

FEMA News Summary & Clips

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MAIN FEMA NEWS

NATIONAL NEWS

ABC: Severe Weather. ABC World News Tonight (8/8, story 6, 1:00, Muir, 14.63M) reported, "Back here at home tonight, and to severe floods we're watching at this hour. Parts of Florida's Gulf Coast, already under water. The pictures. Roads and businesses in St. Pete Beach already swamped. A number of accidents have been cleared along State Highway 399 today. Also, a tropical storm we're watching. So, let's get right to Rob here tonight." ABC (Marciano) added, "David, a lot of deep tropical moisture over the Southeast. You see it rotating around this low. We have flooding from Raleigh to Asheville. But the big target is Florida, the panhandle there. Flood watches that have expanded west. Flood warnings between Perry and Cross City. Over 12 inches of rainfall falling there. Over 20 in some of the areas just offshore. Another five over the next 48 hours and the rain, I think, is going to persist right through the end of the week. Here is Javier. Probably seal this moisture get into the desert southwest later on. Right now, it is hitting Cabo San Lucas. Max winds, 65 miles an hour. It will ride up the Baja. Very active hurricane season in the Pacific, David, this year."

CBS: Severe Weather. The CBS Evening News (8/8, story 3, 0:20, Rose, 11.17M) reported, "Folks in Florida are bracing for severe flooding. In Port Richey, roads have already been closed because of heavy rains, and the forecast is only getting worse. Some places could get nine inches of rain in the next few days. That's because a storm system has stalled

over the Florida Panhandle. The bad weather extends all the way to New Orleans."

CBS: Tropical Storm Javier. The CBS Evening News (8/8, story 4, 0:15, Rose, 11.17M) reported, "In the Pacific, Tropical Storm Javier is bearing down on Baja California. Heavy air is expected to pass by the resort town of Cabo San Lucas late tonight. Half a foot of rain is in the forecast."

CBS: California Wildfire. The CBS Evening News (8/8, story 7, 0:25, Rose, 11.17M) reported, "By contrast, the western US is bone-dry tonight. Dozens of wildfires are burning out of control. Evacuations have been ordered in the San Bernardino Mountains east of Los Angeles. Hundreds of firefighters and 16 aircraft are battling the Pilot Fire. It has burned 4,500 acres. Smoke has blown all the way to Las Vegas."

ABC: California Wildfire. ABC World News Tonight (8/8, story 7, 0:15, Muir, 14.63M) reported, "Another weather headline this evening, a small wildfire east of Los Angeles, exploding in just hours. Triple in size, in fact. The Pilot Fire, as it is being called, is burning in the San Bernardino National Forest tonight. Several dozen homes have been evacuated and parts of two state highways are now closed."

Pilot Fire In San Bernardino County Spreads To Nearly 6,300 Acres, Triggering Evacuations

By Matt Hamilton And Brittney Mejia
Los Angeles Times, August 8, 2016

A fast-moving wildfire in the mountains of San Bernardino County grew Monday to nearly 6,300 acres, prompting the evacuation of thousands of residents, authorities said.

About 375 homes were under a mandatory evacuation order in the Summit Valley area and Hesperia, according to the U.S. Forest Service and the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

About 5,000 homes were under a voluntary evacuation advisory in Hesperia and nearby communities, Sheriff's Department spokeswoman Cindy Bachman said.

After it was first reported about noon Sunday, the Pilot fire spread quickly in dry brush and timber. As of Monday night, the blaze was only 6% contained, said Justin Taylor of the U.S. Forest Service.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Firefighters have worked in the air and on the ground to build fire lines and snuff out the flames, said U.S. Forest Service spokesman Bob Poole.

"Because the vegetation is so incredibly dry, all it takes is a little spark and it's just been chewing through it," Poole said. "That's been our difficulty."

There has been no structural damage to homes in the rugged rural area, which has several horse ranches.

More than 840 firefighters have been assigned to battle the blaze, aided by five bulldozers and a fleet of helicopters and air tankers.

"Because of the aggressive attack by our firefighters, we were able to protect homes," Poole said. "These guys — they're highly trained, they're highly motivated and they're doing an incredible job in difficult conditions."

The mandatory evacuation order on Highway 173 extended from Highway 138 to Arrowhead Lake Road and from Hesperia Lake Place to Highway 173, fire officials said. In Hesperia, the evacuation order covers homes from Santa Fe Avenue to Lake Arrowhead Road as well as homes south of Ranchero Road, Bachman said.

The voluntary evacuation order included those north of Deep Creek Spillway, south of Rock Springs Road, east of the Mojave River and west of Kiowa Road, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

The American Red Cross has opened a shelter at Oak Hills High School. Pet owners can bring animals to the San Bernardino County Devore Animal Shelter.

Highway 173 is closed between State Route 138 and Arrowhead Lake Road.

The fire prompted a smoke advisory for Victor Valley and nearby communities, with the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District warning those with lung and heart disease as well as older adults and children to limit the amount of time spent outside.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District also issued a smoke advisory for residents in the central San Bernardino Mountains.

Meanwhile, to the north, the Soberanes fire in Monterey County has scorched 60,900 acres and is 50% contained. The blaze, which has burned for more than two weeks, has killed one person, injured three others and destroyed 57 homes and 11 outbuildings.

The victim, Robert Reagan III, was a bulldozer operator working to control the fire. At some point, he suffered fatal injuries, authorities said.

Other blazes in the state include the Cold fire, which has burned 5,731 acres at the southern tip of Lake Berryessa in Northern California and is 70% contained, and the Goose fire in Fresno County, which has burned 2,241 acres and is 96% contained.

This article was updated with details on the growth of the Soberanes fire.

This article was updated with details on the growth of the fire and the evacuation orders.

This article was updated with details on the evacuation center and other fires in the state.

The Post-Katrina Model

By Stefanie Haeffele-Balch And Virgil Henry Storr

U.S. News & World Report, August 8, 2016

Over the past few weeks, over 30 wildfires have ignited in California, Utah, Nevada and other western states. In Big Sur, the wildfire has destroyed over 50 homes and threatens thousands more. Residents have been forced to evacuate and firefighters have been working around the clock to tame the flames.

The remainder of fire season is predicted to have above-average activity in the west, due to high temperatures and dryness. The potential for further damage from wildfire comes at a time when disasters are increasing in frequency and strength. As communities attempt to prepare for such disasters, which are necessarily devastating and uncertain, it may be difficult for some to imagine how communities can recover at all. Yet, amazingly, we've witnessed the determination of city after city all over the world rebound after major disasters.

After Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast of the United States in August 2005, many doubted the city of New Orleans would survive. The storm and subsequent flooding caused over 1,800 deaths, displaced over 400,000 residents and resulted in over \$100 billion in damage. Residents were restricted from returning to their homes for months, not knowing what remained if and when they did.

The rebuilding of New Orleans was uneven and often stunted by the uncertainty of flood insurance payments, a complicated federal assistance process tangled in red tape and ever-changing reconstruction plans. But recovery did take place throughout the city, even in the poorest and hardest-hit neighborhoods. A decade after Hurricane Katrina hit, much of New Orleans has rebounded, with populations close to pre-Katrina levels in many neighborhoods. And, perhaps more importantly, the culture and sense of community that is unique to New Orleans has survived.

New Orleans rebounded because of the work of local entrepreneurs – who reopened their stores and started new businesses – and the efforts of community leaders who worked tirelessly to reopen their churches, schools, clinics and aid organizations. These entrepreneurs and community leaders also rallied together with their neighbors to rebuild their homes, encourage and help others to recover and revive their neighborhoods. In our book “Community Revival in the Wake of Disaster,” we show that local commercial, social, and political entrepreneurs can play a key role in bringing about post-disaster community recovery as long they are given the opportunity to help their neighbors.

For instance, Doris Voitier – the superintendent of St. Bernard Parish in the Greater New Orleans region – realized that families would not return unless their children could go back to school. She did everything she could to fulfill her promise to reopen the schools in her parish within months of Hurricane Katrina’s landfall. When officials in the government’s emergency relief agencies told her it couldn’t be done (and that she was not allowed to do what she planned), she forged ahead anyway. She bought trailers and supplies on her own in order to make sure the kids, teachers and staff had what they needed to get back to normal life. Her persistence rallied her community and eliminated some of the uncertainty that surrounds post-disaster recovery.

Doris, like all disaster victims, was faced with a multitude of challenges, from assessing the damage done to her community, navigating the disaster relief process and finding ways to rebuild. The task of recovering is complex and highly uncertain, and exacerbated by the physical and emotional tolls of the disaster. While government assistance programs can help, and should find ways to not add signal noise to the already complex process of recovery, post-disaster community recovery is necessarily driven by the community.

Based on our interviews with residents who returned to New Orleans after being displaced by

Hurricane Katrina, we found that New Orleans rebounded because of hardworking residents who came together to rebuild their neighborhoods. As people affected by these wildfires begin the long path to recovery, it will be vital to allow the hardworking and enterprising residents who seek to rebuild and sustain their community do so. Policymakers seeking to help efforts should embrace the many lessons from Hurricane Katrina and allow a recovery to come from the bottom up.

Stefanie Haeffele-Balch is a research fellow with the Mercatus Center at George Mason University. She co-authored “Community Revival in the Wake of Disaster” with Virgil Henry Storr and Laura E. Grube.

Virgil Henry Storr is a research fellow with the Mercatus Center at George Mason University. He co-authored “Community Revival in the Wake of Disaster” with Stefanie Haeffele-Balch and Laura E. Grube.

Central Idaho Residents Face Evacuation As Wildfire Advances

Associated Press, August 8, 2016

LOWMAN, Idaho (AP) – Two of three roads leading into and out of a small town in mountainous central Idaho are closed, and residents have been told to be ready to evacuate as a 100-square-mile wildfire defies containment.

Authorities on Monday also set up a roadblock on the third paved route to Lowman and are only allowing outbound traffic for security due to evacuated homes in the area and safety due to active fire equipment near the town that is under a voluntary evacuation.

More than 1,500 firefighters are battling the blaze and are putting in fire lines to the west and south of the community where structure protection that includes a sprinkler system is in place.

But firefighters have had to abandon numerous fire lines in the last two weeks as a combination of winds, rugged terrain and dry timber have made the fire unstoppable. The fire is about 25 percent contained, with full containment not predicted until the end of September.

Fire spokesman Jose Acosta said 122 homes with about 400 residents are under a voluntary evacuation. It’s not clear how many residents have left. Many of the homes in the area are only occupied in the summer, but there are also year-round residents.

About 25 miles of State Highway 21 are closed south of Lowman where crews are working to clear slides, fallen trees and dangerous trees left after the fire moved through. Fire officials were hopeful the road

would be open by Tuesday morning; it has been closed since July 23.

To the west of Lowman, part of Banks-Lowman Road is closed, with the wildfire burning on both sides. Guardrails have been destroyed by the fire, and quite a bit of work will be required to get it open. There's no time estimate on when that will happen.

To the east of town on State Highway 21, a checkpoint has been set up allowing outbound traffic but turning back inbound traffic, Acosta said.

At least one state-operated backcountry yurt in the Boise National Forest has been destroyed and another damaged. One other has survived, and the fate of three others isn't clear. A helicopter assessing damage in the area couldn't locate the three yurts, Acosta said.

Five of the six yurts are within the fire perimeter. The \$60,000 yurts are round, tent-like structure with a dome roof and plastic skin. In winter, the yurts are booked months in advance by backcountry skiers, and they are also popular in summer.

"We're in holding mode," said Leo Hennessy, who manages the system for Idaho Parks and Recreation. "We don't know if we'll be able to start the yurt system this winter or if it will be two or three years."

The state operates the system under an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service. Typically, the Forest Service closes burned areas, sometimes for several years, following a wildfire to allow the area to recover. A wide closure is already in effect on the Boise National Forest because of the fire.

A miner's cabin also burned, Acosta said. It was in use, as opposed to historical mining structures that dot many Idaho mountain areas, he said.

The fire is starting to hit burn scars from previous wildfires that will likely slow its progress, Acosta said. "The fire is moving but it will run into another fire scar, so there's some optimism there," he said.

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Wildfire Continues To Threaten Lighthouse On Poverty Island

Associated Press, August 8, 2016

POVERTY ISLAND, Mich. (AP) — Firefighters have returned to an uninhabited island in northern Lake Michigan to protect a historic lighthouse from a stubborn wildfire.

The Poverty Island Fire Incident Command Team reports Monday that about 50 of the island's 200 acres have burned.

The fire likely was started by lightning and was reported June 30.

Humidity and rain last month were keeping it under control, but the fire had continued smoldering. Conditions now are drier and officials hope to burn out trees and forest debris around the lighthouse to keep the blaze from spreading to the building.

A sprinkler system is in place to protect the lighthouse and other buildings.

The lighthouse no longer is being used. Poverty Island is southeast of Escanaba and just off Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

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Residents Allowed To Return To Homes Once Threatened By Fire

Associated Press, August 8, 2016

HAMILTON, Mont. (AP) — Residents who had been evacuated because of a western Montana wildfire have been allowed to return home. But some residents near the southern end of the fire have been warned to remain alert to future evacuation notices.

The fire, which has burned nearly 13 square miles in the Bitterroot National Forest southwest of Hamilton, was 30 percent contained on Monday. Some crews were being released.

The Ravalli County sheriff's office earlier said the fire had burned 14 homes and 49 outbuildings, but after some fallen trees were removed from roads, officers found two more homes burned by the fire that started on July 31.

Fire information officer Mike Cole says managers don't expect to have the fire contained until late September, unless the weather ends the fire season sooner.

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In Ellicott City, A Town Built On History And A River, Cleanup Is Part Of The Culture

By Bill Turque

Washington Post, August 8, 2016

Like the rest of Main Street in Ellicott City, Md., 60-year-old Howard House has seen its fortunes rise and fall, like the Tiber and Patapsco rivers that have inundated the old mill town west of Baltimore with disastrous regularity since its founding in 1772.

The sturdy granite hotel and restaurant was a popular stop for mid-19th-century travelers headed west on the National Road, and a day-trip destination for urban dwellers. The 20th century wasn't as kind. In the 1940s, the decorative wrought iron on its second-floor porch was sold to the government for the war effort. Later, it devolved into down-at-the-heels digs. But new owners put some money into it, placing a photography studio and an art gallery at ground level, with renovated apartments above.

Howard House was one of an estimated 90 buildings damaged a week ago Saturday, when an astonishing 6.5 inches of rain fell in about two hours, turning the Main Street historic district into a murky torrent that swept two people to their deaths.

For a town where history is the financial lifeblood, the historic storm is a staggering blow. Main Street, with its mash-up of vintage clothing stores, antique shops and museums, lives on tourist dollars that are, for the moment, gone.

Howard County officials said they are committed to helping their county seat get back onto its feet. As structural engineers, insurance adjusters and anxious owners slogged through the stagnant water and humidity this week, trying to put a dollar figure on the damage, the future was uncertain.

"This is the worst ever, much worse than Agnes," said Howard House owner Ron Peters, referring to flooding that followed the 1972 hurricane. Peters, who has rental homes just west of downtown that were hit hard, said the water "came down like the frigging Niagara River."

Nearly all of the historic district buildings have long stories, many of them arcs of success, decline and renewal.

Two adjacent 1860s buildings in the 8100 block of Main have had incarnations as Holtman grocery store, Laumann barber shop — which at one point offered customers bloodletting with the help of leeches — and in the 1940s a library operated by the Howard County Women's Club. But time took its toll.

"Both buildings withstood floods and fires, substantial neglect and makeshift renovation," current co-owner Walter Johnson wrote in a 1989 application for historic preservation.

But the July 30 storm dealt a final blow, rendering the buildings so structurally unsound that they may face demolition, county officials said. That would orphan two shops and several tenants who lived above them.

Just up the street, the longtime home of Caplan's department store looked more bombed out than flooded

out. The water burst through all sides, taking out the front and back.

"The water just blew the place apart," said Tamara Beideman, owner of Sweet Elizabeth Jane, a clothing store operating there.

She lost \$150,000 worth of inventory. Electronics with her point-of-sale data are "floating in the river someplace."

A river runs under it

The first recorded flood was in 1780, just a few years after three Quaker brothers from Bucks County, Pa. — Joseph, Andrew and John Ellicott — founded what became a center of milling and graining. They chose a shallow valley in the middle of a lot of water.

A support beam under the railroad tracks downtown marked where water reached during the worst of the floods in 1868, 1972, 1923 and 1952. There were bad ones in between as well: 1901, 1917, 1923, 1975, 1989, 2006.

As Ellicott City grew, many businesses and homes were built over the Tiber, a tributary of the Patapsco. When the rains began on July 30, Beideman got a call from her panicked manager who reported that the water was coming up through the floor.

"Back in the day, it was kind of a good thing to do. They didn't have good sewage [systems] back then," said Don Reuwer, the Howard County developer who owns or co-owns a major portion of the Main Street corridor.

But high water is more than a calamitous event for Main Street and its owners and merchants. Over the decades it has seeped into the civic soul, to the point where recovery is now part of the town's identity, and a point of pride.

"We always come back better," Reuwer said.

Downtown was devastated by the June 1972 flooding that followed Hurricane Agnes. "Of the town's 83 stores 39 were on such low ground that they were swamped by river and mud. The water rose so fast that almost nothing got saved," said a Washington Post account.

It also caught Ellicott City in the midst of preparations for its bicentennial that September. Enough of the damage was repaired that the celebration went forward as planned.

Three years later, Hurricane Eloise "filled up Lower Main Street like a large basin, flooding shops to the second story," local historian Joetta Cramm wrote in 1996. The cleanup began anew.

Longtime residents said those who couldn't tolerate the constant punishment dealt by the rivers

have long since left. Those who remain have assimilated it as a part of life in Ellicott City.

"You can always see it from the lifers," said Shawn Gladden, executive director of the Howard County Historical Society. "It's obviously sad and tragic, but it's something they've done before."

The history hasn't all been uplifting and inspiring. Caplan's was a retail anchor for downtown through most of the 20th century. Sam Caplan, whose grandfather founded the business in 1895, was a popular figure, often referred to in newspaper stories as Ellicott City's "unofficial mayor."

The store "carried a little bit of everything," his wife, Gertrude, said in a 1997 oral history excerpted by the Baltimore Sun. Caplan's boasted of the lowest prices: In 1949, ladies' dress shoes were \$4.49. Men's neckties went for \$1 to \$2.50.

But Gertrude Caplan said things were never the same after the 1972 flood.

"Don't ask me, don't ask me," she said of the flood. "I think that was really the turning point of Ellicott City. That was the downfall of our business . . . because it just, everything just sort of was washed away." The store closed in 1977.

'Nobody knows what's next'

The long, low-rise concrete building at 8307 Main is young by Ellicott City standards, dating back to about 1930, according to Reuwer, its owner. It was a showroom for Charles Miller's Chevrolet dealership and later housed the Howard County Health Department and the Howard County Times newspaper.

Remnants of the ramp for moving cars to the dealership's second-floor garage are still visible inside the Linwood Center Boutique, one of two businesses on the lower level. It is a thrift store staffed by autistic adults enrolled at the same-named school, which is on higher ground. The store, which relies on community donations of furniture, clothing and knickknacks, is designed as a training opportunity for Linwood students.

The surrounding building is solid — with concrete floors three feet thick. But inside the boutique is an uninhabitable gumbo of water, mud and debris. Executive director Bill Moss is eager to start the turnaround so his students can return.

"They want to work, and it's hard to find jobs," said Moss, who calls the store "a godsend."

Next door at La Palapa Grill and Cantina, the familiar post-flood smell is taken to the next level by spoiled food. General manager Simon Cortes and his workers are wearing dust masks as they clean out the

main dining room, where a buffalo head hangs over the bar.

"Nobody knows what's next. Everything is still up in the air," said Cortes, whose father, Gilberto, opened his first restaurant, El Azteca in Clarksville, 23 years ago. The family operates five places.

Cortes wasn't even supposed to be on the premises. Howard County restricted access to Main Street last week because of safety concerns. But he needs to get rid of the stinking food and start ripping out the floors and walls.

Cortes had a full house that rainy Saturday night, lots of large parties and people waiting. He knew there was trouble when he saw the Tiber, which also runs under his place, spilling out from an exposed channel in his parking lot. Soon the water was backing up onto Main Street, and drivers were climbing out of windows onto their car roofs.

"Everybody started freaking out," he said.

Cortes is proud of his employees, all of whom stayed to help guests. His biggest regret now is that they are out of work. "We've tried to place them at other restaurants, but we can't place 50 people."

As he returns to the tasks in front him, Cortes repeats the vow heard up and down Main Street last week.

"We'll rebuild and we'll be back. That's for sure."

The Drought No One Is Talking About In The Southeastern United States

By John Hopewell

Washington Post, August 8, 2016

Crops are wilting in the fields in several states in the southeastern United States from an extreme drought that has crept up under the radar of most people living outside the region.

Farmers in northern Georgia, northeast Alabama, southeast Tennessee, western North Carolina and northwestern South Carolina are desperate for rain as harvest time nears. Combined with above average heat this summer, the corn crop in numerous counties has already been wiped out.

From April 1 to July 31, Chattanooga, Tenn., had only received 61 percent of its normal rainfall, a deficit of over 6.5 inches. August has started off dry in the Scenic City with a meager 0.09 inches in the first week. And throwing gas on the fire, the June and July average temperature was roughly 4 degrees warmer than normal.

Data from the most recent U.S. Drought Monitor show northern Georgia hardest hit with the most counties under "extreme" drought conditions, while

western North Carolina is just slightly better off with “severe” and “moderate” conditions.

Tougher crops “like cotton and soybeans are surviving, but the corn crop is gone and so is most of the hay,” Norman Edwards, an agricultural extension agent for Walker County, Ga., told the Maryville Times.

Pastures are so barren that some cattle farmers are resorting to feeding their livestock baled hay instead of allowing them to graze off the parched land, the Maryville Times reported.

Georgia’s famed peanut crop has also been adversely affected. “The peanuts that don’t have irrigation are really kind of suffering from the drought,” Don Koehler, executive director of the Georgia Peanut Commission, told Insurance Journal. “They have not fully developed as far as plants.”

The region needs rain sustained over a long period to alleviate the drought. This week, as low pressure over the Southeast draws tropical moisture northward from the Gulf of Mexico, some beneficial rains are likely.

“The broad low-pressure system centered just west of the county warning area should stagnate through the vast majority of the forecast period allowing for an abnormally moist and tropical air mass,” the National Weather Service forecast office serving Atlanta said in a discussion.

Several inches of rain could fall.

