuals completed AAEM Professional Certification in December, 2014:

## Basic—750 hours

- Myles Chamblee Calhoun County EMA
- Bryant Jackson Yankton County EMA, S. Dakota
- Matt Teal Volunteer, Cherokee County EMA

## Intermediate—1,000 hours

- Jacob Crowell Morgan County EMA
- Kenneth Dobbs Franklin County EMA
- George Harwell Marshall County EMA
- Michael Melton Madison, AL
- Tory Myers Volunteer, Jackson County EMA

## Advanced—1,250 hours

- Caleb Branch Blount County 911
- Beverly Daniel Cherokee County EMA
- Jackie Farley Tuscaloosa EMA
- Robert Jenkins Theodore, AL
- Scotty Johnson Volunteer, Coffee County EMA
- Brian Kotrous NASA, Marshall Space Flight Center
- Susan Allison Lee Fairhope, AL
- Jan Prescott Randolph County EMA
- Don Roybal Blount County EMA

## Advanced Recertification—1,250 hours

- Robert Mann Auburn University

## Masters-1,600 hours plus

- Donald Leeth Mobile County EMA





## Recent Retirees and New Appointments

Submitted by Phyllis Little

**Roy Gober retired**

**Franklin Co. Director is now Jody Hitt**

**David Hartin retired**

**Tuscaloosa Co. Director is now Rob Robertson, III**

**Mike Bryant retired**

**Etowah Co. Director is now Deborah Gaither**

**Alan Kniphfer retired**

**Jefferson Co. Director is now James (Jim) Coker**

**Max Armstrong retired**

**Blount Co. Director is Don Roybal**

**Jessica Schweigher moved to AEMA**

**Crenshaw Co. Director is now Earl Thompson**

**Best wishes to all retirees - may you go about your days slowly doing nothing!**

**And, best of luck to all new Directors!**



## Recent IAEM CEM & AEM Awardees

Photo submitted by Roy Waite, CEM

The following Alabamians received their CEM (♦) or AEM (□) designation at the IAEM Conference in San Antonio, TX on November 19, 2014 (from left to right):

- ♦ Roy Waite - Director, Clarke County EMA
- ♦ Ronnie Adair - Director, Mobile County EMA
- ♦ Mike Evans - Deputy Director, Mobile County EMA
- ♦ Katie Krushniski - Training and Communication Coordinator, NOAA Disaster Response Center
- Kenny Tucker - Coast Guard - Mobile



## Message from the President, AAEM

The AAEM Board and the Committee Chairs have been very busy working on many different issues since June of 2014. I want to thank each Board Member, Committee Chair, Special Committee Members along with the AEMA and ACCA for working together, collaboratively on several important issues.

We had several good submittals for this Newsletter, so many in fact that we have more than we can publish. So, I'll keep my remarks to a minimum.

Looking ahead, some of the challenges facing all of us in emergency management are the continued shrinking of budgets, unrealistic expectations for government response and a poor economy to name just a few. One thing I have realized over these past six months is something that George Bernard Shaw said: *"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."* I have come to understand how true this is within our own Association and between our Commissioners and others. The burden to communicate with elected officials, our legislators and between our own membership lies with US! As we move forward in 2015, one of the important challenges for the AAEM is to be very proactive in that education process. Visit your Commissioners and Legislators and speak to them often about the challenges facing emergency management and let's collectively start a synergistic campaign so that we can acquire their support in making positive changes and moving emergency management forward in our counties, regions and the state. And, let's continue to work on better methods of communication amongst our membership.

There is an old Chinese Proverb that states: *"When planning for a year, plant corn; When planning for a decade, plant trees; When planning for life, train and educate people"*. As for the future of emergency management, we all must take on that challenge of planning for the future "life" of emergency management. With that said, I didn't say that it would be easy, but it will be worth it!

I am looking forward to 2015 with enthusiasm and with the comfort of knowing that we have a great TEAM of emergency management professionals working for the people that we are here to serve and helping each other along the way.

Warm Regards,

Anita McBurnett



## AAEM Committee Chair Appointments



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Committee	Committee Chair	Employed with
Nominations and Credentials	Margaret Bishop-Gulley	Sumter County
Public Affairs	Deborah Gaither	Etowah County
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

### **Remaining AAEM Board Meeting\* Dates:**

**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:**

**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!**