But sometimes too much of a good thing can be a bad thing. The ground is so dry and impermeable that a lot of the rain will simply runoff, making the threat of flash flooding a concern.

Group Plans To Make House Into Hurricane Katrina Memorial

By Janet McConnaughey

Associated Press, August 8, 2016

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A house that was flooded by Hurricane Katrina could become a memorial to the catastrophic storm that nearly wiped New Orleans off the map 11 years ago.

The city planning commission will consider a request by the group Levees.org for a permit to preserve the house at a meeting on Tuesday, according to group founder Sandy Rosenthal. She said the house is likely the closest left standing near any of the three spots where levees broke, pouring water into the city.

The one-story brick house is still vacant, with gaping holes in a back wall and roof.

Rosenthal says she wants the exterior to look as it did just after the city was pumped dry, with a re-

creation of a moldy, flood-upturned living room visible through the front windows.

Glenn Corbett, a New York fire safety professor who testified before the congressional 9/11 commission, said in a phone interview Monday that he believes the project is “an incredibly valuable thing and unique. Nobody’s done this.”

Corbett, who suggested the project to Rosenthal, said that as far as he knows, this will be the first time someone has preserved “a piece of disaster history ... so people can look at it, get close to it, see what happened.”

Corbett said that after 9/11, many people assumed that the only parts of the World Trade Center remaining above ground — three crazily leaning sections of facade and exterior beams — would be stabilized in place as part of a memorial. Instead, he said, the 8-acre site was swept clean.

Rosenthal’s group, created to push for reforms in levee building and oversight, also has had plaques installed at the levee breaches and created a memorial garden in the vacant lot next door to the one-story brick house which she bought in April.

“We cannot squander the opportunity to preserve this relic, this insight,” she said at a news conference in front of the one-story brick house, still vacant 11 years after the storm.

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Is America Any Safer?

By Steven Brill

The Atlantic, August 8, 2016

Fifteen years ago this September 11, 19 terrorists, using four jetliners as guided missiles, killed 2,977 people—and enveloped the country in fear. It was the first sustained attack on American soil since the bombing of Pearl Harbor, which was a far-off military base. This massacre hit the center of our government and blasted away part of our most iconic skyline. It left a stench that New Yorkers could smell weeks later as remains continued to be recovered from the ashes.

Suddenly, we were vulnerable. Not just to disease, tornadoes, accidents, or criminals, but to the kinds of enemies that had always threatened others but never us.

Barack Obama remembers that after the second plane hit, he left the Chicago building that housed his state-Senate office. “I stood in the street and looked up at the Sears Tower, fearing it might be a target, too,” he told me in a recent email exchange, adding, “I remember rocking Sasha to sleep that night, wondering what kind of world our daughters were going to grow

up in.” He continued, “With nearly 3,000 people killed in the places where we lived our daily lives, there was a feeling that our homeland was truly vulnerable for the first time.”

This is the story of the first 15 years of how we have dealt with that newfound fear—how we have confronted, sometimes heroically and sometimes irrationally, the mechanics, the politics, and the psychic challenges of the September 12 era. From Our September 2016 Issue

Have we succeeded in toughening up what overnight became known as “homeland security”? Absolutely. But not without a series of extravagant boondoggles along the way.

Are we safer? Yes, we’re safer from the kind of orchestrated attack that shocked us on that September morning. It’s harder for terrorists to get into the country, and harder for them to pull off something spectacular if they do. But we have not plugged some of the most threatening security gaps. Worse, as the Orlando massacre reminded us, the world has become more populated by those who want to exploit those gaps, including those living among us—and who, in the United States, can easily obtain military-grade weapons. They are not deterred by the prospect of their own death, and they are happy to commit acts less ambitious than those of 9/11. That makes their attacks much harder to detect in advance. Our defenses are far stronger, but what we have to defend against has outpaced our progress.

Have we adjusted, politically and emotionally, so that we can make rational decisions as a government and as a people to deal with the ongoing threat? Not yet. In a bitterly divided democracy, where attention spans are short and civic engagement is low and the potential for oversimplification and governing-by-headlines is high, that is hardly a surprise.

But in those first hours after the planes hit their targets, we did answer the call—which required an almost complete turnaround of America’s mind-set and produced just as stunning a turnaround in our security posture. Part I: The Good News

On September 10, 2001, then–Attorney General John Ashcroft rejected an FBI request to increase anti-terrorism personnel for the coming fiscal year beyond a fraction of the bureau’s overall staff. The next morning, Ashcroft headed to Milwaukee to read to schoolchildren while his boss, President George W. Bush, was doing the same at an elementary school in Sarasota, Florida. America’s struggle to cope with the relentless threats of the post-9/11 world

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Also on September 10, FBI officials declared at a congressional briefing that the most imminent domestic terrorism threat was from animal-rights activists. Fifteen years later, the Justice Department has a national-security division, set up in 2006, that has consolidated and fortified all the department’s counterespionage and counterterrorism litigation and related legal-policy decisions. The overall FBI budget has nearly tripled since 2001, and its mission of investigating and prosecuting federal crimes that have already happened has been expanded to stopping terrorists before they strike. Most of the new resources—for intelligence analysts, technology upgrades, and additional agents—have been directed at prevention. “About half” of all agents are now assigned to national security, FBI Director James Comey told me, up from “maybe a quarter before the attacks.” Connecting the Dots

On September 10, 2001, the Federal Aviation Administration, which was responsible for air-travel security, had a watch list of 12 people, even though the FBI and the CIA had identified hundreds more in their databases. A proposal to expand the FAA list to include those additional names had been sitting for months in the inbox of an FAA security official. In reporting for a book about the nation’s recovery efforts in the first year after 9/11, *After: How America Confronted the September 12 Era* (2003), I discovered that two of the hijackers had been on that expanded list. Distribution of their names to the airlines had been delayed because the FBI and the FAA had not resolved which organization’s letterhead should be attached to the memo bearing the new list.

On the day the World Trade Center fell and the Pentagon was left smoldering, the CIA knew that two suspected terrorists whom it was tracking around the world—and who ended up on the 9/11 planes—had come to the U.S. months earlier. But the agency never told the FBI. When this came to light, the September 12-era phrase failure to connect the dots was born.

Today, all U.S. security agencies share the same watch lists and threat databases, which are constantly updated. They share intelligence tips with one another (though sometimes still grudgingly), and federal officials even sit on task forces with their local counterparts. With some lingering exceptions, we do connect the dots. Safety in the Air

On September 11, the airlines themselves were responsible for airport-security lines. They employed 16,000 poorly trained, low-wage private screeners, who operated under guidelines, approved by the FAA, that allowed the kind of box cutters and knives (up to four

inches long) that the hijackers used. The airlines had lobbied the FAA for these and other accommodations to keep costs down and the security lines moving.

Today, there are 46,000 screeners, almost all federal employees, trained by the Transportation Security Administration. Although management failures have produced security gaps in fast-moving lines, followed by—especially this spring and summer—long wait times resulting from efforts to plug those gaps, the screening process is undeniably tighter than it was on the morning of September 11. And cockpit doors have been fortified to block anyone who slips past the screeners, making a repeat of the 9/11 plot to commandeer planes and turn them into missiles hard to imagine.

In the 1970s, hundreds of federal air marshals—undercover cops in the air—were deployed on American planes to thwart hijackings to Cuba. By 2001, the number of marshals had been reduced to 33—negligible coverage for the more than 20,000 flights leaving 440 airports in America every day. Within a month of 9/11, an emergency program had recruited 600 new marshals, and by 2005 approximately 5,000 were on planes. (The actual number is classified.) Securing the Ports

When Kevin McCabe, the chief inspector of the U.S. Customs contraband team at the giant Elizabeth, New Jersey, freight port, looked across the water at the World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan and saw the second plane hit, he knew his country was under assault.

McCabe stared out his office window at the pier below, loaded with more than 7,000 cargo containers that had arrived from all over the world, and began what was probably America's first exercise in post-9/11 profiling. He directed his 70 inspectors to move every container that had arrived from the Middle East or North Africa—about 600 of them—to a far-off section of the pier. They then began the days-long process of X-raying and, if anything seemed untoward, hand-searching all 600.

A U.S. Army sergeant patrols the main concourse of Grand Central Terminal, July 4, 2016. (Greg Kahn)

The X-rays and searches, however, had always been geared to looking for smuggled drugs. The inspectors were great at finding cocaine hidden in limes from Ecuador. But they had little training in looking for bombs—and little equipment for detecting material that could be used for a radiation-laced “dirty bomb.”

Fifteen years later, every American port screens cargo using billions of dollars' worth of technology, including radiation detectors. Containers that register

high on a threat matrix (based on information sent in advance about the content and its shippers) are singled out for additional screening; many containers are screened in foreign ports by U.S. Customs inspectors before they set sail.

The system is far from airtight. But the port inspectors have come a long way from McCabe's panicked game of musical containers. Preparing for a Biological Attack

A week after the attacks, America was again caught flat-footed, when envelopes containing deadly anthrax were sent to several media outlets and two U.S. Senate offices, ultimately killing five people and hospitalizing 17. When Tom Ridge, the Pennsylvania governor, whom President Bush had just recruited to become the White House homeland-security adviser, convened his first meeting about anthrax in the Roosevelt Room, across from the Oval Office, he was stunned by the cluelessness of those assembled at the table. There was no playbook. No list of medical experts to call. No emergency supply of antidotes and no plan to produce one.

Today, a collection of federal agencies—so many that, if anything, there is bureaucratic overlap—has playbooks for a variety of biological and chemical outbreaks, and billions have been spent to stockpile antidotes. Part II: The Spirit of September 12

Beginning September 12, 2001, crash efforts were the order of the day.

Reconstituting the air-marshals program.

Doubling the number of Border Patrol agents.

A Victim Compensation Fund was conceived of and passed by Congress in 10 days and became the nation's single greatest act of tort reform. To the dismay of many trial lawyers, it allowed victims' families to seek millions each in uncontested claims directly from the federal Treasury (and also bailed out the airlines).

The TSA was legislated and launched within months, led by a fresh group of recruits from the private sector. They held their first meetings standing in an empty room in the Department of Transportation's headquarters, clutching laptops—until someone gave up on the glacial government procurement system and went to a local Staples and ordered chairs and desks with his own credit card.

Tom Ridge was emblematic of the September 12 mind-set. He'd been the governor of Pennsylvania for nearly seven years, and loved his work. But he took the job heading homeland-security efforts within hours, on September 19, not knowing where he would live or what his salary would be. This same spirit moved

members of Congress to pass piles of bipartisan legislation and assemble on the Capitol steps the night of the attacks, holding hands and singing "God Bless America." Video: The Inevitability of Dirty Bombs The terror threat that no one is talking about

Of course, that has changed. The initial September 12 spirit was like a rush of adrenaline. Much of what Americans in and out of government did was extraordinary; in hours worked, helping hands extended, immediate problems solved, they stretched beyond what they might have expected of themselves.

Then the rush subsided. When the headlines—the adrenaline that fuels Washington—died down, Beltway norms returned. Contractors, consultants, academics, and bureaucrats swarmed in to co-opt the new big thing, while the politicians retreated to their respective corners.

In April 2002, working as a reporter, I watched as a spirited band of new recruits got the TSA up and running at its first airport, in Baltimore. They timed passenger throughput, and high-fived each other when it stayed below four minutes per person. When the sun glared through a glass wall, killing the view of a carry-on-bag X-ray machine, someone found a piece of cardboard to shade it. More high fives.

When I visited TSA headquarters five years later to discuss a business I was starting that would expedite prescreened passengers through the security lines, administrators and other back-office employees—who by now numbered about 5,000, in addition to the 44,000 screeners working in airports—had their own building, near the Pentagon. As I rode the elevator, two people with TSA ID badges got on. One groused to the other that his parking-space assignment was unfair.

"Even I think the pendulum has swung way too far" in the direction of overspending and bureaucracy, says Richard Clarke, the anti-terror chief on President Bush's National Security Council, who had been derided for being the guy in the White House most obsessed with the threat of an al-Qaeda attack. "Beginning almost the morning after, the consultants and contractors came out of the woodwork."

Billions of dollars awaited contractors who promised infallible new technology: bio-threat and radiation detectors in towers to catch border-jumpers, upgraded Coast Guard cutters, biometric identification cards, \$1 million baggage-screening machines, new data-collection software.

Billions more would go to cities and towns savvy enough to slap a homeland-security label on grant proposals.

A burgeoning industry of homeland-security conferences and trade shows sprang up.

Across the country, colleges and universities went after research grants aimed at everything from how to make office windows blast-proof to how to secure international shipping channels. Academic institutions began offering degrees in homeland security. I counted 308 such programs when I scanned the web a few weeks ago.

"Sure, we're safer than we were 15 years ago," says one senior auditor at the Government Accountability Office (GAO), whose 3,000 auditors independently monitor federal agencies. "But we've spent hundreds of billions since 9/11. The question is how much of that was wasted and how much should have been used on other programs to address other security gaps." Bioterror and "Failures of Imagination"

Here are excerpts from an eye-opening report highlighting one of those continuing gaps, which I bet you never heard about, even though it was issued less than a year ago: Nine weeks ago, terrorists unleashed insidious biological attacks on our Nation's Capitol during our Independence Day celebrations. The infectious agent they used ultimately led to the deaths of 6,053 Americans ...

We discovered later that other attacks had already begun elsewhere in the Nation, using methods we have yet to identify that spread the disease among livestock in rural communities.

The report then offered a stinging indictment of America's security apparatus: The terrorists were successful because the government—including Congress—failed. They took advantage of our failure to achieve early environmental detection of the agent, failure to quickly recognize its occurrence in livestock, failure to rapidly diagnose the disease caused in sick patients, failure to consistently fund public health and health care preparedness, failure to establish sufficient medical countermeasure stockpiles, failure to make sure that non-traditional partners communicate. Ultimately, they took advantage of our failure to make biodefense a top national priority.

Sadly, much as the 9/11 Commission observed in its analysis of the attacks of 2001, the attacks of 2016 occurred because of another "failure of imagination."

The report was written by an all-star bipartisan panel consisting of, among others, Tom Ridge, the founding secretary of the Department of Homeland Security; Joe Lieberman, the former chair of the Senate Homeland Security Committee; Donna Shalala, who served as the secretary of health and human services under Bill Clinton; and Tom Daschle, the Democratic

former Senate majority leader. They were organized by Lewis “Scooter” Libby, who now works at the Hudson Institute, a conservative think tank. As Vice President Dick Cheney’s national-security adviser, Libby led the country’s bioterrorism-defense initiatives following 9/11 and the anthrax attacks.

No, the attack described in the report didn’t actually happen. Rather, the authors introduced the scenario as something that could happen, because, they wrote, “the threat is real and growing” and “carries with it the possibility of millions of fatalities and billions of dollars in economic losses.” It was meant to be a “wake-up call” to get the nation’s attention, Ridge told me.

It didn’t work. The rest of the report drew on dozens of experts’ testimony and reams of data to present the case for renewed attention and national leadership to address the threat of bioterrorism, which Libby says is “still the most likely game-changing terrorist attack.” Yet the report received scant news coverage when it was issued on October 28.

The Obama administration had the same nonreaction. The panel’s primary recommendation—to put one senior person in charge of consolidating the hodgepodge of agencies that have some role in biodefense—has never been acted on. “I read the report, and I respect it,” Jeh Johnson, the Obama administration’s current secretary of homeland security, told me. “But it’s a lot like everything else I deal with. We have to make choices every day about risk and priorities.”

What a difference 15 years makes. The bioterror threat hasn’t receded; if anything, as the panel pointed out, advances in science and technology have made it easier to launch these kinds of weapons. But the nation’s attention has receded—which is emblematic of the roller-coaster way our democracy and its leaders deal with risks. As suggested by the report’s rhetoric about “failures of imagination,” our imagination is limited to the day’s headlines. Policy makers fight the war that made those headlines, not the war that might come next.

A week before the 9/11 attacks, three New York Times reporters—Judith Miller, William J. Broad, and Stephen Engelberg—published an article in The Times adapted from their book, *Germs*, a vivid account of the danger of bioterrorism that would be published the following month. After the Twin Towers fell and the anthrax envelopes were delivered, *Germs* shot to the top of best-seller lists and the media were filled with reports about how a successful biological attack could kill as many people as a nuclear weapon—yet would be

far easier to pull off, a point that had been made earlier, by the 1999–2001 commission led by former Senators Gary Hart and Warren Rudman, whose pre-9/11 warnings about a terrorist attack on the U.S. were widely ignored.

The inspectors’ specialty was finding cocaine hidden in limes from Ecuador. They had little training in looking for bombs.

Immediately after the anthrax attacks in September 2001, Libby got Cheney and the rest of the Bush administration behind an urgent biodefense drive. Within months, during which there were several false alarms signaling apparent follow-on germ attacks (including one that officials feared had penetrated the White House), what would become a program costing hundreds of millions was launched to buy dozens of BioWatch detectors. These were deployed at pedestrian gathering places in 20 major cities to collect air samples. By 2005, 36 metropolitan areas were covered.

The instinct to do something, anything, about the threat was understandable. But collecting and analyzing BioWatch air samples could take up to 36 hours. By then, of course, an aerosolized attack could have infected thousands of victims who would have long since dispersed. Besides, samples of only six possible pathogens were even theoretically detectable, and that was only if the offending germs were sprayed close to the detectors.

Worse, it wasn’t clear that even those six pathogens would be detected at any distance. According to GAO reports about BioWatch and a study by the National Academy of Science, the devices had never been tested in real-world conditions, because officials hadn’t determined how to avoid the obvious risks during the testing process. The sensors deployed indoors (at places like Grand Central Terminal) seemingly had a better chance of working than those scattered outside along busy streets. But no one knew for sure whether any of them worked.

A new BioWatch program was launched in 2003 to develop systems that could cut down the analysis process to six hours and broaden the range of threats that could be detected. The effort lasted 11 years and ate up another \$200 million in fees to Beltway contractors. But it was canceled in 2014 because the new devices didn’t work.

Meantime, the original sensors are still deployed. Whether they work is still not known; many experts doubt they do unless the aerosol is released in intimate proximity. The continuing 36-hour sample-collection process and related maintenance cost \$80 million a year—more than \$1 billion over the past 15 years.

As of the end of 2014, the BioWatch sensors had produced a total of 149 alarms—none of which, according to a 2015 GAO report, “was linked to an attack or to a public health threat.” In fact, BioWatch is considered such a dud that local officials routinely ignore any alarms that federal homeland-security officials pass along from it.

“We knew it was a stopgap, but we felt we had to put something out there” at the time, says Ridge, who was the homeland-security secretary until the beginning of 2005. “But 13 years, and nothing better? Come on!”

Tom Ridge, America’s first secretary of homeland security, in his office in Washington, D.C., June 27, 2016 (Greg Kahn)

This past February, when a House homeland-security subcommittee held a hearing on BioWatch, senior DHS officials assured their inquisitors that they were working on the problem. “We seem to be having the same hearings over and over again,” Bennie Thompson, a longtime Democratic subcommittee member, complained.

The subcommittee’s then-chair, Martha McSally, a Republican freshman from Arizona and a former Air Force fighter pilot, seemed more upbeat, until she noted that industry vendors had told her they’d responded to DHS requests for information about possible new versions of the technology two years earlier but never heard back. Reginald Brothers, the Homeland Security Department’s undersecretary for science and technology, replied that he was now sending out still more such requests. Testifying in a near-empty committee room that would have been filled with bioterror-obsessed media 15 years earlier, the undersecretary said his team was engaged in an “exploratory process” and hoped to have a fix in place in “three to eight years.”

“This kind of stuff just drives you crazy. It’s all so slow and bureaucratic,” McSally told me. “We rolled something out in a panic after 9/11 and then it lingered in a substandard place because attention shifted.”

When I asked Jeh Johnson about his deputy’s apparent acceptance of a process whereby exchanges of information with the private sector stretch out over years and whereby a fix to an urgent problem is still three to eight years off, he sighed in what seemed to be exasperation, then offered this: “I can think of a number of instances where the best technology is a ways off.”

“When germs were sexy right after 9/11, they focused on it,” says Judith Miller, one of the co-authors of *Germs*. “But until someone engineers one of these

pathogens and releases it, we’re not likely to do anything more.” “Jack Bauer Syndrome”

The story of BioWatch’s exercise in hope over reality illustrates what one GAO auditor calls “Jack Bauer Syndrome,” referring to the counterterrorism agent who was featured in *24*, the hit TV series.

“If you’re shocked and scared and you know there’s a threat out there, you’ll do anything, spend anything, to deal with it,” the auditor explained, “even if what you spend it on hasn’t been tested and you haven’t even set any standards to evaluate it.”

Chip Fulghum, the Department of Homeland Security’s chief financial officer, who took the job in 2013 and says he considers himself part of a “cleanup operation,” puts it this way: “Right after 9/11, the spigot got turned on and a fire hose of money poured out. Much of it was badly monitored and much of it was for stuff that just didn’t work.”

Multiple programs—salivated over by Beltway contractors, who formed “capture teams” to reel in business—were launched with exuberant announcements, after which they quietly tailspinned into implementation delays, revised promises, and finally failure.

“We rolled something out in a panic after 9/11 and then it lingered in a substandard place because attention shifted,” Martha McSally says.

Two billion dollars was doled out to improve the TSA’s screening of checked bags for bombs, but the new equipment yielded no discernible improvement.

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Another \$1 billion was wasted on a network of motion sensors and camera towers across just a fraction of the U.S. border with Mexico as the first step in what was to be a \$5 billion program. When the government awarded the coveted contract to Boeing in 2006 (to replace a failed \$2.5 billion program started in 2004), President Bush heralded it as “the most technologically advanced border project ever.” Once deployed, however, the system’s sensors set off alarms when all varieties of wildlife moved around, and its cameras swayed in the wind and failed to provide visibility in areas where the land wasn’t level. The program was finally euthanized in 2011, after which an Israeli firm was brought in to provide a system that apparently works.

Similarly, a \$2.5 billion plan to replace drive-through radiation detectors at border crossings with a new model that would cut the high false-alarm rate was killed in 2011 after \$230 million in prototype tests showed no improvement.

A long-running contract awarded to Northrop Grumman and Lockheed Martin to build new Coast Guard cutters has so far come in \$1 billion above its \$4.7 billion budget and four years late.

And a \$400 million program (also feasted on mostly by Lockheed Martin) to distribute 3.5 million tamperproof biometric ID cards to truck drivers hauling hazardous material and to workers at seaports and airports was completed five years behind schedule, in 2011. Worse, the ID-card readers have never worked and are not being used, making the high-tech credentials no more secure than a library card.

The granddaddy of all the misbegotten big ideas may be something called FirstNet, a project set up to provide a telecommunications system exclusively for firefighters, police officers, and other first responders that would cost as much as \$47 billion.”Attack 2” Versus a Flaming Bagel

Clarke, the former White House anti-terror chief, has a weekend house in Rappahannock County, Virginia (population 7,400). He says that one Sunday morning a few years after the 9/11 attacks, he burned a bagel in his toaster and his smoke alarm went off. “This monster fire truck with four volunteer firemen—two teenagers and two guys my age—arrived,” Clarke recalls. “They could barely drive the thing. It had a logo on it calling it ‘Attack 2.’ “Clarke was stunned to find out that the truck, which cost \$185,000, had been paid for by a federal homeland-security grant.

“Want to see how your homeland-security money was spent?” a longtime anti-terror official who was one of Tom Ridge’s senior aides asked me. “Go to your local Fourth of July parade anywhere in small-town America and you’ll see a logo on a spiffed-up fire truck or armored police truck saying we paid for it.”

The largesse has hardly been limited to souped-up emergency vehicles. Across the country, small towns have loaded up on everything from a “latrine on wheels” in Fort Worth, to fish tanks in Seguin, Texas (presumably to help counterterrorism cops relax?), to unspecified equipment in American Samoa. In all, more than \$40 billion has been spent on homeland-security grants since 9/11.

U.S. Representative Martha McSally of Arizona, the chair of a House subcommittee on homeland security, at her office in the Longworth building, Washington, D.C., July 6, 2016 (Greg Kahn)

Everything in the grant applications was linked to terror, an exercise in which the grant writers suffered no failures of imagination. A Senate report documenting this spending found that one law-enforcement website offered “a how-to guide, Tapping

Into Federal Funds, advising public safety officials to amplify the frightening ‘what ifs’ in their request for funds by pointing out ‘the worst case scenario’ ... that the project for which you’re seeking funds would help.”

The arrival of Attack 2 to extinguish Clarke’s bagel was proof that homeland security had morphed from an emergency mission into politics as usual. When asked during a 2004 Senate hearing what kind of formula governed decisions about who received grants, Tom Ridge, himself a former congressman, replied in a burst of candor that he was looking for something that gets “218 votes in the House or 51 votes in the Senate.” This explains why Congress mandated that each of the 56 states and territories had to receive some grant money, regardless of actual risk of terrorism.

Today, the grants continue, though at a reduced rate, and they are mostly restricted to high-risk metropolitan areas.

Which is the other side of the story. Money Well Spent

The flow of federal funds to major cities has plugged innumerable security gaps.

In New York City, federal grants enabled newly elected Mayor Michael Bloomberg and his police commissioner, Raymond Kelly, to set up a 1,000-person Counterterrorism Bureau that includes specially armed quick-response units and intelligence officers assigned overseas.

On September 12, 2001, the train tunnels under New York’s rivers could have been breached by a bomb small enough to fit in a backpack. Thousands could have been drowned. The most vulnerable were

PATH trains running under the Hudson River to New Jersey. Hundreds of millions of dollars were quietly allocated to reinforce the tunnels’ roofs.

More federal money went to reinforcing subway tunnels, installing cameras to detect intruders, and assigning undercover officers to ride the trains.

Money from Washington helped pay for the hardening of the Madison Square Garden–Penn Station complex, a venue that had been easy prey for even a small car bomb and that—because it is a high-profile, crowded hub sitting atop crucial subway junctions and Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor rail lines—was feared to be a prime terrorist target.

On the Upper West Side, an exposed bit of a pipeline running natural gas up the East Coast was encased in a protective shed, as was a vulnerable water main in the Bronx that could have flooded much of that borough. Related Story

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Federal money helped pay for a team of consultants to work with Kelly’s Counterterrorism Bureau to produce a smartly written manual called “Engineering Security.” Now widely used across the country, it provides those responsible for the security of office buildings and other facilities guidance on everything from gauging the blast resistance of different grades of glass to determining a venue’s overall risk profile.

Washington also paid for cops to be posted at key targets. At the Brooklyn Bridge, according to Kelly, these officers staved off a plot to cut its cables—which intelligence officials learned about when questioning Khalid Sheik Mohammed, al-Qaeda’s 9/11 mastermind.

Overall, anti-terror money sent from Washington to New York has exceeded \$6 billion.

The federal government made similar investments in other cities and other high-profile venues across the country. Joint Terrorism Task Forces—which had previously consisted of small groups of FBI agents, representatives of other federal law-enforcement agencies, and a few local police officers—were beefed up with funding from Washington. The number of detectives and intelligence analysts on Ray Kelly’s task force in New York went from 17 to 120.

In 2001, there were 35 Joint Terrorism Task Forces around the country; today, there are 104. The federal government has also funded broader groups of law-enforcement and emergency-response agencies, called fusion centers.

The feds have sponsored drills and other exercises to help state and local police departments, and other first responders, rehearse how they would work together in an emergency. One full-scale, 24-hour exercise in Massachusetts, six months before the April 15, 2013, bombing of the Boston Marathon, is credited with helping officials do such a good job of stationing medical personnel at the site before the event began and mapping out how mass casualties would be distributed to the city’s multiple trauma centers that, amazingly, none of even the most grievously injured among the 264 victims was added to the death toll of the three who died immediately at the scene. Part III: Washington’s Most Maligned Agency

By my calculation, over the past 15 years, the American government has spent \$100 billion to \$150 billion on failed or unworthy homeland-security programs and on acquiring and maintaining equipment that hasn’t worked. However, as with the equipment

procured for port inspections, launching the TSA, and grants for protecting New York’s subway tunnels and running emergency drills in Boston, much more than that was well spent.

The same mixed verdict applies to the agency created to dole out that money and manage the programs. President Bush’s decision to combine 22 far-flung government agencies into the Department of Homeland Security belatedly followed a primary recommendation of the Hart-Rudman commission, whose warning, in three reports starting in 1999 and culminating on January 31, 2001, about the need for the government to prepare for terrorist attacks had been largely ignored. The details of the reorganization are still being debated. Should the FBI have been left out? Should the Secret Service have been included? But combining agencies such as Border Patrol, Customs, the new TSA, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency into one department responsible for putting the people and systems in place to defend against or recover from an attack made sense, as did enabling the still-separate FBI to gather intelligence in order to stop the people planning attacks or track them down after an attack occurred.

Nonetheless, the result, especially at first, was management disarray and ineffectiveness that could fill a textbook on bureaucratic dysfunction.

DHS—which has had seven undersecretaries or acting undersecretaries for management—has perennially been on the GAO’s list of agencies whose overall management is considered “at risk.” From the beginning, the agencies thrown into the new superagency fought to keep their turf, often calling on congressional allies to help. “At one meeting early on, I mumbled something about why should the Coast Guard and Customs each have their own helicopters and planes,” Tom Ridge recalls. “Why couldn’t they combine to purchase the same stuff? Within a few days, we had calls from Capitol Hill warning us not to mess with the Coast Guard’s or Customs’ procurements.” (The two agencies still have their own air forces.)

Ridge was preoccupied during his tenure with organizing the new agency and launching urgent programs, like the BioWatch detectors and the posting of U.S. Customs inspectors overseas. His successor, Michael Chertoff, a former federal appeals judge and head of the U.S. Justice Department’s Criminal Division, prioritized tighter management, but ended up overwhelmed during most of his tenure by his department’s failures in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Chertoff, who declined repeated requests to be interviewed, was succeeded during President Obama’s

first term by Janet Napolitano, who resigned as governor of Arizona to head the department. Napolitano focused, she told me, on rebuilding

FEMA following the Katrina disaster, border security, and the (unsuccessful) effort to pass a broad immigration-reform bill.

The border-control system's sensors set off alarms when wildlife moved around. The program was finally euthanized in 2011.

Only Jeh Johnson, who succeeded Napolitano when she left to take over the University of California system in late 2013, seems to have made forging a cohesive organization—he calls it “unity of effort”—a priority.

Johnson, who turns 59 on September 11, was the first African American to make partner at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, a New York law firm that has long been a home for prominent Democrats who rotate in and out of government. A former general counsel for the Defense Department, Johnson seems to have become a smart, tough manager. He has made significant progress in rationalizing DHS, which today is a \$64.9-billion-a-year colossus with 240,000 employees. But the challenges of fusing so many long-standing independent bureaucracies remain, even 14 years after they were first thrown together.

Dealing with these multiple agencies is further complicated by the fact that DHS's senior executives and staff are spread among 120 offices, scattered, wherever space has been available, throughout Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. Most work far from Johnson's office, a shabby, converted naval facility in Northwest D.C. that is itself far from downtown Washington. (After many false starts, a closer-in, massive \$600 million headquarters seems likely to be built within the next two or three years.)

The Office of Personnel Management's latest annual survey of employee morale across all government agencies ranks DHS in the bottom tier across multiple measures of employee satisfaction and sense of mission. In a category called “intrinsic work experience,” DHS somehow scored below the Federal Elections Commission, an agency so famously paralyzed by partisan deadlock that its mission has basically been put on hold.

“I really care about that survey, and we're going to improve those numbers,” Johnson told me. “But it's going to take time.”

An approachable boss who has made a habit of mingling with his troops wherever he goes, Johnson seems well suited to the challenge. At a town-hall meeting for DHS employees in New York, I watched

him connect with those who asked questions, inquiring about their families and then demonstrating that he was immersed in the issues they cared about. Last March, Johnson was a big hit at the Baltimore-Washington International airport when he played undercover boss, acting as a TSA screener.

“I wasn't planning to be a manager when I came into this job,” Johnson said. “But during my [Senate] confirmation-oversight process, I kept hearing ‘management reform, management reform,’ so this is something I've had to focus on.”

Although the GAO recently reported that DHS has made significant progress in tightening management, Johnson still has work to do, starting with customer service. In June, a friend tried to call Customs and Border Protection with a complaint about a Global Entry card that he should have been able to use when entering the United States after an international flight. The line was constantly busy, so he tried the agency's email complaint system, only to receive a reply telling him that the response time for emails like his was “16–20 business weeks.” I followed up and called three different DHS customer-service lines. No one ever picked up the phone.

Jeh Johnson, the current secretary of homeland security, who has made improving the dismal morale of his department a priority, at DHS's New York office in One World Trade Center, June 20, 2016 (Greg Kahn)

Last winter, a House subcommittee hearing about a DHS human-resources IT program produced another installment of a C-

SPAN drama that has played out in dozens of episodes since the agency was put together: indignant inquisitors lacerating their witness. Noting that the IT program had so far cost \$180 million over 13 years without yet being operational—and that there is no set schedule for when it would be—Scott Perry, a Pennsylvania Republican, told Chip Fulghum, DHS's chief financial officer, that the program was the “poster child for inept management.” Congressional Malpractice

As Perry's scolding of Fulghum demonstrates, members of Congress in both parties have never been shy about criticizing, even mocking, the Department of Homeland Security for mismanagement and low staff morale. But the longest-running failure of management when it comes to homeland security—a failure that is deliberate, self-centered, and easy to fix—has to do with Congress itself.

When Congress voted in 2002 to consolidate 22 federal agencies into a unified DHS, each of those agencies and their dozens of subunits was overseen by

different congressional committees and subcommittees. “We figured congressional leaders would reorganize things,” says Ridge, referring to how, after the departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force were put into the new Defense Department, congressional oversight was consolidated accordingly.

That never happened. “There is no committee chairman or subcommittee chairman or ranking member who will give up jurisdiction over something that they had jurisdiction over, especially something as sexy as homeland security,” Martha McCally, the House subcommittee chair, told me. Thus, four House and Senate transportation subcommittees oversee the TSA and the Coast Guard, but subcommittees of the House and Senate homeland-security committees oversee them too. In all, 119 congressional committees or subcommittees assert some kind of jurisdiction over DHS.

Those committees and subcommittees held 300 hearings in 2011 and 2012 alone, according to a tally compiled by DHS. Each hearing required DHS secretaries, undersecretaries, assistant secretaries, or agency heads to sit for hours, listening to the members read ponderous opening speeches and then responding to questions. It adds up to one or more senior DHS officials sitting through these hearings about three times a week. And that’s not counting the many more informal briefings conducted for members of Congress.

“It’s outrageous,” says Napolitano. “You get all those directions and priorities from all those committees and subcommittees. It’s a huge burden and a huge waste of time.”

When then-Speaker John Boehner was asked during a December 2014 press conference why oversight hadn’t been consolidated under the homeland-security committees, he chuckled and said, “I’ve been working on this for about six years ... It should have been done.”

I could find no member of Congress or congressional staffer willing to defend the current setup. Rather, unlike any other issue when it comes to terrorism—where urgency and indignation at even the slightest failing is the order of the day on Capitol Hill—everyone I talked with seemed to accept their own bipartisan failure to act as an immovable fact of life. **The Duct-Tape Dilemma**

Some morale problems at DHS may have less to do with management and congressional harassment and more to do with the nature of DHS’s mission. There are few noticeable victories—but multiple opportunities for failure, embarrassment, and ridicule.

“The FBI are the stars and the DHS people basically are seen as the garbagemen,” Richard Clarke told me. While the FBI, he explains, does high-profile detective work, DHS mostly screens people and things at airports and borders, reviews claims for cleanup grants after disasters, and does the unsung work of advising the private sector on how to protect its infrastructure. Even DHS’s arguably most glamorous agency, the Secret Service, makes headlines only when it fails.

“In law enforcement,” says Johnson, who is a former federal prosecutor, “you get a big takedown and you get a big press conference.” You get headlines like “Eight Charged in Check-Kiting Mob.” But the nature of homeland security “is different. We’re on defense.”

Although DHS mostly makes the news when it fails, it also gets attention when it becomes the butt of comedy monologues about mindless bureaucracy.

Early on, the jokes had to do with color codes and duct tape. Both illustrate the no-win proposition of having a government agency try to deal with the changing impulses of the September 12 era.

The much-ridiculed color codes—public pronouncements that the country was at a green, blue, yellow, orange, or red state of alert—came about because Ridge insisted that federal officials should share threat information with the local police agencies who would be on the front lines. But the information the locals got was leaked, spurring outcries that the public deserved to know at least something about potential threats.

The resulting color scheme, announced in 2002, was derided as so vague as to be meaningless. But it was seen as better than the alternatives of saying nothing or telling everyone, including the bad guys, specifically what the government knew. Ten years after the attacks, the color advisories were abandoned in favor of equally vague but wordy “bulletins” that are infrequently updated on the DHS website, where they are largely ignored but are no longer a source of derision.

Duct tape was about a more important, if equally ridiculed, initiative. In the aftermath of the anthrax crisis, amid growing fears of bioterror attacks, Ridge’s office urged citizens to prepare emergency “ready” kits. One of the suggested ingredients—in addition to flashlights, a portable radio, water bottles, and nonperishable food—was duct tape, which could be used along with plastic sheeting to seal doors and windows so that people could safely “shelter in place.”

This was, and remains, a prudent security precaution. But Ridge and his team were almost

immediately lampooned, perhaps because joking about a possible disaster relieved nerves. Of course, if Ridge had discarded experts' recommendation that he tout duct tape because it could protect people during a bio attack and then an attack had occurred, he would have been denounced for his failure of imagination. The Agency That's Always Wrong

DHS's most visible unit is the Transportation Security Administration, which has more daily interactions with more Americans than any other federal agency. Those encounters are inherently a source of public cynicism: They're inconvenient, and to many they seem an exercise in bureaucratic rigidity.

In June 2015, news leaked that testers from the DHS Office of the Inspector General had been able to smuggle simulated weapons or explosives through checkpoints 67 out of 70 times at airports across the U.S. Johnson was so incensed that he removed the acting TSA administrator and replaced him with Peter Neffenger, a highly regarded Coast Guard vice admiral. Since taking over, Neffenger has completely redone the TSA training program and required all current staff members to be retrained to focus on the agency's primary mission—security.

Passengers in line at a TSA checkpoint at Reagan National Airport, just outside Washington, D.C., December 23, 2015. TSA lines have gotten worse this year, and will likely not improve until 2017. (Saul Loeb / AFP / Getty)

"We were worried too much about throughput," Neffenger told me. "We had to go back to basics."

Neffenger said he is also determined to expand the PreCheck program. Launched in 2012, PreCheck provides expedited TSA clearance for the 3 million people (so far) who have agreed to be prescreened. Neffenger is determined to improve its marketing, open more-convenient enrollment centers, and give government officials who already have a security clearance automatic enrollment.

PreCheck is "the most popular thing I've ever done in public service," Napolitano, the former DHS secretary who initiated the program, told me. But it will be popular only until a PreCheck member does something bad—which is bound to happen today or 10 years from today, because no security process is perfect. Making homeland-security decisions based on logical weighing of risks makes sense and avoids public frustration and ridicule—until something bad happens.

As those who have flown lately know, the problem of slow airport-security lines was exacerbated this spring and summer by record air-travel volume and

by the fact that three years ago, the TSA began to trim its airport staff. The staff cuts came because letting up on its tight process, which ultimately allowed the inspector general's testers to slip through with their simulated weapons and bombs, had given DHS the false sense that it could keep the lines moving while getting by with fewer people. Hiring and training to get back to staffing levels sufficient to cut the current wait times while maintaining security will take at least until the beginning of next year. Costs Versus Benefits

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, fewer people flew, because they feared more aviation attacks. However, once the TSA was operating, people resumed flying instead of driving. According to a study done by the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute, there were likely 1,018 more traffic fatalities in the three months following 9/11 than there would have been had people believed flying was safe. In other words, the reassurance provided by the establishment of the TSA arguably saved more than 300 lives a month.

Put differently, terrorists can kill 300 people a month by scaring us off airplanes—and that's in addition to the economic havoc that fear of flying produces.

All of which suggests that judging the TSA's efficacy—and the claims about the agency's bureaucratic bloat and its pointless "security theater"—is complicated.

Of course, the TSA gets no credit for those 300 lives a month. Turning that theoretical math into congratulatory high fives is a stretch. But other, more direct measures of homeland-security success are no easier to calculate.

"How many terrorist attacks has TSA thwarted? We're never going to know the true answer to that question," Jeh Johnson says. "I do know that last year TSA seized in carry-on luggage 2,500 guns—83 percent of which were loaded."

Just before Tom Coburn, a Republican senator from Oklahoma famous for being waste-averse, left office in 2015, he issued a 162-page report on DHS that attacked almost every aspect of the agency for wasting money while "not successfully executing any of its ... main missions."

Coburn's argument boiled down to a recitation of the obvious: American taxpayers have spent \$1 trillion since 9/11 (on DHS and on terror-related work at other agencies), but Americans are still not safe from terrorist attacks. Which is like declaring that a health-care system doesn't work because people still get sick and die.

“People ask, ‘How many terrorist attacks has TSA thwarted?’” Jeh Johnson said. “We’re never going to know the true answer to that question. I do know that last year TSA seized in carry-on luggage 2,500 guns—83 percent of which were loaded.”

Coburn’s attempt at more-detailed cost-benefit analyses highlighted how complicated that exercise can be. One of his most intriguing critiques was directed at the Federal Air Marshal Service, which, he pointed out, was spending about \$800 million a year (equal to about 40 percent of the Secret Service budget and nearly 10 percent of the FBI’s). That adds up to more than \$10 billion since the 9/11 attacks. Yet, Coburn wrote, “it is unclear to what extent the ... program is reducing risk to aviation security.”

Air marshals are supposed to prevent terrorist hijackings. There have been no hijackings. Why complain about that? Isn’t that the best possible proof that the program works? How do we know how many hijackers were deterred by the well-publicized air-marshal buildup? Related Story

Meet the People Who Protect America’s Critical Infrastructure

Then again, even for \$800 million a year, the air marshals can be on only a fraction of all flights—maybe about 5 percent, depending on the number of air marshals, which is classified. No marshal was on board either shoe bomber Richard Reid’s plane or the one carrying underwear bomber Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab.

And what about the flights that air marshals were on? On the hundreds of thousands of flights carrying undercover air marshals since 9/11, not a single hijacker has been taken down. In fact, there have been more arrests of air marshals since 9/11 (for off-duty conduct such as drunk driving) than by air marshals for conduct in airports or on planes.

This is what makes any cost-benefit analysis so challenging. There have been no hijackings since 9/11—and the deterrent value of having even a small percentage of flights protected by marshals might account for that. Yet training thousands of men (and some women) for armed combat in the sky and then having them travel (mostly in first class, to be near the cockpit) on endless flights every day does seem to be overkill, especially when all cockpits have been fortified to prevent the kind of forced entry that precipitated the buildup of the marshal force.

That would seem to be a good argument for at least dropping the Federal Air Marshal Service down on the DHS priority list. Yet only in the past four years

have any members of Congress even mildly urged cuts in its budget. Part IV: Everything Is a Priority

At least in the case of the air marshals, there is a tactical argument for cutting the program: The fortifying of cockpit doors and the arming of thousands of pilots may have eliminated the threat that the marshal program was supposed to address. But no one in Washington seems willing to rank threats in terms of the relative risk they pose. Saying that something is less of a threat than something else is a political third rail. Everything is always a priority.

Kathryn Brinsfield, a former emergency-room doctor and administrator of EMS services in Boston, is the DHS assistant secretary running the agency’s bioterror-prevention programs, including the BioWatch sensors that have been waiting 15 years for next-generation technology. Those are the upgrades that one of her colleagues told Congress he hoped to have within the next “three to eight years.” When I asked her to discuss the obvious—that her bailiwick had lost the priority status it had in the months following the anthrax crisis—she gamely replied, “No, BioWatch is a major priority.”

Jeh Johnson is only a bit more forthcoming: “We have to be concerned about all ranges of attacks,” he says. “I never categorize anything as low priority, but we have to look at what’s high risk and what’s less high risk and spend our time accordingly.”

The problem with ducking a real discussion about priorities is that it allows for decisions to get made ad hoc and out of the limelight, typically based more on what’s “hot” or on what’s a political priority than on what the evidence might dictate. “Not Your Father’s Terrorism”

What’s hot today is the threat of lone wolves.

Even before the Orlando massacre, every government official or television pundit was talking about how lone wolves—terrorists acting on their own, or in small groups—are the major threat to homeland security, rather than the kind of centrally managed, patiently planned shock-and-awe attacks al-Qaeda launched on 9/11. Although the Brussels and Paris massacres were, in fact, organized by sizable cells emanating from

ISIL in Syria, multiple one-off attacks have become relatively common, from the Boston Marathon to Orlando to San Bernardino to Fort Hood to Garland to Chattanooga.

It adds up to what Johnson calls “an entirely different global environment.”

“This is not your father’s terrorism,” says John Miller, a former CBS News senior correspondent who

is now the deputy commissioner for intelligence and counterterrorism at the New York Police Department.

Miller has a newsman's flair for describing the current situation pungently: "Al-Qaeda was an elite organization. They would turn people away," he says. "

ISIL does no screening; they do mass marketing ... Their attitude is 'We don't care if you're a loser. And we don't care about some apocalyptic event. Just go do your thing.' "

"You do not have to be smart to kill people this way," Miller continues. "The fact that they're morons is academic. Any moron could make the pressure-cooker bomb those idiots used in Boston. The San Bernardino couple were idiots. If they had been directed by anyone, they'd have picked something a lot more crowded than the place where the guy worked. But

ISIL latches on to people like that, telling them, 'It's okay to lash out at people you hate—in our name. It's okay that you're a loser. You can still have an impact. You can be a hero.' It's elixir for someone sitting in the glow of their laptop in their parents' basement."

Al-Qaeda's biggest failing was ego, Miller says. "Bin Laden thought of himself as a historic figure and that if he just blew something up that wasn't spectacular, he'd be just like the Palestinians. So they didn't go after malls or anything ordinary.

ISIL is just the opposite."

"Al-Qaeda was an elite organization. They would turn people away. ISIL does no screening; they do mass marketing," John Miller says. "Their attitude is 'We don't care if you're a loser.' "

So how do we guard against would-be killers sitting in their parents' basements?

Miller's team includes a crew of several dozen multilingual people sifting through websites and social media. "We have an easier time getting Arabic speakers than the FBI, because we don't have to put them through the security clearances that the bureau does," he says.

According to Miller, who served as the head of public affairs at the FBI from 2005 to 2009, 15 of the past 19 cases in which the FBI made arrests charging people with offenses such as planning to join

ISIL stemmed from leads developed by his NYPD unit.

Carlos T. Fernandez, the FBI special agent in charge of the New York-based counterterrorism division, which runs the city's Joint Terrorism Task Force, told me he is "not sure" of Miller's count, and that "there were many [cases] where we were both

working leads"—which, he added, "is really the point: The big change since 9/11 is how we work together."Strengthening the FBI

Fernandez's New York operation is on three floors of an old office building overlooking the Meatpacking District in Lower Manhattan. The task force—whose major wins include the 2009 disruption of a bomb plot by a homegrown terrorist who had driven to Queens from Denver—now numbers some 400 federal, state, and local agents and investigators from the FBI, the NYPD, and all the metropolitan area's other law-enforcement agencies. That's a dramatic upgrade from when the unit was formed in 1980 with 10 FBI agents and 10 city detectives in response to threats from Croatian extremists and the Jewish Defense League. "Those were the good old days," says Fernandez, whose work as an agent on the task force in the months after 9/11 had him spending much of his time overseas chasing leads.

Divided into 17 squads, the office has jurisdiction not only over New York, but also over cases emanating out of Canada, western Europe, and Africa.

One squad chases down any and all tips from the public and refers those that seem credible to more-specialized units. Others hunt terrorists on the internet. Separate squads track

ISIL and al-Qaeda. Has Fernandez's al-Qaeda team lost focus in the wake of

ISIL's rise to prominence? "That's why we keep separate squads," Fernandez says, "so that they don't."

A weapons-of-mass-destruction unit looks for intelligence about dirty bombs and bioweapons, keeping tabs on, as Fernandez puts it, "the potential players in bio or nuclear who, if we got a tip, we would look at first."

"The threat information bubbles up from the units," Carl Ghattas, the head of the FBI's counterterrorism division at headquarters in Washington, told me. "It's a triage process. You look at the patients in the emergency room and decide what needs your immediate attention or what needs some kind of longer-term initiative." That raises the question of whether—as with DHS paying inadequate attention to bioterror vulnerabilities and, as we will see later, other federal agencies not doing enough to secure potential dirty-bomb material—the FBI's triage process is allowing lower-profile, higher-impact threats to fester.

"You have to worry about all the marginal, stupid people that

ISIL may motivate here," James Comey, the FBI director, told me. "But there are still smart people

waking up every day over there trying to kill us. We know

ISIL is trying to develop chemical weapons. And you have to worry about that, too. Balancing those threats is a challenge today.”

Orlando police officers direct people away from the mass shooting at Pulse nightclub, June 12, 2016. (Phelan M. Ebenhack / AP)

Comey was a chief federal prosecutor in New York and then the deputy attorney general under George W. Bush until he left for the private sector in 2005. He recalled that when he returned to government to run the bureau eight years later, “I felt like Rip Van Winkle.” His predecessor as FBI director, Robert Mueller, “had totally transformed the place.” The agency now has something like 3,000 intelligence analysts. “The way we use local police is probably the biggest single change. All in all, I think we really are a well-oiled anti-terror machine.”

However, Comey acknowledged that even in the brief time since he took over the bureau in 2013, the rise of lone wolves has changed the nature of the intelligence his agents have to try to collect. Detecting the plans of a lone wolf or a small group can’t be done by monitoring a known foreign terror cell. The bureau has tools to sift through social media to try to connect the dots—but the volume of the traffic and possible connections between all those dots make this a hit-or-miss proposition where only hindsight provides clarity. As of this writing, it’s unclear whether Omar Mateen, who massacred 49 people in Orlando, was in contact with anyone about his plans. True, certain clues suggested that Mateen might be a threat—but they were no clearer than the hints about the thousands of people like him who hit the FBI’s now-vigilant radar screens every week. No amount of resources, let alone compromises in constitutional rights, would make it possible for the bureau to detain or even surveil all these people.

“It’s hard,” said Comey, who spoke with me a few weeks before the Orlando massacre. “But I’m not ready to give up. We have to keep trying.”

The FBI had interrogated Mateen twice in the past, but never had cause to arrest him, or to keep him under constant surveillance. “We are looking for needles in a nationwide haystack,” Comey said at a press conference the day after the Orlando massacre. “But we’re also called upon to figure out which pieces of hay might someday become needles.”

In the aftermath of attacks like those in Orlando and San Bernardino, some critics charge that Comey and his people were not aggressive enough in

monitoring or arresting the perpetrators of those attacks before they occurred. Others argue that the FBI has overstepped constitutional boundaries in its drive to find out what people might be planning, often by entrapping suspected terrorists into actually creating attack plans they might otherwise never have thought of.

“Since 9/11 the FBI has organized more jihadist terror plots in the United States than any other organization,” Peter Bergen, a longtime terrorism analyst, wrote in *United States of Jihad: Investigating America’s Homegrown Terrorists*, published early this year. Bergen cites several cases in which defendants have argued that while they might have expressed hostile thoughts to someone who ended up informing on them, the FBI stepped in and, through informants or undercover agents, created an attack plan for them, encouraged them to try to carry it out—and then arrested them when they proceeded with the attempted attack. In June, a *New York Times* report calculated that two-thirds of the bureau’s recent prosecutions of suspected

ISIL supporters have involved undercover agents or informants engaged in aggressive sting operations.

“Think about it from our perspective,” Comey said when I asked about this. “Suppose someone is overheard in a restaurant saying that he wants to blow something up. And someone tells us about it. What should we do? Don’t we need to find out if he was serious? Or was he drunk? The way to do that is to have someone engage him in an undercover way, not show up with a badge and say, ‘What are your thoughts in regard to terrorism?’”

“Plenty of times it’s a wing nut or some drunk, and we drop it,” he continued. In fact, an informant was assigned to sound out Mateen two years before the Orlando attack, after co-workers reported that he had allegedly made inflammatory comments about terrorists. But Mateen did not seem to be a threat.

“People have had plenty of opportunities to try that [entrapment] defense, and it hasn’t worked,” Comey added. The FBI has charged approximately 90 individuals with plotting a terrorist attack since 2013. So far, no entrapment defense has been successful. *Reaching the Kid in His Basement*

Because finding such homegrown cases is difficult (not everyone blabs online, let alone in a restaurant, about their bad intentions), a new homeland-security acronym has come into vogue: CVE, or “countering violent extremism.” CVE is a program that aims to reach people who are so alienated or unstable that they may be susceptible to

ISIL's appeals.

Last September, President Obama authorized the creation of the \$50 million CVE program, to be run by a new Office for Community Partnerships at DHS. A big part of the effort has been making DHS's "If you see something, say something" campaign more effective. Beginning as a billboard tagline created by the New York City transit system's ad agency, the program has become an effective message enlisting the public to alert authorities if they notice something or someone that seems suspicious, such as a suitcase left unattended on a train. George Selim, the director of the Office for Community Partnerships, works with a staff of about 30—as well as with Jeh Johnson personally—to encourage leaders in Muslim communities to look for signs of trouble more subtle and further upstream than abandoned luggage, such as teenagers in schools or at mosques who appear disaffected.

"All the data from Boston to Garland to San Bernardino indicate that someone around them knew something but didn't want to or know how to report it," Selim, a former Justice Department community-relations liaison, told me.

Johnson, who has thrown himself into the CVE effort, says that when he goes into Muslim communities, he tells people that he understands profiling. His grandfather, he explains, was called to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee, because "in 1949 any black man with a Ph.D. was suspected of being a Communist." He says he tells Muslim community leaders that he "will be your public champion, but that I have an ask, too, which is 'Help us help you with homeland security. It's your homeland too.'"

Another aspect of Selim's work involves reaching out directly to that kid "sitting in the glow of their laptop in their parents' basement."

His office has been giving grants and running contests at colleges and universities that form student teams to compete for prizes in internet and social-media messaging aimed at countering

ISIL's online recruiting. "We recognize that government is not a credible messenger for that demographic," Selim explains. "So we have recruited peer-to-peer messengers." With the State Department—and Facebook ("to add to the cool factor," Selim says)—as co-sponsors, he contracted with a private consulting firm that has now persuaded 101 colleges and universities around the world to establish courses, backed by a \$2,000 U.S.-government stipend per school, offering academic credit to students

who create these peer-to-peer anti-jihad social-media campaigns. Cyberterror

The other hot new threat is cyberterrorism.

Because 87 percent of the country's critical infrastructure is owned by the private sector—power plants, financial institutions, water companies—much of the Department of Homeland Security's lower-profile work involves sharing information and convening forums and sponsoring drills aimed at helping industries help themselves.

Meantime, the government's efforts to protect its own digital infrastructure have provided steady fodder for cynics. To take the latest examples, neither a data-hosting service at the Department of the Interior—whose technology setup was declared by federal officials to be a "Center of Excellence"—nor the Office of Personnel Management detected the hacking in 2014 and 2015 of 25 million records kept by the OPM. A \$1 billion cybersecurity program designed by DHS, called "Einstein," was, according to the GAO, so ineffective that it missed the hacking of the OPM records. In fact, most government agencies initially defied a presidential directive and refused to even install the much-derided Einstein.

It's a bad sign when a program called Einstein turns into a clown show, and it's tempting to make that a metaphor for the government's cybersecurity efforts more generally. However, since taking over DHS's cybersecurity and communications unit three years ago, Phyllis Schneck, a highly regarded cybersecurity engineer who came from the private sector, seems to have put the agency on a better track. She has worked to professionalize the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center, which, although it has produced yet another mind-numbing acronym (NCCIC), has the potential to be effective, according to one Silicon Valley star programmer who has advised the Obama White House on cyberissues. "With counterterrorism, I have an expectation, and it's met every day, that I will get a full report on threats across the spectrum, because we put in place structures ... to ensure information-sharing across the intelligence community, as well as with state and local law enforcement," says Lisa Monaco, President Obama's White House homeland-security and counterterrorism adviser. "With cyber, we're not there yet, but we're getting there."

Hidden on four floors in a nondescript office building in Virginia (it's not listed in the lobby directory), Schneck's operation includes a heavily guarded floor with space for 150 cyberdetectives, many recruited from the private sector.

Some sit at screens looking for trouble as they monitor the innards of dozens of federal agencies (except the Defense Department, which has its own cybersecurity apparatus). For example, a dramatic upsurge in traffic at the IRS during tax time, in mid-April, would mean nothing, but the same spike on Commerce Department servers could spell trouble.

Others monitor web traffic around the world, looking for similar regional or countrywide anomalies that could indicate attempted sabotage.

"These savages have so far only figured out how to use the internet to proselytize ... What happens when they figure out how to use it to break into a chemical plant, or a blood bank?," James Comey says.

Schneck, whose father was a computer scientist at the National Security Agency, describes one approach she is applying as "biological." The Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation program, for which \$275 million has been budgeted for the coming fiscal year, will reject a virus that makes it onto a government network "in real time, even if we don't know what it is," Schneck says.

Using data-analytics tools from the private sector, she is also augmenting Einstein (which has been allocated \$460 million in this year's budget and \$471 million for next year) with software that will prevent such intrusions in the first place by implementing what she calls "a cyber no-fly list." There are now ways of using data, she explains, to target the address of a machine that has been the source of other hacks, and to keep it from accessing the emails or websites of the agencies she is protecting.

I asked Schneck whether cyberattacks on the government would be impossible or nearly impossible anytime soon. "Of course not," she said. "But we are going to try to stay ahead of them most of the time, and if they do get in, we'll have ways to mitigate, fast. This is not yesterday's government."

Schneck's command center also acts as a real-time clearinghouse for threat information from cybersecurity chiefs in the private sector. The voluntary information-sharing process has been made easier by recent legislation that shields private companies from liability for sharing the information.

For his part, the FBI's Comey worries more about a cyberterror onslaught directed at the private sector than one directed at the government. "These savages," he says, "have so far only figured out how to use the internet to proselytize, not to wreak physical damage. What happens when they figure out how to use it to break into a chemical plant, or a blood bank and change

the blood types? We know they are trying. And they don't have to come here to do it."

Last fall Ted Koppel, the former ABC News correspondent and Nightline anchor, published *Lights Out*, a short, alarming book that makes the case that the United States is unprepared for a cyberattack on its electric grid. Tens of millions of Americans could be left without power for weeks or even months—and, therefore, also without access to water, ATMs, the towers that transmit their cellphone messages, and other lifelines. Koppel argues that neither the power companies nor the government has sufficient protective measures or backup plans to avert or recover from this kind of disaster.

Because much has improved in the two years since Koppel began his research, the odds of us facing a sustained power outage are lower than Koppel calculates.

To be sure, the power industry has successfully resisted regulations requiring safeguards and backup plans that could render Koppel's book almost moot. However, with prodding and assistance from DHS's infrastructure-protection office (and obviously wanting to ward off regulation), the industry seems to have taken measures to head off catastrophe. Koppel writes that a smartly directed cyberattack could disable enough giant transformers to cause huge swaths of the country to lose power—and that it would take months to procure and ship replacements to get the grid back online. But according to Gerry Cauley, the president of the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, an industry trade group, there are now reserves of these transformers placed strategically across the country. Moreover, Cauley told me, cyber-repair teams are prepared to spring into action much the way that teams of power-line repair teams from across the country did in response to Hurricane Sandy.

These and other arrangements have been coordinated through DHS's energy-infrastructure-sector team, one of 16 such units covering sectors from information technology to financial services to commercial facilities, such as shopping malls and sports arenas.

The energy-infrastructure team helps organize a biennial attack exercise, during which energy-company executives, along with relevant law-enforcement and other officials, convene for two days to simulate how they would work together in the event of an attack. The most recent exercise, held in November, "stressed us to the point of failure, with multiple cyber- and kinetic attacks across the country," says Thomas Fanning, the chief executive of Southern Company, the giant

Atlanta-based utility. In all, more than 4,000 people participated in the exercise. Along with executives and officials in Washington, local law-enforcement and power-company personnel across the country helped defend and recover from simulated cyberattacks, bomb blasts, and gunfire at multiple facilities.

Fanning, an industry leader in cybersecurity, has been a consistent campaign contributor to conservative Republican candidates over the years, which makes this comment notable: “When it comes to these issues, the capability of these government officials in this administration is terrific.”Part V: The Gaps That Remain

One way to measure how far both DHS and the private sector have come since 9/11 against how far they still need to go is to imagine the inevitable report citing our next failure of imagination, much the way that the bipartisan panel organized by Scooter Libby last year reminded us of the threat of a catastrophic bio attack. It’s a parlor game that’s easy to play; we can never be completely safe from people who are willing to commit suicide to hurt us. Yet it’s worth playing not only because some vulnerabilities are far more serious and likely to be exploited than others, but because the two most-talked-about threats of the moment—lone wolves and cyberterrorism—so dominate headlines that they may have unduly diverted our focus from bigger dangers. As Tom Ridge told me, “Democracies tend to be reactive, not prescriptive, and that’s a homeland-security problem that will be with us forever.”

Exploiting some of our vulnerabilities requires more expertise and planning than a one-off shooting spree in a mall. However, the small groups necessary to take advantage of them could easily be trained in countries where

ISIL, or new groups we haven’t heard of yet, hold territory. And, of course, they could be homegrown.

Many such threats remain, including the bioterror attack that the Libby panel warned of last year. The potential for sabotaging a freight train carrying oil or toxic chemicals, which could kill thousands, would also be on my list.

But my reporting leads me to conclude that the most ominous terrorist threat—based on the relative ease of pulling off such an attack, the possible damage it could do, and, most of all, the danger of overreaction to it—is the dirty bomb.The Bomb That Lasts for Decades

In March 2002, Joe Biden, who was then the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, held a hearing in which the president of the Federation of American Scientists used a study recently completed

by his organization to describe a doomsday scenario unfolding a few blocks from Capitol Hill.

Biden had convened the committee to hear testimony about the threat of dirty bombs—a conventional explosive mixed with commonly available radiological material, such as that used in hospitals and industrial facilities. Henry Kelly, then the president of the federation, which was formed by scientists in 1945 to study ways to prevent nuclear catastrophes, described for the committee what would happen if a small conventional bomb mixed with a small amount of cesium-137—which can be found in everything from nuclear reactors to radiation therapy for cancer patients—were set off at the National Gallery of Art. The explosion might kill only a few people, but it would create an area with contamination levels as dangerous as a “Superfund” site—a venue designated as having high levels of toxic waste that demand immediate government intervention and often evacuation. The contaminated area would cover 40 city blocks that include the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress, and the Capitol. Those buildings could have to “be abandoned for decades,” Kelly warned.

According to Kelly, an extra one in 10,000 people would die of cancer if people were not evacuated and if the area were not completely scrubbed. The decontamination process could take years and cost billions, because radioactive material adheres stubbornly to cement, which means that many roads, sidewalks, and buildings would have to be replaced.

However, that prospective death toll is worse than it sounds. Indeed, as the hearing proceeded, it became clear that dirty bombs present less a safety challenge than a perception challenge. In a city of 500,000, the contamination level Kelly cited would mean an extra 50 cancer deaths over a period of years—an incremental casualty rate that could probably be offset by an antismoking campaign in one or two D.C. office buildings.

Even concentrations of radiation higher than what Kelly posited would still not endanger masses of people. But because of popular perception, an explosion would unleash panic—which is why many experts are surprised that a dirty-bomb attack has not happened.

There were 325 reported instances of nuclear or radiological material being lost or stolen in 2013 and 2014. This material could easily be used to build a dirty bomb. Sometimes only a cheap padlock stands between would-be terrorists and radioactive material. (Government Accountability Office)

The ingredients are readily available. According to a recent white paper from the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI)—the nonprofit dedicated to fighting proliferation founded by Ted Turner and Sam Nunn, the former Democratic senator from Georgia—the ingredients for a radioactive dirty bomb are in tens of thousands of radiological sources located in more than 100 countries around the world.” The report cited a database that had documented 325 instances of nuclear or radiological material having been publicly reported lost or stolen in 2013 and 2014 alone. And those are just the publicly reported losses and thefts.

The release of the NTI’s white paper was timed to coincide with the Nuclear Security Summit hosted by President Obama in March. This was the last of a series of meetings of world leaders that Obama had initiated in 2010 to address nuclear proliferation. Lately, the threat of dirty bombs—whose radiological material isn’t potent enough to make actual nuclear weapons—has become a significant part of the nuclear-security agenda. Twenty-three of the summit’s 52 countries, including the United States, have made commitments, according to the NTI, “to secure their most dangerous radiological sources.”

That’s significant progress, and it has been accompanied by clandestine efforts around the world by U.S. and allied counterterror agents who, I learned in reporting this story, have blocked multiple attempts by would-be terrorists to obtain radiological material and, in some cases, nuclear material. But if only 23 countries have committed to securing their radioactive material, that leaves most of the world uncommitted to securing widely dispersed ingredients for dirty bombs.

Last October, DHS officials testified before a House transportation subcommittee on whether someone from one of those countries could ship such material through an American port. They tried to put the best gloss on a scary reality. Todd Owen, a Customs official, said that all 11 million containers arriving at U.S. seaports are “analyzed” and “screened.” What he meant was that all containers are subject to a data-based threat matrix. Scanning every container—which is what that Customs supervisor at the New Jersey port wanted to do on the afternoon of September 11—at least with X-rays, if not by hand-searching them, was mandated by Congress in 2007. But it has never been done for every container—and arguably can’t be done, given the delays in international commerce such a process would precipitate. Only about 3 percent of containers (those that register high on the threat matrix) are now X-rayed.

One hundred percent do pass through some kind of radiation monitor, Owen said—but those monitors cannot detect radiological material wrapped in lead or other protective covering. This is why the thousands of small radiation monitors that police in cities like New York now carry may be an important tool for detecting unshielded illicit material, but are unlikely to detect a dirty bomb, because the low levels of radiation necessary for such a device are not difficult to shield. The shielding material could likely be detected in an X-ray—but, as noted, only about 3 percent of containers are X-rayed.

Moreover, hundreds of thousands of a different kind of potential container—cars coming into American ports from factories abroad—are never X-rayed at all or subject to any kind of actual threat-matrix analysis.

I asked John P. Wagner, a deputy assistant Customs commissioner, why a terrorist couldn’t simply put shielded dirty-bomb material in the trunk of a BMW. Wagner explained that car exporters are in his agency’s “trusted shipper” program, meaning that “we inspect those factories regularly to make sure they have adequate security plans in place.” When I followed up and asked for details about the last time Customs had inspected an auto factory, Wagner’s office said there was no record of any such inspection.

So it doesn’t require a wild leap to imagine someone with terrorist sympathies planting shielded radioactive material in a car or a cargo container that then makes its way through one of our ports. But it’s even easier to imagine a dirty bomb being constructed from material that doesn’t have to be snuck through the ports—because, despite significant work done by the Obama administration, large quantities of radioactive material already sit unguarded in the U.S.

According to the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), approximately 1,400 industrial facilities in the United States house high-risk radiological sources. The material is used for everything from testing the ground for oil drilling to irradiating food in order to kill germs. In addition, some 1,500 hospitals and other medical facilities use high-risk radiological material.

Responsibility for guarding this material is split between the NNSA and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), both of which are units of the Energy Department. According to multiple GAO reports, efforts to secure radioactive material have been hamstrung by turf battles between the two agencies. The NRC regulates all entities that use radiological material and imposes security requirements on them.

But those requirements have been consistently criticized by independent security experts—and by the government’s own experts at the NNSA—as dangerously lax.

“We choose not to be prescriptive in our regulations,” says the head of the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards. “We take a more general approach, offering guidelines.”

The NNSA is responsible for maintaining the safety of the American nuclear arsenal and also for providing expertise related to counterproliferation. In that context, it conducts security surveys and encourages facilities to enforce standards that are much tighter than those required by the NRC. But the NNSA itself can impose no security requirements.

If a dirty bomb goes off in Washington or on Wall Street, the question of why the standards that one federal agency (the NNSA) believes are necessary are higher than those of the federal agency (the NRC) that can actually regulate toxic material will no doubt be the subject of another blue-ribbon commission.

What this new commission will find is that once the adrenaline flowing from the September 11 attacks receded, the industries licensed by the NRC began to push back against those sounding the terror alarm.

“The NRC is basically a captive of the industry,” says Andrew Bienenawski, a veteran proliferation expert who is the vice president for material security and minimization at the Nuclear Threat Initiative. “They get 90 percent of their funding from licensing fees from the industry, and they’re always saying they’re worried that tougher requirements would put licensees out of business.” “Just a Matter of Time”

The NNSA has persuaded 796 of the 1,503 hospitals that use radiological material to implement security upgrades that extend well beyond the NRC’s vague requirements. That is a major improvement; in 2012, the GAO noted that only 321 hospitals had made these upgrades. Other hospitals and medical facilities have been persuaded to make the transition from high-risk material to newer, safer substitutes. But that still leaves hundreds of medical facilities with threadbare security, many in highly populated urban areas.

It is astonishing that so many hospitals have refused to spend what Bienenawski says is the \$300,000 to \$400,000 necessary per site to increase security, and the \$250,000 necessary to replace a cesium-chloride blood irradiator with an equivalent FDA-approved nonradiological device, especially because the hospitals that use this material for advanced treatments are typically large enterprises with tens of millions of dollars in annual operating profit.

“It’s just a matter of time until someone puts two and two together and sees that you don’t have to go to Syria or Iran for this material, that you can get it in New York,” Bienenawski says.

Shipping containers at Maher Terminals in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Screening such containers for dirty-bomb material remains a challenge for DHS and local law enforcement. (Mark Lennihan / AP)

Nonmedical industrial users remain an even bigger threat. In 2014, the GAO issued a report that will be another proverbial smoking gun if something catastrophic happens. Independent auditors roundly criticized the NRC’s regulations as weak and inconsistently enforced. Some trucks carrying radiological devices used by oil-drilling companies, for example, were found to have cheap padlocks to secure the equipment. Background checks of drivers and warehouse employees were not standardized. GPS devices for the trucks, which could track them down if they were stolen, were not required. Storerooms containing material that could be used to turn Disney World into a ghost town had no entry alarms and were protected by simple padlocks—if they were locked at all. Even when storerooms and trucks did have alarms, many were found to be inoperable or shut off. After a truck went missing in Washington State, the governor’s request to get the NRC to require GPS devices was rejected.

“We choose not to be prescriptive in our regulations,” Scott Moore, the acting director of the NRC’s Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, told me when I asked about the GPS requirement. “We take a more general approach, offering guidelines,” which he believes “are adequate to assure public health and safety.” As for the apparent disconnect between the security measures the NNSA believes are necessary and the NRC’s requirements, Moore said, the “NRC’s approach provides adequate security; NNSA’s suggestions are for additional security.” Part VI: The End of “Never Again”

The TSA spends about 98 percent of its budget on one transportation sector, aviation. Why does it make sense to screen airplane passengers and not the millions more people getting on trains and subways every day? And why place all those resources at our big freight ports when a pleasure boat carrying a dirty bomb can arrive in Florida from the Bahamas with no inspection? What about the ferries that each haul thousands of people through the waters off New York City and Seattle? A well-placed explosive could kill many more people on a train or boat than on a jetliner.

In May, the inspector general of DHS sharply criticized the TSA for failing to implement legislation passed in 2007 requiring a variety of security measures for Amtrak, including checking to see if railroad employees were on terrorist watch lists. In response, the TSA promised that it had “assigned the highest of priorities” to implementing the nine-year-old law. However, the reality is that although we have stepped up police monitoring of trains (and ferries), we can’t treat trains like planes.

Why not? The math doesn’t allow it. The New York City subway system has about as many entrances as there are checkpoints at all the airports in the country. To secure the subways in New York, we would have to create a whole other TSA. Beyond the \$7-billion-a-year tab that would come with a New York TSA, the new security process would probably double travel times. (Imagine: shoes off before boarding the subway.) It’s such a ridiculous notion that even typing this paragraph is embarrassing.

The security measures that do make sense are those that local and federal officials implemented after 9/11 to make the subway tunnels more secure, helping to ensure that a potentially catastrophic September 11-level massacre following a huge explosion and subsequent flood is more likely to be limited to a routine semi-mass casualty.

Routine?

I use the word deliberately.

The morning after 9/11, President Bush famously directed then-Attorney General John Ashcroft to make sure “this can’t happen again.” It was an understandable sentiment. But it was a fantasy then—and it is even more of a fantasy now, despite everything we’ve done.

The reality we face 15 years after the September 11 attacks is that for all the people and money we have thrown at the cause of “never again”—much of it heroically and wisely, and much that in hindsight looks desperate, stupid, or corrupt—the threat of terror hasn’t been eliminated. In fact, despite our best efforts, terror is destined to become, yes, routine—a three- or four-times-a-year headline event, perhaps almost as routine in this country as people with mental-health problems buying a semiautomatic and going hunting at a school or movie theater. But if, as seems to be the case, Americans have come to accept mass killings carried out by those who are mentally unstable as horrifying but not apocalyptic, why do they perceive an attack linked—even if just rhetorically by the perpetrator—to Islamist terrorism differently?

President Obama described the difference to me this way: “If the perpetrator is a young white male, for instance—as in Tucson, Aurora, and Newtown—it’s widely seen as yet another tragic example of an angry or disturbed person who decided to lash out against his classmates, co-workers, or community. And even as the nation is shaken and mourns, these kinds of shootings don’t typically generate widespread fear. I’d point out that when the shooter or victims are African American, it is often dismissed with a shrug of indifference—as if such violence is somehow endemic to certain communities. In contrast, when the perpetrators are Muslim and seem influenced by terrorist ideologies—as at Fort Hood, the Boston Marathon bombing, San Bernardino, and Orlando—the outrage and fear is much more palpable. And yet, the fact is that Americans are far more likely to be injured or killed by gun violence than a terrorist attack.”

The FBI’s Comey agrees. “That the shooter in San Bernardino said he was doing it in the name of

ISIL changed everything,” he told me. “It generates anxiety that another shooting incident, where the shooter isn’t a terrorist, doesn’t. That may be irrational, but it’s real.”

In that instance, the sheer ordinariness of the venue—a meeting room at a family-services center—exacerbated the anxiety. “For me, San Bernardino was the game changer,” Ray Kelly, the former New York City police commissioner, told me. “It put the whole country in the target zone.”

Attorney General John Ashcroft listens as President George W. Bush speaks prior to signing an anti-terror bill, July 15, 2004. (Brooks Kraft / Corbis / Getty)

“Engineering Security,” the manual that Kelly’s department published in 2009, urged building owners to consider the status of their venue in assessing how much protection it needed. Iconic structures or those housing high-profile businesses should be the most fortified, as should those where an attack could cause inordinate damage.

That ranking system still makes sense, “but the kind of place attacked in San Bernardino means that everything is a target,” Kelly explained. “The FBI and the NYPD can do a great job finding and rolling up some people who are even thinking about doing something bad, but they can’t find everyone, and they can’t be everywhere. Imagine if just a few of these people got together and shot up a few malls the same day around the country. Then no one would feel safe.”

Yes, we can take steps to harden those softer targets a bit. We can improve surveillance technology

and add guards. We can keep doing our best to identify those among us who are susceptible to online jihadist recruitment pitches, by persuading neighbors and family members who “see something” to “say something.” We can keep improving how we connect the intelligence dots around the world.

But there is a limit. We can’t turn every Macy’s or high-school basketball game into a TSA operation.

And even if we did, those terrorists who don’t care about dying—for whom there is no such thing as deterrence—will still shoot people on the street.

Or bomb them. Or use a truck to mow them down.

We have to accept that that is going to happen.

A favorite September 12 mantra in the anti-terror community is: “The terrorists have to be right only once—but we have to be right 100 percent of the time.”

We can’t be right 100 percent of the time. The FBI and the Joint Terrorism Task Forces have stopped between three and five dozen plots since 9/11, depending on one’s definition of a plot. Comey’s “well-oiled anti-terror machine” has indeed improved our defenses. And the TSA, Customs, the air marshals, and other DHS units have undoubtedly deterred attacks. But we can’t catch everything. Layers

That’s why those in the anti-terrorism business focus on another post-9/11 buzz phrase: layers of security.

When it comes to flying, that means first checking prospective passengers’ watch-list status. Then, when passengers arrive at the airport, undercover security agents look for suspicious people in the departure lobby. That’s a layer now being fortified following the Brussels and Istanbul airport bombings, although it is difficult to see why airport lobbies should get more security attention than other similarly crowded venues.

The third layer is at the security checkpoint, where passengers are screened for valid identity credentials and to make sure they are not carrying anything dangerous. Fourth, an air marshal might be on board the plane to interrupt a possible attack. The fortified cockpit door offers a final security layer. The fact that we have all these layers is our tacit admission that no single layer of defense is perfect—but the odds of getting through all of them, while not zero, are pretty steep.

Think of the process as a funnel, in which we start with a large population and whittle it down, layer by layer, to those allowed to board a plane. “Sometimes I think that the lid has come off the world,” Comey told me. “People are unsettled, unmoored. I worry that as we squeeze

ISIL in Syria—and we are—their troops will go to Libya or Europe,” he continued. “There will be a terrorist diaspora. Trained fighters will go there and then be more easily able to come here, or if they can’t get here directly they’ll get to Canada and try to drive over the northern border.”

That so many could pour into the top of the funnel—including those recruited online, at home in America, without having to cross any border—is as important in calculating our odds of avoiding an attack as assessing the remaining gaps in even our most porous layers. The New Reality

Those who have enlisted since 9/11 to maintain those security layers—the infrastructure-security coaches at DHS advising and cajoling stadiums, utilities, water plants, and other private-sector venues; the TSA airport screeners; the cyberdetectives; the FBI dot-connectors—have no control over how many would-be killers pour into the top of that funnel. And they get little attention from the rest of us until something goes wrong. We go about our lives oblivious to the threats that are their obsession—until the next catastrophe produces headlines. Meantime, we often dismiss their work that is visible to us, such as at the airports, as excessive. Yet we remain so ready to be retroactively indignant if something goes wrong that political leaders, encouraged by a Beltway culture that tries to keep the spigot always turned on, are afraid to make any choices other than to declare everything a priority.

Sooner or later we have to realize that “never again” is a fantasy, and that it is not an excuse to make everything a priority. A democracy must make rational decisions, even when that’s not easy, and especially when security is involved.

Can the tens of billions for FirstNet or for “homeland security” grants for toys like that monster fire truck in rural Virginia be justified as smarter investments than replacing the lead pipes in a significant portion of the nation’s water systems? Wouldn’t the \$800 million a year for air marshals be better spent on more TSA staffing to cut wait times? Can’t we have tougher procurement contracts, so that Boeing and Lockheed Martin would have to give the money back when their products don’t work, so the country could direct those billions to hiring more FBI agents or perhaps to expanding early-childhood education?

Conversely, does it make sense that Congress has decided that giving everyone, including deranged people and terrorists, free rein to buy assault weapons

at gun shows is the one situation where “never again” is not the highest priority?

Getting past “never again” doesn’t just mean making tough choices about priorities; it also means preparing for the inevitable.

In theory, a realistic approach should be uncontroversial. For example, conceding the usefulness of drills because some attacks will inevitably succeed is not an admission that we don’t care about prevention, any more than having ambulances on call is a sign that we don’t care about preventing traffic accidents or violent crime.

But when it comes to terrorism, the balance between prevention and accepting the reality that prevention will not always work is trickier.

President Obama is the first post-9/11 president, and he and his administration have made significant, if often muted, progress in adding two dimensions to the homeland-security mission beyond the first goal of prevention: mitigation (lessening damage from a successful attack) and recovery.

Oklahoma Senator Tom Coburn, who has criticized DHS for wasteful spending, introduces a report on the defense budget, November 15, 2012. (Chris Maddaloni / CQ Roll Call / Getty)

In his 2015 report on DHS, Senator Coburn demonstrated how officials who make mitigation and recovery a priority can be political targets. He acknowledged that the terrorism drill conducted in Boston before the marathon bombing might have played a “constructive” role, but he criticized a DHS report about the drill because it suggested that the Obama administration was more focused on “preparing state and local first responders for the emergency and swift response” than on “what additional roles DHS could play in preventing future terrorist attacks.” That “raises questions,” Coburn concluded, about whether “terrorism prevention truly is the Department’s first mission and whether that mission has been transformed into preparing to recover from terrorist attacks.”

I asked President Obama about Coburn’s critique. “Part of keeping the American people safe is making sure we’re ready for all contingencies,” he told me. “So it’s not ‘either/or’—preventing attacks or being able to respond to and recover from attacks. We have to do both. In fact, to focus solely on prevention while ignoring response and recovery—or vice versa—would be irresponsible.”

“After all,” President Obama continued, “from Boston to San Bernardino to Orlando, we’ve seen how important it is for communities and first responders to be ready if and when tragedy strikes. That’s a critical

part of preventing attacks from causing even greater loss of life. It’s a key part of our resilience. It’s one of the ways we can show terrorists that they will not succeed—that Americans get back up and we carry on, no matter what.”

Mitigation and recovery need to be about more than repairing physical damage. After all, terrorism’s first goal is inflicting psychic damage—scaring us into changing our way of life and even turning against one another.

President Bush’s strategy was simply to tell us not to worry—that we should fearlessly keep on shopping. As a short-term measure, it was a sensible effort to calm a shocked nation. But the longer term requires a more nuanced, and politically perilous, message, because there is no such thing as “never again.” Attacks will happen, and, as San Bernardino and Orlando portend, they will happen in random venues—where part of what’s so frightening is the randomness, suggesting that anyone, anywhere, anytime could be vulnerable.

In the April issue of this magazine, Jeffrey Goldberg reported that President Obama “frequently reminds his staff that terrorism takes far fewer lives in America than handguns, car accidents, and falls in bathtubs do.” Goldberg also wrote that the president had frequently expressed to him “his admiration for Israelis’ ‘resilience’ in the face of constant terrorism, and it is clear that he would like to see resilience replace panic in American society.”

When *The Atlantic* published this account, Obama was immediately attacked by Republicans in Congress and on the presidential campaign trail for not taking terrorism seriously and for admitting defeat.

“President Obama’s job is to keep us safe,” Tom Cotton, a Republican senator from Arkansas, said on *Morning Joe*. “It’s not to minimize the fear Americans justly fear about terrorism ... President Obama goes around telling people that more Americans die in bathtub falls than are killed by terrorists. It’s that mentality that we have to change and get on offense against the Islamic State if we don’t want to see a Brussels-style attack here.”

One of Obama’s senior security advisers countered in a conversation with me: “If we overreact to these relatively small attacks, it creates more incentive for someone else to try one, but that’s what the media does and what most politicians do.

“What if those militiamen who took over that park in Oregon had been Muslims? We’d have had wall-to-wall coverage,” the adviser added. “The president sees

trying to get Americans to take a more nuanced view of terror as part of his job.” Dirty Bombs

Obama’s ambition to give Americans a realistic understanding of terror threats is certainly more advanced than his predecessor’s “never again” posture. But when it comes to the weapon in the terrorist arsenal that is most about perception versus reality—the dirty bomb—he has recognized the problem yet fallen short of the challenge.

Beyond forcing his Nuclear Regulatory Commission to promulgate security regulations at least as strict as the measures his National Nuclear Security Administration is stuck trying to persuade custodians of radiological material to adopt, the president ought to launch an education campaign about dirty bombs from his own bully pulpit. Removing the public’s untoward fear of the bomb can defuse its power to terrorize.

The Bush administration’s sole contribution to public understanding of dirty bombs went in the opposite direction. In 2002, when John Ashcroft announced the detention, with no hearing or charges brought, of José Padilla, an American citizen, for allegedly being part of “an unfolding terrorist plot” to detonate a dirty bomb (an allegation later dropped for lack of evidence), he sought to justify depriving Padilla of due-process rights by warning that a dirty bomb could cause “mass death and injury.” Tom Ridge, as well as two senior members of Bush’s White House staff, told me at the time that they were appalled by Ashcroft’s hyping of the danger, though they did nothing publicly to correct his message.

President Obama and his administration obviously understand the perception problem. In 2013, the Environmental Protection Agency, in a move coordinated by the National Security Council, softened its Protective Action Guides related to radiation incidents. These are the radiation metrics, originally published by the EPA in 1992, that first responders would use to determine what area, if any, had to be evacuated in the event of a radiological-contamination event. With the change in these guidelines, the bomb hypothesized in the 2002 Senate testimony of the Federation of American Scientists president—which would have forced the abandonment of a 40-block area around Capitol Hill—might now dictate the clearing of a smaller area or no area at all, depending on the type of bomb.

The guideline revisions, which were published in the Federal Register, cited advances in understanding the science of radiation and also a new focus on a “broader range of radiological emergencies, including terrorist acts.”

What that means, according to a senior White House security official, is that the Obama administration decided that the original guidelines for handling the aftermath of a dirty bomb’s detonation were unreasonably extreme—that evacuating downtown Washington to avert the possibility of 50 cancer deaths would be an absurd overreaction.

All of which makes sense—except that the Obama administration squandered an opportunity by flinching when it came to announcing the change. There was no press release. No public explanation at all. Just changes described mostly with physics jargon and numbers dropped into the Federal Register. As a result, what could have been an ambitious, gutsy exercise in public education—a “teachable moment”—now risks being discredited as an anticipatory cover-up if a dirty-bomb attack occurs. Breathless press reports will “reveal” that the guidelines were changed sub rosa, and that—based on the guidelines in place before President Obama’s staff quietly tinkered with them—much of Washington is being asked to live and work atop land as dangerous as a Superfund site. In the aftermath of a dirty-bomb explosion, explaining the guideline changes in a way that calms anyone would likely be impossible.

The president has failed to finish the job of securing radiological material in hospitals and other facilities—and taken only tentative steps toward leveling with the public.

Following Donald Trump’s criticism of President Obama and Hillary Clinton in the wake of the Orlando massacre for not being “tough,” political commentators called the attack a “June surprise” that could affect the presidential election. Imagine the eruption from the Trump campaign that could come from an administration attempt to explain the loosened guidelines the day after an

ISIL-inspired group used a dirty bomb as the ultimate October surprise aimed at disrupting the coming election.

“People inside and outside the government who worked on these guidelines went back and forth over whether to announce it or bury it, and they decided to bury it,” says Charles Ferguson, who, as the president of the Federation of American Scientists, now occupies the post previously held by Henry Kelly, who laid out the Washington evacuation scenario during the 2002 Biden Senate hearing. “On the merits, they did everything right—but then they went into duck-and-cover mode.”

When I asked President Obama why his administration didn’t announce the change in guidelines and use it as an opportunity to begin a public

discussion about dirty bombs, he referred me to Laura Holgate, a senior National Security Council official. Holgate provided a statement saying that publishing the revisions in the Federal Register had attracted “public comment” from interested parties and was a “normal process” that was “not, in any way, secret.”

How Washington has coped with the threat of dirty bombs is a microcosm of how the country has dealt with terror overall in the past 15 years.

First, by bringing proliferation to the international stage through the summits he has hosted, Obama improved on his predecessor’s prevention efforts—much as he has done by hunting down terrorist leaders abroad while hardening targets and tightening homeland-security management at home.

President Obama walks past a televised image of President Bush at the opening of the 9/11 Memorial, 10 years after the attacks. (James Leynse / Corbis / Getty)

However, the president has failed to finish the job of securing radiological material in hospitals and industrial facilities, or to crack down on the threats from bioweapons and toxic chemicals. Second, with his revised EPA guidelines on dirty-bomb damage, Obama has taken a tentative but insufficient step toward leveling with the public in a way that deprives terrorists of their ability to spread hysteria. That mirrors what he has tried to do more generally: tentatively steer Americans toward the realistic view that while terrorism is inevitable, it is not an existential or apocalyptic threat—unless we treat it like the apocalypse.

This is a politically perilous path—which may explain why the administration proceeded so quietly when announcing the revised radiological-contamination guidelines.

In fact, this may be a path only a lame duck could risk. The politically easier path is to promise “never again.” As Trump’s hard-line rhetoric about the president being weak on terrorism demonstrates, Obama and anyone who follows him and tries to continue on that path will be an easy target for opponents who will claim that transforming homeland security from the fantasy of never-again prevention to a combination of prevention and mitigation and recovery is throwing in the towel.

That this is still a debate in an election season 15 years after the 9/11 attacks is evidence that although we’ve made progress, we’re still a long way from adjusting—politically and psychically—to this new normal, where, unlike during the Cold War, there is no relying on deterrence for protection.

Teacher Out At Fordham Prep After School Says ‘84 Sexual Abuse Claim Is Credible

By Colin Moynihan

New York Times, August 8, 2016

The gathering, in June 1984, was like many others involving recent graduates of Fordham Preparatory School, a Jesuit all-boys secondary school in the Bronx. It took place at a home in Westchester County, where many of Fordham’s students lived. Most of those at the party drank and several ended up spending the night, according to a former Fordham Prep student, Michael Meenan.

That night, Mr. Meenan said, a Fordham Prep teacher who had driven him to the party performed oral sex on him while he slept in a room along with others. When he woke up and pulled away, sliding beneath a coffee table, Mr. Meenan said, the teacher grabbed his leg and tried to drag him back.

Mr. Meenan said that he had told the school’s headmaster about the episode not long after it happened, but that it appeared no action was taken. The teacher remained on the faculty.

Now, 32 years after the episode, Fordham Prep has acknowledged Mr. Meenan’s account of abuse as credible and said the teacher he accused would not return to the school.

“We received an allegation from a Fordham Prep alumnus of the class of 1984 that religious studies teacher, Mr. Fernand Beck, sexually molested him shortly after he graduated,” the school’s president, the Rev. Christopher J. Devron, wrote in a letter dated Aug. 5. “While Mr. Beck has denied this allegation, an investigation led by an independent counsel retained by Fordham Prep determined that the allegation is credible.”

Mr. Beck could not be reached for comment on Monday. Although Father Devron did not identify the person who had lodged the complaint, Mr. Meenan said that it was him and that he had also recently reported the 1984 episode to the Westchester County district attorney’s office. (This reporter also attended Fordham Prep during the same period but did not then know Mr. Meenan or have classes with Mr. Beck.)

“What Beck did was criminal,” Mr. Meenan said during a recent telephone interview. “The school should have fired him long ago and he should have gone to prison.”

After having been initially rebuffed, he recently approached Fordham Prep with the encouragement of a former classmate, Neal Huff, who played an abuse survivor in the Academy Award-winning movie

“Spotlight,” which chronicled The Boston Globe’s investigation of sexual abuse by priests and its cover-up by the Boston archdiocese.

Mr. Huff introduced Mr. Meenan to Mitchell Garabedian, a lawyer in Boston who had represented some of the victims there.

Mr. Garabedian said that he contacted Fordham Prep in March and that lawyers for the school had interviewed Mr. Meenan in June. Although it is too late to file a lawsuit, he said he planned to ask whether the school would “do the right thing” and compensate his client for the pain he had suffered.

“Fernand Beck groomed the victim for months by gaining his trust, socializing with him and giving him alcohol before sexually assaulting him,” Mr. Garabedian said.

Over the past several years, multiple accusations of sexual abuse have surfaced at private schools, including Horace Mann in the Bronx and Poly Prep in Brooklyn, which have both acknowledged past abuses. The Globe recently detailed at least 90 claims around 67 schools in New England.

Mr. Meenan, who served as class president, went on to Brown University and later worked as an educator and a journalist. He said he first reported the assault in fall 1984 when he visited the school while on a break. At that time, Mr. Meenan said, he told the headmaster, Neil McCarthy, that Mr. Beck, a widely admired teacher, had assaulted him.

Dr. McCarthy told him that he would address the issue, Mr. Meenan said, but also asked him if he was a “faggot.”

Mr. Huff and another classmate, Brian Kennedy, said they remembered Mr. Meenan telling them in 1984 that Mr. Beck had assaulted him. Mr. Huff said Mr. Meenan had also told him about his exchange with Dr. McCarthy.

Dr. McCarthy, who is no longer at the school, said in a telephone interview that he did not remember Mr. Meenan but strongly denied that he would have brushed off an accusation of sexual abuse.

“I can assure you that I never ignored that kind of behavior and I never called anybody a faggot,” he said. “That word is not in my vocabulary.”

In a written statement, Father Devron said that after hearing Mr. Meenan’s accusations this year the school arranged for an investigation by the law firm and suspended Mr. Beck. The school would not say whether Mr. Beck was fired or resigned.

“Other than the complaint received in April 2016, investigators found no other recorded complaints against Mr. Beck in his 47 years at Fordham Prep,”

Father Devron wrote, adding, “We treat seriously any allegation of harm against any student, whether present or past.”

In the years following the episode, Mr. Beck remained at Fordham Prep, where he presented himself as a cultured figure with a sly, almost subversive, sense of humor. He also cultivated relationships that extended beyond the campus, former students said, inviting some to his home in Riverdale and arranging outings in his Volkswagen van that sometimes included drinking.

One such student, Terry McKiernan, who graduated from Fordham Prep in 1971, said he had visited Mr. Beck’s house and had accompanied him on outings that involved drinking. Mr. McKiernan, a director of the website Bishopaccountability.org, which documents abuse by priests, said he experienced a moment of unease when they visited a water-filled quarry in Tuckahoe, N.Y., and the teacher urged him to swim naked. When Mr. McKiernan declined, he said, Mr. Beck became irritated.

Although some of Mr. Beck’s behavior was clearly wrong, Mr. McKiernan said, the teacher was also capable of kindness and had helped him move on from a life at home that was often troubled.

“Generally, despite the underage drinking and the experience at the quarry, Beck was a net positive influence in my life,” Mr. McKiernan said in an interview.

But Mr. Meenan said Mr. Beck’s influence was corrosive. After college, Mr. Meenan worked as a dean at a public school in the Bronx, as an education reporter for the cable news channel NY1 and as a spokesman for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. (He also was an occasional contributor to The New York Times’s City Room blog.) Despite those accomplishments, he said, his life had periods of chaos. At times, he said, he had nightmares about being raped. At other points, he said, he became depressed and had difficulty paying electrical bills or putting food on the table.

“There have been very vigorous psychiatric consultations that have focused me on the damage that sexual abuse has created in my life,” Mr. Meenan said.

He said Mr. Beck began extending invitations to meet outside of school during his senior year. At the time he was taking a religion class taught by Mr. Beck that required students to submit weekly essays. Mr. Meenan said he began writing about a romantic attachment to a fellow student, and believes now that Mr. Beck read in those essays signs of vulnerability that he set out to exploit.

Mr. Meenan said he visited Mr. Beck's home and often rode in the van with him. Almost always, he added, Mr. Beck provided alcohol. On one occasion, Mr. Meenan said, he and another student drove with Mr. Beck to a desolate area near a railroad station in Spuyten Duyvil and drank together.

All of those outings, Mr. Meenan said he believed, were meant to pave the way for an eventual assault. He added that he is convinced that Mr. Beck chose the night of the party because the school year had just ended.

"He would not have any more chances to do what he had certainly been planning for a long time," he said. "Everything he did, from the trips to the drinking to the ultimate assault was very calculated."

FEMA HOUSING

Clay County Residents Have Mixed Feelings About FEMA Aid

By Ashton Marra

West Virginia Public Broadcasting, August 8, 2016

Thousands of West Virginians are still recovering more than six weeks after heavy rains caused historic flooding in southeastern parts of the state. State officials say finding housing is still one of the top priorities, but the need in some communities is changing.

In Clay County, for example, when asked if they had somewhere to stay, many flood victims told Federal Emergency Management Agency representatives they were staying with family, but didn't realize how long those stays would last. Others were asked by FEMA workers if they would consider relocating, but without anywhere to safely store the few belongings they had left, many said no and are sleeping in campers or tents in their driveways.

FEMA officials say those two questions are they key to receiving housing aid beyond just monetary pay-outs. They are the key to being eligible for temporary housing units as well, some of which have started to be placed in the four eligible counties- Greenbrier, Kanawha, Nicholas, and Clay- but FEMA will not share specific information about how many temporary unit have been awarded or even how many have been requested.

The temporary housing program awards a mobile home to a family to live in for up to 18 months following a disaster declaration. Participants are required to search for a long-term housing solution

while they stay in the mobile unit and check in with FEMA monthly about their progress.

The program is different than the individual housing assistance program, which awards grants to homeowners or renters impacted by natural disasters. That program is capped at \$33,000 in awards per individual, but the temporary housing units can be awarded in addition to the grant.

Pam Street received the full \$33,000 award from FEMA after her home, which sat on the banks of the Elk River in the Precious area of Clay County, was lifted off its foundation by high water. Street was able to find a rare rental property in the county so she won't qualify for temporary housing, but she said her experience with FEMA was a fairly easy one.

"I'm one of the lucky ones I think. I mean, my total life is destroyed, but I'm still one of the lucky ones," Street said after the Clay County Commission awarded her a \$500 check during a July meeting. Lucky, she said, because she was able to find that rental property and has a job that allows her to pay for it.

Tammy Rhodes and her family were not as lucky. She, her husband and their three children are living in a camper next to the dirt lot where their home once stood. On a hillside, the home buckled in the center after rushing water spilled out of the culvert separating the lot from the main roadway.

FEMA denied all three of Rhodes's claims.

"They said because my mom and dad had given us this part of the property to live on and because a title had never been switched or a deed had never been put in our name that they considered us renters," Rhodes said as she stood next to the lot where her home once stood.

The Small Business Administration, another federal agency offering low-interest loans to flood victims, also said they couldn't help because the property wasn't legally hers.

"They finally told me that if there was a loophole that I had fell through it," she said.

Rhodes and her family are now leaning on charitable organizations for aid, but flood victims who are still in need of federal assistance or whose housing situation has changed, can contact FEMA at 1-800-621-FEMA or online at disasterassistance.gov. The deadline to register for assistance is August 24.

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

Syracuse Flood Map: Why The Feds Added 876 Properties To A Flood Zone

By Chris Baker

Syracuse (NY) Post-Standard, August 8, 2016

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – A recently redrawn flood zone map in Syracuse has some people scratching their heads.

Why were hundreds of properties added to the risk zone? Why do adjacent houses sometimes have differing designations? Do I need to buy flood insurance now?

The flood maps are a result of nearly 10 years of information gathering and negotiations between the City of Syracuse, New York State and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, according to officials with those agencies.

Essentially, the maps predict which areas would flood in the event of a storm that has a 1 percent chance of occurring – often referred to (mistakenly) as a “100-year storm.”

Andrew Martin is the FEMA Region 2 Risk Analysis Branch Chief. He has been working with city and state officials since 2008 to draw the maps. He said the Syracuse map released last week represents a smaller floodplain than the agency initially wanted in 2008.

The floodplain includes swaths of houses around Onondaga Creek and Meadowbrook.

“We’re aware flood insurance can be expensive and it can be hard to cover that cost if you’re on a fixed budget,” Martin said. “But we want to make sure people are aware of the risk.”

The updated flood maps – announced last week – will replace existing maps drawn in the 1980s.

In order to gather more accurate information about Onondaga Creek and the city’s topography, mappers used a system called LIDAR, which maps the terrain using lasers from an airplane.

They also surveyed the width of the creek and the height of its walls at 1,000-foot intervals from Onondaga Lake to the dam on the Onondaga Nation. They studied historical rainfall data to see how much water it would take to flood the creek bed.

In the end, the Syracuse flood zone will include 1,602 parcels, many on the south and southwest side of the city. Nearly 300 properties were also removed from the map drawn in the 1980s – mostly in the Meadowbrook neighborhood.

Martin said some properties were taken off the map as a result of data provided by the City of Syracuse about rainfall.

City facilities engineer Russell Houck said the city has repeatedly contested FEMA’s flood models to get a more accurate map. As a result, he said, the

number of parcels in the flood zone was reduced by about 30 percent.

“We’ve gone back four times with technical data where we said, ‘This is not right, the channel wasn’t surveyed right or bridge elevation wasn’t right,’” Houck said “We got maybe 95 percent of what we wanted.”

In some parts of the map, adjacent parcels have different designations. On East Genesee Street, for example, the property at 2960 was removed from the floodplain while the property at 2956 was added. Sometimes, Martin said, minor differences in elevation can make a big difference, especially around the edge of the floodplain.

“If the model says it’s going to flood to 100 feet and this house is at 99 feet and that house is 101 feet, the flood plain will go between those two houses,” he said. “Very rarely do real floods match our models exactly, but we’ve got to draw the line somewhere.”

Martin said, however, that those houses outside the floodplain still have some level of risk.

What are the odds of a flood?

In Syracuse, the risk of flood is highest when snow is melting or during hurricane season.

Dr. Richard Smardon is a professor emeritus of environmental studies at SUNY ESF. He’s currently writing a book about urban creek revitalization. He has spent years studying Onondaga Creek.

In the early part of the 20th century, Smardon said, the creek used to flood much more often. The city dammed it on the Onondaga Nation in 1949, which stymied the flooding. Still, Smardon said, the creek is in a very narrow channel, and urban development comes right up to its banks.

“With Syracuse, the neighborhoods just south are right adjacent to the creek,” he said. “If you have steep runoff and a narrow area, you’ve got a high risk of flood.”

Smardon said the last “100-year storm” came in August, 2015. The frequency of those storms has increased recently as a result of climate change, he said.

“The whole thing is shifting and we’re getting infrequent but longer rain storms,” he said. “So a 100-year flood is like a 50-year flood now.”

Houck, the city engineer, said the last storm he recalls that produces significant property damage along Onondaga Creek was in 1974. Many properties in the floodplain had to be evacuated, he said.

Smardon said the city straightened and channelized much of the creek while developing downtown areas. That was done to decrease the risk of flood by deepening and widening the creek bed.

He was part of a group that explored ways to “naturalize” the creek again, including the portion that runs through Onondaga Park. Those plans, however, never made it to fruition due to financial and feasibility issues.

Houck said the city is examining ways to further reduce flood risk, which would lower insurance premiums. Those include removing sediment from the creek and finding areas within the city to store excess water.

The Common Council will host a public meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 9 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall to answer questions and give information about the flood maps.

See The Syracuse Properties Added To Or Removed From A Flood Zone (Interactive Map)

By Chris Baker

Syracuse (NY) Post-Standard, August 8, 2016

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Last week, the Federal Emergency Management Agency announced the addition of nearly 900 Syracuse properties to its flood zones. We mapped those properties to show you where that flood zone was extended most.

See the map below for all the properties added to, removed from or remaining in the flood zone. Click on a marker for more information about the parcel.

In all, FEMA added 876 properties to the flood zone, removed 237 parcels and left 726 in. A total of 1,602 parcel are now in the flood zone.

An overview of the map shows most of the properties added were on the city’s south side around Bellevue Avenue. Most of those removed were along Meadow Brook on the east side.

On the map below, a red dot indicates a parcel that was added, a yellow dot indicates one that was previously in the flood zone and will remain so, and a green dot indicates a property removed from the flood zone.

Do I Need To Buy Flood Insurance? 7 Questions (And Answers) About Syracuse Flood Maps

By Chris Baker

Syracuse (NY) Post-Standard, August 8, 2016

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Last week, the federal government added nearly 900 Syracuse properties to a flood zone. For many homeowners, that means they’ll now have to carry flood insurance in addition to their regular homeowners policy.

Some homeowners have questions about what that means for them. Here are a few answers to frequent insurance questions:

Do I need to purchase flood insurance?

Flood insurance is required for any home in a “high-risk” flood zone with a federally-backed mortgage. Some lenders will require flood insurance for homes in moderate- or low-risk areas, though it isn’t a federal requirement.

Your best bet is to call your mortgage lender and ask.

How do I get flood insurance?

You can purchase a policy from the National Flood Insurance Program through most insurance agents. Since the insurance is provided by the federal government, rates don’t change from agent to agent.

In the city, all newly added property owners should have received a post card with insurance options.

Why is the government in the insurance business?

The risk pool for flood insurance isn’t large enough to make it worthwhile for private insurance companies. The rate of claims compared to the rate of people buying insurance is higher than it is for, say, auto insurance.

For that reason, Congress passed the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 to subsidize insurance. Nearly 6 million properties are insured by the NFIP nationwide.

How much will it cost?

Flood insurance in Syracuse will probably run anywhere from \$500 to \$2,500 per year.

The City of Syracuse participates in the Community Rating System, which means engineers have taken efforts to reduce flooding risks. City residents will receive a 15 percent discount on insurance for those efforts.

Andrew Martin, the FEMA Region 2 Risk Analysis Branch Chief, said properties newly added to flood zones get a further break on insurance.

“We do it to ease people into the transition of having to carry a flood insurance policy,” he said.

Newly mapped properties can get a maximum coverage policy, which covers \$250,000 worth of structural damage, for about \$450 per year, to start. That will increase by five to 18 percent each year until the premium reaches a cap of about \$2,500 per year.

Will it affect the value of my property?

Let’s put it this way: It won’t help. Property owners must disclose their flood designation when trying to sell a home. A 2008 study from the Journal of Risk & Insurance estimated that properties in a flood

zone were worth an average of 7 percent less than those not in a flood zone.

Is there anything I can do to lower my premiums?

Martin recommends taking measures to decrease damage in the event of a flood. In coastal areas, some homeowners use stilts to elevate their house to above the floodplain level (not a likely solution in downtown Syracuse).

More realistic options include locating utilities like the furnace, electrical panels or HVAC on the first or second floors instead of the basement. Martin also suggested installing flood vents.

What if I don't think I belong in the flood zone?

If you want to challenge your flood zone designation, you'll need to hire a licensed surveyor to survey your property. The surveyor will give you an elevation certificate (which could cost up to \$1,000).

Submit that certificate to FEMA, along with a letter of map amendment, to the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA will then make a determination on your property.

MITIGATION

Flood Towns Struggle With Infrastructure As Federal Deadline Passes

By Ashton Marra

West Virginia Public Broadcasting, August 8, 2016

FEMA-- the Federal Emergency Management Agency-- is well known for its individual housing assistance program-- a federal program that helps homeowners and renters who have lost their housing and belongings in natural disasters, but the agency has another program that helps states and local governments rebuild. The application deadline for FEMA's public assistance program was Monday and many small communities throughout the state are dependent on those funds after June's historic flooding.

Richwood, W.Va.

In the Cherry River just outside of Richwood, a concrete dam creates a small waterfall. The water flows over the dam, down massive, sand colored rocks and fills two crystal clear swimming holes. The scene is idyllic, but the sound is not so ideal.

Behind the dam is a massive metal pipe that served as the intake for Richwood's public drinking water system. But that pipe was damaged in late June when heavy rains caused large rocks to rush down the river. Those waters later flooded many parts of Richwood. Now, a temporary pump sits next to one swimming hole, pumping water to the city's taps.

"We're going to get another one that's boxed," Richwood Mayor Bob Henry Baber explained over the noise of the pump, "and also that might take us through the winter because this one won't and we're not sure how fast we're going to get this fixed up here on the intake."

Baber estimates his town in total suffered more than \$15 million in damage to public infrastructure and government buildings, but the loss of both the Richwood Middle and High Schools will make the total much higher.

Clendenin, W.Va.

But it's not just Richwood that suffered millions of dollars in damage to public infrastructure. Gary Bledsoe is the Mayor of Clendenin in Kanawha County.

"It could be pushing as high as \$2 million. It's well over a million now with just what we've turned in so far," Bledsoe said.

That money will be needed for repairs to road slips, the restoration of its community rec center, and rehabilitation of the first floor of city hall. For now, the mayor's office is in a garage around the corner.

FEMA's Public Assistance Program

Communities like Richwood and Clendenin can't pay for those repairs on their own, though. Both mayors say after June's floods they're not sure how they're even going to make payroll through the end of the year, let alone replace a \$250,000 rec center. That's where FEMA's Public Assistance program comes in.

"Public Assistance is to repair the public infrastructure, those large items that particularly in this disaster such as schools, bridges, roads, the infrastructure that's been so severely hit in this state because of the flooding," FEMA Public Information Officer Tom Kempton explained.

So far, the total damage to roads and bridges in flood affected counties is estimated at more than \$54 million by the Department of Transportation.

The West Virginia School Building Authority says a new high school costs around \$30 million and a new middle or elementary school from \$5-10 million. At least five schools in two counties have been closed as a result of the storm.

Kempton explained it's these types of infrastructure and public needs that will quickly escalate the total price of recovery. Through the public assistance program, FEMA will pay 75 percent of the cost for public projects. Normally, the state matches with 25 percent, but Governor Tomblin has asked the federal government to bump the match up to 90/10.

Tomblin representatives said last week total damage estimates must reach more than \$250 million before FEMA will grant the higher matching rate, but Kempton said West Virginia's economic climate will also play a role in that decision.

"If you look at the kind of damage within, say Kanawha County where they have a large range of very expensive projects, schools that have been pretty much destroyed, those are going to be prioritized and does the county have that match?" he said.

"Can the county come up with 35 percent of the cost to redo all those facilities? That'd be very difficult for even a wealthy county to do."

Restoration

Many of the flood affected communities were struggling with insufficient infrastructure and public buildings before the storm. Mayor Baber said that was certainly the case with his sewer system.

FEMA has been clear- they will pay to restore damaged infrastructure, leaving communities with something equal to what they had before, but Baber worries that won't be enough.

"What does that mean when you've got a system that's so antiquated? I mean, we're putting patches on patches on patches so this is hard to know what's going to happen here," Baber said.

"We've reached the point where I just don't know how many more patches we can put on patches. How many more band aids can you put on band aids when you're hemorrhaging?"

The deadline for communities to file for public assistance through FEMA was Monday, August 8.

State revenue officials say even if West Virginia does not receive the 90/10 match from FEMA for those projects, there is enough cash in the Rainy Day Fund to help struggling communities recover.

Communities Rely On FEMA Funds To Rebuild

By Beth Vorhees

West Virginia Public Broadcasting, August 8, 2016

On West Virginia Morning, today is the deadline for local governments to apply for assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Ashton Marra reports many small communities depend on that assistance. And from the Ohio Valley ReSource, reporter Aaron Payne visits three addiction treatment centers with three very different approaches to deal with opioid addictions.

These stories on West Virginia Morning from West Virginia Public Broadcasting – telling West Virginia's story.

[Click here to listen to West Virginia Morning Monday, August 8, 2016.](#)

City Of Wakefield Denied Funds From FEMA

Ironwood (MI) Daily Globe, August 9, 2016

WAKEFIELD — The Wakefield City Council heard Monday night of the city's continuing efforts with the Gogebic County Emergency Management Team to apply for funding to mitigate the costs corresponding to the severe storm on July 11-12.

The city was denied FEMA assistance, but continues to apply for funding from other relief organizations. The city is working to estimate damages to private properties.

There was no current interest in the proposed logging operation required for the continued development of a non-motorized trail system in the city. The council decided to wait until fall when the logging prices are expected to come back up.

Under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit, the city is required to install ground water monitoring wells in the local lagoon. The cost is estimated to be in the range of \$15,000 to \$20,000. According to Councilman John Granato, the Department of Environmental Quality raised the city's permit, making the wells a new requirement. The council approved seeking bids for engineering consultants to install the wells.

The city is accepting bids for sewer televising and cleaning for approximately 28,600 linear feet of sewer. The project falls under the SAW grant. The council will be meeting with the engineering firms in September for an update on the project.

The Wakefield Volunteer Fire Department will host its fourth annual Open House on Wednesday, Aug., 31 from 4 to 7 p.m. There will be food and equipment demonstrations at the event.

The Wakefield City Chamber of Commerce will hold a "Meet and Greet" at the Wakefield Municipal Building on Aug. 18 from 5 to 7 p.m. for members and prospective members.

The next City Council meeting will be held on Monday, Aug. 22, at 5:30 p.m.

McClintock Discusses Trans Pacific Partnership

By Sean Thomas

Calaveras (CA) Enterprise, August 8, 2016

The environment, the Trans Pacific Partnership and federal regulations were the lead topics of discussion during Thursday evening's town hall meeting with Rep. Tom McClintock in San Andreas.

McClintock opened the event with a talk about what he feels are the biggest issues challenging residents in Calaveras County: fire, water and the ever-increasing national debt.

"The one that I think will truly sink us is the national debt," said McClintock. "We ran up half a trillion dollars of debt this year alone."

McClintock sits on multiple committees, most of which involve the environment. Currently, McClintock sits on the House Committee on the Budget and the House Committee on Natural Resources. He's also the standing chairman of the Subcommittee on Federal Lands and a member of the Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans.

"We are dealing with a catastrophic decline in the quality of our forests," said McClintock.

"We have roughly four times the tree density in our national forest today than the acreage can support," said McClintock. "The result is, those trees that used to be healthy and strong and could resist environmental stressors like drought and beetle infestations are now stressed and fighting for their lives from those same trees trying to occupy that same ground."

The congressman said he introduced a bill to clear out forests that have already been declared devastated due to insect infestation before they have the opportunity to become fuel for more big forest fires.

McClintock introduced the Emergency Forest Restoration Act on Jul. 14. He said the law would generate \$300 million in revenue per year through excess timber sales and that the funds would then be used to replant devastated forest areas.

McClintock capped off his opening monologue with a warning about over regulation. He questioned the effectiveness particular environment regulations and tied California's water shortages and fire prevention issues to an overstuffed law book that he believes makes it difficult to address problems as they occur.

"We are not going to solve our water shortage until we start to build more dams," said McClintock. "We can't build more dams until we overhaul some of those same radical environmental laws."

"We've had these laws now in place for almost 45 years," said McClintock. "The promise was that they were going to improve the ecology. I think after 45 years we're entitled to ask how the ecology is doing, and the answer is damning."

When the floor was opened to questions, attendees asked about McClintock's support of Republican Party presidential nominee Donald Trump and homeland security. Much of the early conversation dealt with the Trans Pacific Partnership.

That international trade deal has become a major talking point this election cycle.

Before the event began, an attendee handed out an informal fact sheet about the controversial deal. Most of the questions directed at the congressman had less to do with the trade aspect of the deal and more to do with American sovereignty concerns.

"One of the (objections) to the deal is that it has provisions that override American sovereignty," said McClintock. "My response was (that) I read an early draft of that agreement before it was fully negotiated. I have not gone back and reviewed it since then. That issue is a very important one to me."

Shelly Piatt, 57, of Arnold, steered the conversation towards a more local issue. She attended the event for the sole purpose of asking the congressman about the possibility of financial relief for people who are being told by local agencies to remove dead trees on their properties.

Piatt said that she's facing a lien on her home if the trees are not removed. She said she is hoping McClintock could secure funding from an agency such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency to help with the approximately 100 trees on her property.

"I have a lot of acreage and I just can't understand how they can expect us all of a sudden, to go, 'oh yeah you need \$50,000 or we're putting a lien on your house and it needs to be done by a certain time,'" said Piatt.

McClintock said he receives a similar question every time he speaks to mountain communities and he fears it because he still doesn't have an answer. He said the issue with FEMA officials is that they "do not act to prevent disasters; all they do is respond after a disaster."

The congressman did say the House has looked into changing that provision, but was concerned that it would open "a can of worms," in which every county in the nation would request emergency aid.

Piatt was not satisfied with the response.

"He doesn't have an answer," said Piatt. "There's no help coming. So it's basically, 'You're left to your own devices.'"

Calaveras County District 3 Supervisor Michael C. Oliveira said that he has been working closely with McClintock and other lawmakers on the dead tree issue

"One of the problems we are faced with is we don't have any type of relief for our private properties,"

said Oliveira. "We've taken care our municipalities, our (California Department of Transportation), our highways. But we've finally gotten the attention of the National Forest service."

"It's a major problem now and it's going to get tremendously worse," said Oliveira. "If you throw in the fire aspect of that, it's going to be devastating, simply devastating."

Oliveira encourages everyone to attend a meeting on the tree mortality issue at 11 a.m. Saturday at Avery Middle School, 4545 Moran Road, Avery.

"People need to understand what the problems are," Oliveira said. "We got to know about them. We have to provide solutions about them."

Cannabis cultivation and how to regulate it has been a huge topic of discussion in the past year in Calaveras County.

McClintock reassured those present that he plans to look into how Colorado has handled the legalization process and plans to speak with Calaveras County Sheriff Rick DiBasilio about his recent trip to speak with Colorado law enforcement. McClintock said that he supports the state's right to choose.

"My general view is we have spawned a lot of problems with the laws we have in place," said McClintock. "There are a lot of kids in college who have had their lives ruined by a conviction."

McClintock didn't go as far as to endorse legalization, instead mentioning his support for states' rights to decide the matter.

McClintock is currently running for re-election and was first elected to the House of Representatives in 2008. He formerly served in California State Senate and the Assembly.

Russellville Central Fire Station Underway

By Patricia Spears

Russellville (AR) Courier, August 8, 2016

With a projected finish date of late 2017 and a cost of \$6.5 million funded through city sales tax, construction of the new Russellville Central Fire Station is underway.

Fire Marshal Richard Setian said all of the bids came in under budget. Van Horn Construction is the primary contractor.

"Right now we don't foresee anything that will exceed the amount," Setian said. "However, with construction you never know what you may run into."

He said the new station is being structurally built to meet federal standards.

"From a response standpoint the building will meet FEMA standards, which means it will be better protected if a big storm came through as well as the firefighters," Setian said. "It will be bigger and equipped with the latest technology making it more efficient for day-to-day operations and response."

He said with the design, they will also have the ability to expand at some point.

The new station will be 24,849 square feet, span one half of a city block, and three stories tall with the exception of the training tower which is designed to be four stories.

The drill tower or training tower is a new addition to the Russellville Fire Department, Setian said.

"The tower will give the firefighters the ability to train with fire protection," he said. "It will offer a stairwell (for practice climbing), repelling and a standpipe sprinkler system."

Another addition for the fire department will be a wellness and fitness room.

The first floor will include all necessary apparatuses for the fire department.

"Everything that needs to be accessible like equipment, storage, the medical supply and turnouts has to be on the ground floor," said Setian.

Living quarters with individual bedrooms and shared baths, a day room and kitchen will take residence on the second floor. The current station can hold an occupancy of eight but the new station will be able to sleep 11 plus quarters for the battalion chief. According to Setian, the new station may have the ability to house 11 but the plan is to only occupy seven. The remaining four will be used for future expansion if possible.

The third floor will be reserved for administration including fire marshals who are currently located in Russellville City Hall, the fire chief, a conference room and administration assistants.

"The public will be able to enter the first floor and take an elevator straight to the third floor," Setian said.

In the design plans, the training room will be larger and will have the ability to hold 40-50 participants. There will also be twice as many bay doors.

Setian said the current station has three bays which require firefighters to back trucks in causing road hazards from having to stop traffic.

The new station will feature three drive-thru bays for large pumper and ladder trucks exiting onto El Paso Avenue and three drive-thru bays for short auxiliary vehicles and reserve pumper trucks exiting onto West B Street. The drive thru bays will allow drivers to bring

the trucks in through the back, eliminating the need to stop traffic and back in.

The fire department offers tours to the public and will continue giving tours once in the new station, according to Setian.

“One of the services we provide, especially for kids, is tours of our location,” he said. “Our intent is to continue with tours in the new station.”

Coffee County To Receive \$353,000 In FEMA Funds

By Mike Gursan

WTVY-TV Dothan (AL), August 8, 2016

ELBA, Ala.-- Coffee County's EMA Director Larry Walker wants to hear from property owners in the unincorporated areas of the county who suffered damage from the “Great Christmas Flood” last year.

Walker says the county will receive \$353,000 in FEMA mitigating funds. This money can be used to relocate homeowners out of a flood plain, it can also be used to purchase generators and vital equipment for municipalities.

More than 150 homes in Elba were damaged or destroyed in the December flooding.

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

No stories for this edition

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

66 Jewish NY Metro Groups Get \$5.1M In Security Funds

By Claude Solnik

Long Island (NY) Business News, August 8, 2016

Sixty-six Jewish organizations and several churches in the New York City metropolitan area have been awarded \$5.1 million in federal funding designed to make nonprofits more secure.

Seventy of the 198 groups that applied, or roughly 35 percent, were given grants, equaling about 26 percent of the groups approved nationwide.

The money was awarded through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's fiscal 2016 Nonprofit Security Grant Program, which provides funding for security enhancements to nonprofit organizations deemed at risk of terrorist attacks.

Groups in and around New York City have obtained about \$39.3 million since the program began in 2007.

The largest amount provided to the area was \$6 million in 2010, followed by this year's awards, nearly twice the \$2.7 million awarded last year.

Although religious affiliations are not a requirement, Jewish organizations applied for and received the vast majority of the funding in New York, equal to more than one quarter of the \$20 million nationwide for nonprofits.

The UJA-Federation and several other Jewish groups worked closely with legislators and nonprofits to obtain the funds, being used for things such as automatically locking doors, barricades and other security infrastructure.

High-profile churches such as the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine in New York City also were awarded funding.

Congresswoman Kathleen Rice (D-Garden City), who helped groups obtain \$575,000 in her district, in a written statement said “one of the most effective things we can do at the federal level is help vulnerable or high-risk institutions harden their facilities and enhance their emergency response capabilities.”

“It is especially important for organizations in and around New York City to receive this federal funding,” Sen. Charles Schumer (D-New York) said in a written statement

The Federal Management Agency describes the program as providing “support for target hardening and other physical security enhancements to nonprofit organizations that are at high risk of terrorist attack” in eligible urban areas.

Rice helped numerous groups on Long Island obtain funding, including The Hebrew Academy of Long Beach, the Hebrew Academy of the Five Towns and Rockaway, the Merrick Jewish Centre, Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst, and Young Israel of Oceanside, which have each been awarded \$75,000 in her district.

Yeshiva of South Shore in Hewlett has been awarded \$73,673, and the Hebrew Academy of Nassau County has been awarded \$50,000, while Congregation Aish Kodesh in Woodmere received \$75,000.

Temple Beth Sholom Roslyn Heights, Temple Beth-El of Great Neck and The Merrick Jewish Centre also received support.

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-New York) said terrorists have “previously targeted schools and congregations for attacks,” which makes FEMA's Nonprofit Security Grant Program “critical in making sure that high-risk organizations like Jewish schools and congregations are safe and protected from terrorist attacks.”

She added that “New York is the number one terror target in the world, so we must continue to be vigilant,” adding that “these federal funds through Homeland Security will provide the necessary resources to help keep our places of worship safe and secure.”

FIRE GRANTS

No stories for this edition

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

No stories for this edition

FLOODS

Board Searches Solutions As Two Kanawha Libraries Remain Unopened

By Elaina Sauber

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, August 8, 2016

With two Kanawha County library branches still unusable after the June 23 floods, the library board is trying to accommodate residents in Clendenin and Elkview in the meantime.

On July 26, the library reopened its former space at 3636 Pennsylvania Ave., in Big Chimney, to operate until the bridge at Crossings Mall in Elkview is replaced.

The Elk Valley branch was spared from the floodings, but has been inaccessible since then because of the washed-out culvert to the shopping center.

Library Systems Director Alan Engelbert said the public is making “great use” of the former library since it opened.

“A lot of the wiring and even one of the checkout desks is still there, so we were able to get it up and running very quickly,” Engelbert said.

That location is functioning under regular library hours, he added.

Work on the new bridge to Crossings Mall is expected to begin this week after the owner, Plaza Management, received the necessary permits for the new bridge from the Kanawha County Planning Department late last week.

The work is expected to take six to eight weeks to complete.

Engelbert said he received correspondence from Plaza Management earlier Monday, confirming that it will pro-rate rent for the Elk Valley branch during the time that it’s been inaccessible to patrons.

“That was pretty much what we asked for, so that was fair enough,” Engelbert said. “We’re all very anxious to get back there and start operating.”

The Clendenin branch is a more complicated issue.

After more than 9 feet of flood water rose inside the building, Engelbert said its interior was essentially a total loss.

The library board hired a contractor to remove its contents and strip it down to the bare walls, he said.

Engelbert said the Federal Emergency Maintenance Agency (FEMA) has asked the board if it has an estimated cost to repair or rebuild the facility.

A previous Gazette-Mail story reported that renovating the branch would cost about \$330,000, while demolition and rebuilding a new facility would cost more than \$1 million.

“We really haven’t had those discussions internally,” Engelbert said, adding that he’s unsure how much FEMA would pay to help with those costs.

Also slowing down the process are paperwork inconsistencies with the library’s flood insurance carrier, which has two different addresses for the Clendenin branch, though Engelbert said they’re the same building.

Engelbert noted that Kanawha Public Library system did receive a grant from the West Virginia Library Commission for a grant in the amount of \$10,733 to help pay for flood relief costs at its affected branches.

A mobile library is currently operating in Clendenin every Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Engelbert said the board is looking into extending those hours so that people can visit after work and students can stop by after school.

“We’re looking to provide services in other ways as time goes on,” he said.

Preparations Continue At Bridge, Elkview Schools

By Daniel Desrochers

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, August 8, 2016

The staff at Bridge Elementary School built a classroom on Friday.

“We started with a blank slate of clean wax and built a classroom from scratch,” said Vanessa Brown, Clendenin Elementary’s principal.

The classroom — which was a cafeteria last year — will host 75 fifth-graders and three teachers.

“This is like taking a trip back to the ‘70s,” Brown said. “This is the way we started our careers.”

It’s just one of the many accommodations that Brown and Bridge Principal Cynthia Cummings have had to make as they prepare the school for the upcoming school year, after floods closed Clendenin Elementary. The Clendenin school suffered damage totaling up to 97 percent of its value.

But Bridge wasn’t free of flood damage either. Most of the doors in the building had to be removed. A thin sliding door is the only thing giving people privacy in the hallway bathroom. Most of the bulletin boards were removed, out of fear of mold.

The principals are asking teachers to avoid putting nametags on desks or to only use them for a little while, because they aren’t sure who will show up on the first day of school.

To minimize changes, the principals tried to put kids in the same classes as their friends; Bridge students with Bridge students, Clendenin students with Clendenin students.

“Kids are very adaptable,” Cummings said. “I think it will work fine.”

On Monday, the day that school originally had been scheduled to begin, boxes still lined the hallways. Teachers were decorating their classrooms and sorting through the school supplies donated from several states. The school received many donated items to help them get back on track.

Come the first day of school, which will be Wednesday for these children, every student at Bridge will get a backpack filled with school supplies. They were donated by a school in New York that was affected by Hurricane Sandy.

Each student also will receive a free pair of shoes, from Dominion Virginia Power.

While class sizes have grown — some classes will have as many as 38 students — the student-teacher ratio has remained similar.

The most students per teacher will be 25-to-1.

“We’re overstaffed,” Brown said. “We’ll have a lower student-to-teacher ratio once we get the portables.”

The staff held a walk-through Monday morning for the arrival and dismissal of students. With the extra students coming in, Brown and Cummings are expecting the arrival to be hectic.

“Please ride the bus!” Cummings said.

“It’s going to be a huge traffic snafu,” Brown added.

The principals said parents will not be allowed to park and walk in with their children; they’ll only be able to drop them off.

“You want it to be as safe as possible,” Brown said.

At Elkview Middle School, which will host students from the shuttered Herbert Hoover High School, Principal Missy Lovejoy isn’t as worried about traffic.

Classrooms will be used by middle-schoolers in the morning, and then high-schoolers in the afternoon, until temporary classrooms can be set up.

“There will be a few bumps and things we’ll have to rein in,” Lovejoy said, “but I think we’ve looked over every major thing and mediocre thing that could possibly come up.”

Elkview still was being prepped Monday. Lovejoy said the most difficult part was moving supplies and equipment back from the storage pods, where they were being held after the flood.

But now, most of the supplies are back in their correct classrooms.

“As soon as I get that cafeteria cleaned out,” Lovejoy said, “we’ll be ready to go.”

Houston Flood Victims Upset Over Commissioner’s Comments

By Jennifer Bauer

KPRC-TV Houston, August 9, 2016

HOUSTON – A video recorded on August 4 has upset some Houston residents, especially those affected by the widespread floods in 2015 and 2016.

The short video clip shows Harris County Commissioner Steve Radack, of Precinct 3, giving a presentation.

“There are some people, frankly, over the years and the many years I’ve been doing this, that enjoy floods,” Radack said. “They like to see a flood about every seven years because they want new cars. They want their homes redone.”

Someone in the audience recorded the video and posted it online, and now some flood victims are speaking out.

“It upset me. It upset quite a few people,” said Carlos Goenaga, a Meyerland resident whose home flooded in both the Memorial Day flood of 2015 and the Tax Day flood of 2016. “He’s either inexcusably ignorant or just extremely cynical.”

Goenaga told KPRC he had an insurance claim of about \$100,000 to make all the repairs on his home. Then, 11 months later, his home flooded again. That time, he and his wife had a three-day-old baby at home

in addition to their two-year-old son. The flood turned their world upside down and forced them into a hotel for more than two months.

"There is so much emotional and financial stress dealing with a flood," Goenaga said. "It is a fact that people get new cars and remodel their homes. It's also a fact that they have no other choice. Just to even think that people 'enjoy' that ... 'enjoy' losing all their possessions that can't be replaced."

In a sit-down interview with KPRC, Radack said he meant what he said. Some people use catastrophic events to get money from their insurance company in a dishonest way and Radack said it's unfortunate and that's what he was referring to.

"I'm not directing that to anybody who has gone through the tragedy of a flood," he said. "I'm talking about people who sit there and are happy that they have figured out a way to rip off FEMA or their insurance company."

Radack said it's disappointing that only a small portion of what he said was shared. The entire presentation was 90 minutes long.

"You're taking something in the middle of someone's conversation," Radack said. "People rip off insurance companies all the time. They rip off FEMA all the time."

"I don't want a personal apology," said Goenaga. "I would just like an acknowledgment that these floods make people suffer and cause an unimaginable amount of stress."

2016 Click2Houston/KPRC2

TORNADOES

No stories for this edition

WILDFIRES

No stories for this edition

WINTER STORMS

No stories for this edition

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

No stories for this edition

ZIKA VIRUS

CBS: Zika Virus-US Spread. The CBS Evening News (8/8, story 2, 2:00, Rose, 11.17M)

reported, "The number of non-travel related infections of Zika in Florida rose today to 17. This time the person is in Palm Beach County, about 75 miles north of the Miami Zika zone. But they had traveled to Miami-Dade County. David Begnaud has the latest on the battle against the virus linked to birth defects." CBS (**Begnaud**) added, "There has been aerial spraying over the Zika zone at least three times now. With 17 locally transmitted Zika cases, the one-square-mile area of Wynwood was a near ghost town this weekend. Four months into her pregnancy, Marie Vitalacle feared she had Zika. She started having flu-like symptoms. Today she received some good news." **Marie Vitalacle**, mother: "We did your test last week, and it was negative." **Begnaud**: "What was the reaction when you got it?" **Vitalacle**: "Whew. One less thing to worry about." **Begnaud**: "She says she's been taking precautions, including using bug spray any time she's outside. You understand how randomly it could have been you." **Vitalacle**: "Absolutely, and in this situation, when you become pregnant, you just sort of have to accept that you're not in control. One thing that you're in control of with Zika is you can prevent." **Begnaud**: "Vitalacle's obstetrician, Dr. Maria Lopez-Beecham, worries some of her other patients are forgetting about prevention." **Dr. Maria Lopez-Beecham**, obstetrician: "I think many people want to be tested, but you always wonder, do you have bug spray in your purse. As you are going to get tested, do you have bug spray in your purse? That's what you have to focus on. The image has to be of the mosquitoes, the mosquito bites. That's what you need to avoid." **Begnaud**: "Tonight in Palm Beach County, inspectors are in the area where the new case was detected going door-to-door asking people for voluntary urine samples to see who else may have been infected. Kids are about to go back to school in Florida, and today the governor asked education leaders to start teaching students about Zika protection."

NBC: Zika Virus-Florida Case. NBC Nightly News (8/8, story 7, 0:25, Holt, 16.61M) reported, "Florida has confirmed its first case of homegrown Zika in Palm Beach County, bringing the total number of cases in that state to 17. It was found well outside of the Miami neighborhood pregnant women have been told to avoid. The patient did recently travel to the Miami area, but it's not clear where the infection occurred. Starting today, all pregnant women throughout Florida can be tested for Zika for free."

Officials Investigate Zika Case In Palm Beach County

Associated Press, August 8, 2016

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) – Florida health officials say they’re investigating a case of Zika virus infection in Palm Beach County that was likely contracted in the United States.

Gov. Rick Scott said in a news release Monday that the Florida Department of Health is working to determine the source of the infection. The infected person had recently traveled to Miami-Dade County, where more than a dozen non-travel-related Zika cases were discovered last week. The release says health officials still believe active transmissions of the mosquito-borne virus are only taking place within an area smaller than 1 square mile in Miami-Dade County.

With the new school year starting, the release also says Scott has directed state health and education officials to work together in providing Zika prevention guidance and resources to students, parents and educators.

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Investigators Study New Zika Case In Palm Beach County

By Melanie Evans

Wall Street Journal, August 8, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

A 500-Square-Foot Area In Miami Is Ground Zero For The Zika Virus

By Pam Belluck

New York Times, August 8, 2016

Around July 4, a patient entered an emergency room in Miami-Dade County with a fever, a rash and joint pain — three of the four classic symptoms of the Zika virus. By this point, there had already been about 1,600 other Zika cases in the continental United States, but it soon became clear that this one was different.

All the other patients had either traveled to Latin America or the Caribbean, where Zika had been raging for months — or they had sex or close contact with someone who had been there. Not this patient.

It was the case public health officials had been expecting and dreading: A person in the continental United States had been infected from the bite of a local mosquito.

It would turn out to be the first of a wave of cases health officials are now scrambling to identify and contain. They are investigating 17 suspected cases of locally transmitted Zika — including 13 linked to a 500-square-foot area that touches two neighboring businesses in the Wynwood section of Miami.

While officials are confident that Zika will never run rampant in the United States, the chase is on in South Florida as more local cases are identified and *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, the type that carry Zika, stay one step ahead of the spray.

Public health officials are also grappling with, well, the public: Some think that the authorities should warn pregnant women away from much more than one square mile, and still others seem unaware that Zika, while mild or inconsequential for most people, can cause devastating brain damage to the babies of infected pregnant women.

“Obviously when people detect local transmission, there’s a lot of different opinions,” said Dr. Lyle R. Petersen, who is managing the Zika response of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “People panic and there’s potential for irrational thinking in either direction, not doing enough and doing too much.”

Last week the agency took the unprecedented step of urging people to stay away from a place in the continental United States, warning pregnant women to avoid the square-mile area of Wynwood that contains the 500-square-foot patch and the two unidentified businesses.

Dr. Petersen said because the continental United States has better mosquito control, more air-conditioning and less standing water than other countries dealing with the Zika virus, there are most likely to be only “handfuls of local transmission and very rare outbreaks,” which will be containable with a targeted response.

“It’s not the whole city — it’s a very small part of the city,” Dr. Petersen said of the possible risk in Miami. “So the recommendation is just don’t go there, particularly if you’re pregnant. In the rest of the city, you’re more likely to get killed in a car crash than you are to get Zika virus.”

The story of the homegrown Zika cases demonstrates both the value and the limits of planning when the enemy is an unpredictable and stealthy virus delivered by a hardy mosquito adept at hide-and-seek. In a 60-page blueprint this year, the C.D.C. outlined detailed steps to take, and officials have been assiduously tracking the patients, testing people close to them and amping up mosquito control.

Still, battling Zika in Wynwood is challenging because its mixture of businesses, apartments and warehouses makes it a veritable urban mosquito mecca. Slices of the gentrifying neighborhood are bursting with art galleries, boutiques and condominiums, but they give way to a still-tattered section of run-down buildings where residents struggle in poverty.

"This is low-income," Tony Fonseca, 45, a construction worker, said as he stood outside the La Fama Supermarket at Northwest Second Avenue and 31st Street. "People live on welfare, they use drugs. You walk around here at night, you can get assaulted — they'll steal your Ray-Bans."

That part of Wynwood, Mr. Fonseca said, has "lots of standing water," but he said people in this predominantly Latino neighborhood tend to blame foreign visitors to the arts district for bringing the Zika virus.

"Maybe someone brought it from Latin America," said Mr. Fonseca, born in Miami of Nicaraguan parents. "But no one around here is worried about it."

A firefighter taking a break at a coffee shop on Northwest Second Avenue said two of his female colleagues, both pregnant, were temporarily transferred to a station several miles south, near Coconut Grove. But as Florida health department workers go door to door asking for urine samples to test, seeking to learn the extent of the Zika risk in Wynwood, not everyone sees the need.

Diana Ozuna, 27, declined to be tested, even after her 53-year-old mother, who lives nearby, submitted a urine sample of her own. Ms. Ozuna said she lowered her window screens and used repellent, especially on her 20-month-old daughter. Still, because she is not pregnant and has no immediate plans to be, she does not perceive Zika to be a great menace.

"It's bad," she said, "but it's not something that you die from."

Zika is an enemy most people cannot see. While its effects can be catastrophic to developing fetuses, in adults the effects are usually mild or negligible, and health officials assume that for every person with symptoms, four more have undetected Zika infection.

So when a homegrown case arises, officials need to test people close to the infected patient to see if the case is isolated or if there is active local transmission taking place in that community.

After the first case appeared in July, the Florida Department of Health tested 54 people who had some connection to the patient or lived within 150 meters of the patient's apartment building, the maximum distance experts say mosquitoes that carry Zika can typically

travel. None of those 54 tested positive, the department said.

Days later, around July 8, another homegrown Zika case showed up in Broward County, adjacent to Miami-Dade: a person who had visited a family doctor, complaining of fever, rash, headache and joint pain.

In Broward, the health department tested 70 contacts and neighbors of Patient No. 2. All tested negative. And Patient No. 2 had no connection to Patient No. 1.

"They had never been even close to each other," Dr. Petersen said. And "there was no third person. It wasn't like you could say, 'Oh, Harry in the apartment next door has the same symptoms.'"

That there were two isolated cases in different neighborhoods was, in some ways, a relief. It meant that there was no danger zone, no place rife with infected mosquitoes. Most likely, a person who had traveled to Latin America had landed in Miami with Zika, been bitten by an *Aedes aegypti* mosquito in Florida, which, now infected itself, had bitten a person in Miami-Dade. The same thing had probably happened via a different mosquito in Broward, they believe.

County workers unleashed mosquito control tactics where those patients lived, and the health department determined that those neighborhoods were not active Zika zones.

Then two other cases appeared — one in Broward and one in Miami-Dade, people whose symptoms started on July 9 or July 10. They were not connected to Patient No. 1 or Patient No. 2. But they were connected to each other.

"They worked in businesses that were very close to each other," Dr. Petersen said. Because both businesses were in Wynwood, "obviously it looked like there was a potential link between the two. They were in close proximity, two people who were sort of in the same area working."

On July 29, officials announced the four cases of local transmission. But it was still unclear whether Wynwood had an outbreak or just two local cases. Determining the answer would depend on two things: Were there other Wynwood-linked cases besides the two workers, and was the mosquito-killing campaign launched when those two cases were identified killing enough mosquitoes?

The Florida health department began asking for urine samples from employees and people who lived or worked near the businesses, which are small and do not draw much public traffic, but have outdoor spaces that might have been attractive to mosquitoes.

Over the weekend of July 30, lab results came in. Of 26 people closely connected to the Wynwood workers, four were considered to have Zika. Six of 52 people tested in the neighborhood did too. There were now 12 infected people with Wynwood connections, all between the ages of 20 and 45.

"All the people that were positive spent time either at those businesses or in the immediate 150 meters around those businesses," Dr. Petersen said.

The core transmission zone was even smaller. "The area that has demonstrated the spread of Zika is only a 500-square-foot area," Dr. Thomas R. Frieden, the director of the C.D.C., said at a news conference in Miami.

None of the people infected in Wynwood was related or had sexually transmitted the virus to each other. Some were part of a group of "friends that hang out together," Dr. Petersen said, and two were housemates. Officials declined to say if either of the women was pregnant.

The earliest infection in the group probably occurred in late June, meaning that Zika had been in Wynwood for at least a week longer than officials had previously known. "This had been going on for practically a month," Dr. Petersen said, so "you have to basically assume that there's ongoing transmission."

Moreover, officials responsible for mosquito control reported in the last weekend of July that "despite daily use of spraying," they were "still seeing new larval mosquitoes and moderately high *Aedes aegypti* counts," Dr. Frieden said, adding that the mosquitoes might be resistant to the insecticides being used, or simply hiding in pockets unreachable by backpack- and truck-spraying. "Aggressive mosquito control measures don't seem to be working as well as we would like."

On Friday, after aerial spraying with a different insecticide began in Wynwood, the mosquito numbers were coming down, Dr. Frieden said. The C.D.C. will likely keep its Wynwood warning in place for weeks, lifting it only when about 45 days have passed without a new case being diagnosed, or when mosquito counts decrease substantially, Dr. Petersen said. As of yesterday, the health department said it had tested 437 people in the square-mile active zone and identified only one additional case — someone among the 26 close contacts of the two Wynwood workers.

Wynwood is still the only area authorities consider an active local transmission zone. So far, a 10-block area in the northwest section of the square mile has been cleared, since no one there was found to be infected, Gov. Rick Scott of Florida said.

But authorities expect more cases to be identified, some in Wynwood, some elsewhere. On Monday, they announced a 17th case: a person in Palm Beach County who had traveled to Miami-Dade.

Zika Weighs On Businesses In A Miami Neighborhood

By Cameron McWhirter And Melanie Evans

Wall Street Journal, August 8, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Wilmington Reflects On Vigilant Guard Response

By Chris Mays

Brattleboro (VT) Reformer, August 8, 2016

WILMINGTON >> Select Board members spoke highly of emergency responders involved in the Vigilant Guard exercise around emergency preparedness.

"They did fabulously," Select Board member and Town Clerk Susie Haughwout said at a meeting on Wednesday. "They proceeded through the exercise and anticipated what we were trying to get them to do very much ahead of schedule. We expected them to take longer to make these decisions."

Haughwout and Select Board Chairman John Gannon were co-planners in the exercise, staying in touch during the July 29 drill via text messaging on their cell phones. Participating were the Wilmington police and fire departments, the town's Highway Department, Deerfield Valley Rescue, the MOOver busing service and the Community Emergency Response Team, which formed after Tropical Storm Irene had occurred and was identified as a goal of long-term recovery in planning with FEMA.

Haughwout was stationed in a simulation cell in Northfield with about 40 people. Most of them were familiar with dealing with emergencies.

"It was a little challenging for me," she said. "By the end of the day I realized I was probably the only really green civilian in the room. Everyone else is either paid to do this for their full-time job or they have had 30 years of experience."

Gannon stayed local, helping at the emergency operation center during the morning then directing

efforts at Hayford Field in the afternoon. The latter part involved helicopter evacuations for citizen participants.

Certain information did not need to be “injected” into the exercise with tasks getting accomplished ahead of schedule, said Gannon. As part of the drill, the emergency operation center had to move three times. It went from the fire station to the police station to the Twin Valley Elementary School.

“That went really well,” Gannon said. “It was a good experience for me to sit in with my emergency responders and (Town Manager) Scott (Murphy) who was there the entire day, and see how they operated together. I thought it was a really good team effort.”

Murphy was handling VT Alert. The system allows towns to provide residents and second homeowners updates on emergencies or issues by phone and e-mail. To sign up, visit vtalert.gov.

Unfortunately, text messages were not working within VT Alert during the drill. But that was not the town’s fault, Gannon said.

A year was spent in planning the exercise. Haughwout and Gannon were asked to write a script that involved pneumonic plague cases in Vermont, and earthquakes in Montreal, Canada, and upstate New York. The helicopters came to Wilmington to rescue people from the natural disasters’ effect on the Somerset Reservoir. High-water trucks also helped with the acted-out evacuation.

About 50 communities participated in this year’s Vermont National Guard-sponsored Vigilant Guard exercise, which included agencies from New York, New Hampshire and other nearby states. The Maine National Guard conducted a similar exercise in November 2013. One state is expected to do so each year.

“Guilford basically played by themselves whereas we were lucky enough to get National Guardsmen here, both air and land, so that we could actually test out an evacuation of the town. That was really good because it gave us an opportunity to cooperate with the guard and work with them, which is something we had to do in Tropical Storm Irene,” said Gannon, who promoted the idea of having the National Guard come sooner rather than later — as was done in the exercise — because then they “have their own eyes or ears here. And I think reaction will be faster than (Fire Chief) Ken March calling up to the state emergency operation center and asking for resources.”

Evaluations were positive for Wilmington, according to Gannon.

“Did we make a couple mistakes? Yeah. You’re always going to make mistakes,” he said. “But I think

they were really impressed with how we worked the exercise.”

In other news:

— The Select Board is looking at updating its policy for funding events. And it’s looking to Dover for inspiration.

Both towns use 1 percent local option tax revenue to supply organizers with money to put on events. Talks about proposed new guidelines in Wilmington focused largely on what percentages of in-kind and cash matching dollars should be required. In-kind refers to labor, products or other valuable items that can be included in budgeting for an event.

“We were thinking we wanted to keep in-kind as the lesser of the match because the money was going so fast,” said Murphy, who brought a proposal before the board. “A lot of events were using the in-kind match.”

The board also spoke about allowing funding to go to events outside Wilmington that would still benefit the town’s restaurants, inns and retail businesses. Currently, events must take place in Wilmington in order for an organizer to receive funding through the program.

— The Planning Commission has developed a list of “key projects” aimed at meeting goals within the Town Plan. The Select Board plans to discuss the document — which features items such as quality education, career development, adult education, water quality, bridge and culvert replacements, parking lot expansion, and police and fire relocation — with the commission at an upcoming meeting. Adopting an ordinance on “blight” could help minimize the risk of having vacant buildings.

— The Southwestern Vermont Medical Center still wants to move its Deerfield Valley campus from the intersection of Route 9 and Route 100. Septic issues were cited by board members familiar with the subject.

“We want to ensure that they understood that the town’s very interested in having the health center stay in Wilmington,” said Gannon, who met with hospital officials along with Select Board Chairman Tom Fitzgerald and Wilmington School Board Chairman Adam Grinold. “We wanted to make sure we were working better with them, cooperating better with them and making them a more critical player in this whole process of what happens with the old school and old town garage site, because they are a potential anchor tenant for both of those properties.”

The Wilmington School District owns the school building and the School Board now has the authority to sell it since voters approved of the action last month. A request for proposals went out but the process was

deemed unsuccessful by School Board members. Gannon said it was unclear whether another RFP would be issued.

"I think the takeaway from the meeting is that we're going to have an ongoing dialogue going with them," he said of officials at the hospital. "They don't want to be on the old Town Garage site if we're not going to do anything with the old high school and I think that's understandable."

KFIZ News Tuesday 8/9/16

KFIZ-AM Fond du Lac (WI), August 9, 2016

Man Injured In FDL Accident

A 56-year-old man driving on Highway 45 in Fond du Lac was taken to St. Agnes Hospital after crashing into a guardrail on Highway 151 early Monday morning. Sheriff's deputies arrived just before 4:13 a.m. The man had gone off Highway 45 missed a pond, ended up on Highway 151 where his vehicle came to rest in a northbound lane after hitting the guardrail. Fond du Lac Fire and Rescue took him to the hospital.

Three Rescued From Lake Puckaway

Three men were rescued from Lake Puckaway after their boat sank Saturday morning. One of the men in the boat called 911 after it began to take on water. Green Lake County Sheriff's officials say the three were unable to bail fast enough and their motor wouldn't start. They boat sank and all three ended up in the water with life jackets on. They were rescued from the water and the boat was removed from it. The incident was reported at 7:38 a.m.

Jackson Man Remains In Jail For Fatal Accident

Bond will remain at \$15,000 cash for a 21-year-old Jackson man facing reckless homicide and other charges for a fatal multi-vehicle accident in Washington County. The lawyer for Dylan Hodgson recently made a motion to get his bond reduced, but that was denied. Sixty-year-old Cynthia Patrick was killed in the July 19th accident on Highway 60 went Hodgson lost control of his vehicle trying to pass two others. He's back in court on September 21st. Hodgson is being held in the Washington County Jail.

FDL School Board Approves Assistant Principal Hirings

The Fond du Lac School Board Monday approved the hiring of two new assistant principals. Marissa Lombardo will be an assistant principal at the High School and Amy Kunstman assistant principal at Theisen Middle School. District Superintendent Jim Sebert says Lombardo will do a great job. He says she's been a Spanish teacher at the High School. He says they are excited about her energy level and her

knowledge and instructional leadership capabilities. Kunstman was a music teacher at Chegwin Elementary. Sebert says she filled in as a substitute principal at times at Chegwin. He says she is very level, positive and will bring that to Theisen and their district administrative team.

Feingold Faces Opponent In Democratic Primary Today

Former U.S. Senator Russ Feingold feels current Senator Ron Johnson isn't listening to the needs of constituents. Feingold says he believes the job of being a Senator or Representatives is listening to people and getting their view first instead of telling them what they should think. He says typical families are having a tough time making a living. He says middle income and working families feel like they are working hard, unemployment is down, people at the top and Wall Street are doing real well while they are having a hard time paying their bills. Feingold faces fellow Democrat Scott Harbach of Kenosha in today's primary election. The winner will face Republican-incumbent Ron Johnson and Libertarian candidate Phillip Anderson in November.

FEMA Training Tested FDL County Officials Resourcefulness

Sixty officials from Fond du Lac County had a lot thrown at them during a training session at the Emergency Management Institute in Emmitsburg, Maryland last month. The training was paid for through a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant. County Sheriff's Lieutenant Ryan Waldschmidt was one of those who attended. He says they covered things at both the county and state levels, hazardous materials, working with the media and more. He says in a big exercise tailored for the Fond du Lac County contingent there was an accident on I-41 near County Highway OO where a school bus going to EAA collided with a truck. There was an ensuing explosion fire and casualties. A deputy directing traffic was struck and killed and at the same time a train derailed in the North Fond du Lac Railroad yard with a chemical spill. The training was July 11th through the 14th.

Drive 4UR Community Event At Society Insurance Wednesday

Area residents can help out the Fond du Lac Area United Way by test driving a new Ford Wednesday at Society Insurance in Fond du Lac. United Way Executive Director Amber Kilawee says Holiday Ford will be providing the cars for the event, which is from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. She says Ford will be donating \$20 for each test drive up to 300 test rides or up to \$6,000. Society Insurance is the lead pacesetter for the United

Way's upcoming campaign. Tracy Schneider of Society says they will also have a brat fry from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Society Insurance is located at 150 Camelot Drive in Fond du Lac. To participate in the Drive 4UR Community event you must have a valid driver's license and valid car insurance.

Waupun Truck Show Detours

Detours will be set up in Waupun this Friday and Saturday for the annual truck show and parades. Highway 49 will be closed from Gateway Drive to Fox Lake Road. Highway 26 will only be open to local traffic from East Spring Street to East Jefferson Street. Detours will be in effect Friday from 8:45 pm to 11 pm and Saturday from 2:45 pm to 4:45 pm. Drivers heading west on Highway 49 should head south on Shaler Drive, west on Lincoln Street, north on Rens Way, north on Fox Lake Road, west on Brown Street, and north on County Park Road to West Main Street. Southbound traffic on Highway 26 should go north on Frontage Road, east on Highway 26, and south on Highway 151 to get to either Highway 26 or Highway 151 south.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

No stories for this edition

AMERICA'S PREPAREATHON!

No stories for this edition

FEMA CORPS

Local Grad Serves With FEMA Corps

By Alana Norris

Vicksburg (MS) Post, August 8, 2016

A recent local graduate has dedicated the next 10 months of his life to serve others.

This summer Lance Hall joined the Atlantic Region's Federal Emergency Management Agency Corps, a branch of the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps.

"It's like a team-based, service project," Hall said.

He said he is working with a team called DSA, or disaster survivor assistance, which will work on projects having to do with natural disaster preparation, response and recovery.

"We go to different organizations like animal shelters, soup kitchens... and we try to help out people who are in need of disaster survival," Hall said.

FEMA Corps members are more behind the scenes and help people register for federal aid, he said, while traditional AmeriCorps is more labor intensive in their approach to service.

"We set up booths to try to recruit people, and we also travel and try to help out wherever we can," Hall said.

His specialty role is media representative, which means he will write articles, take pictures and utilize social media to get people more involved.

He first became interested in joining FEMA Corps after meeting traditional corps members three years ago during the annual Service Over Self program at Crawford Street United Methodist Church.

"They talked to me about it, and I thought it was really cool being able to travel and help out people. So I knew that's what I wanted to do," Hall said.

A couple years later he met FEMA Corps members at Highway 61 Coffeehouse and said their conversation really sparked his interest and reaffirmed his decision.

"I was like, 'I know this is right for me,'" Hall said.

He graduated from the homeschool program Blessings Christian Academy in May and left for the FEMA Corps in Baltimore, Maryland, in mid-July. After a month of training in Baltimore, he will continue training for a couple weeks in Vicksburg before his team heads out to their just-announced first placement in Kansas City, Missouri. He'll spend three months in Kansas City and then move on to two other three-month placements as a corps member.

"It is going great. I've been up here (in Baltimore) since July 12, and it's been a lot of training everyday. I've been learning a lot of new information about the government," he said.

Hall said he has considered a career in emergency management.

"I really love helping out people and helping out my community," he said.

At the end of his service, Hall will receive a \$5,775 education award that he plans on using for college. He is considering majoring in kinesiology.

PRIVATE SECTOR

No stories for this edition

CITIZEN CORPS

No stories for this edition

POLITICAL COMMENTARY, **COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS**

Disaster Recovery: Navigating FEMA's Cumbersome Financial Assistance Rules

American City & County, August 8, 2016

The 2016 Atlantic hurricane season officially began on June 1, and will end on November 30. Hilary S. Cairnie, a partner with Pepper Hamilton LLP, offers his views on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) policies for reimbursement of disaster recovery costs. Hilary Cairnie's views are below.

The 2016 season for hurricanes, forest fires, floods and tornadoes is in full swing, and that means many state and local governments will have to seek financial assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for reimbursement of disaster recovery costs. If you are not familiar with the Stafford Act and FEMA's rules and regulations, you will quickly come to appreciate the many challenges encountered before receiving FEMA-approved financial assistance. Not all disaster-related costs are recoverable, and understanding what is and is not allowable is an important first step toward effectively managing disaster recovery efforts.

One cost category that is easily and often overlooked deals with the administrative costs incurred by a government entity to manage and administer its recovery efforts.

Recovery efforts involve contractors, subcontractors, consultants, federal agency personnel, site inspections, permitting processes, funding applications, contracts, accounting records, invoices and statements, internal meetings, lawyers, accountants, first responders, overtime requirements, and so on. And, the affected entity must contend with all of those moving parts while trying to reopen closed roads, clean up and remove debris, provide traffic control, coordinate individual relief services, undertake safety precautions, and conduct rescue/recovery operations. Even for a minor disaster, the administrative cost burden can be significant, especially where there is no such thing as surplus or unprogrammed funds.

In a recent case, the Civilian Board of Contract Appeals ruled in favor of St. Tammany Parish, La., and against FEMA. The court decided that accounting and legal fees incurred in support of recovery efforts were "sufficiently associated" with those efforts attributed to

Hurricane Katrina such that FEMA was obligated to reimburse the Parish for those costs.

Importantly, some of those administrative costs were incurred in connection with defending against litigation initiated by aggrieved subcontractors whose claims had not been paid by the parish because FEMA had disallowed those claims.

To maximize recovery of administrative costs, state and local government agencies need to:

(1) Specifically tailor each professional services agreement to address the specific disaster event,

(2) Anticipate the need for professional services, and plan in advance to compete the requirement and get a market price,

(3) Specify clearly your requirements for invoicing to include adequate detail and supporting documentation,

(4) Establish internal accounting controls and cost codes to track cost categories,

(5) Require all personnel to maintain daily time sheets and record all time devoted to disaster recovery activities, and

(6) Assign specific responsibilities to each staff member. No one person can master all of the requirements mandated by FEMA's rules and regulations, and

(7) Plan ahead for dealing with FEMA; agencies should communicate often and be sure to confirm talking points in writing.

Hilary Cairnie is a partner in the Government Contracts Practice Group of Pepper Hamilton LLP, in the firm's Washington D.C. office. His practice is diverse and encompasses virtually all manner of government contracting matters. He is a frequent speaker on topics and new developments of interest to the government contracting community. He has regularly appeared before local, regional and national chapters of trade associations and bar associations. Cairnie can be reached at cairnieh@pepperlaw.com or 202-220-1207.

SOCIAL MEDIA

No stories for this edition

SPANISH MEDIA

No stories for this edition

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