

FEMA NEWS SUMMARY & CLIPS

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MAIN FEMA NEWS

NATIONAL NEWS

Some 38,000 Xcel Energy Customers Remain Without Power

Associated Press, July 6, 2016

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Xcel Energy says thousands of customers from St. Cloud through the Twin Cities into western Wisconsin remain without power.

Around 38,000 were still without power as of 6 p.m. Wednesday, down from about 130,000 after the storms raced across the area Tuesday night. And Xcel says that due to the extent of the damage, it doesn't have an estimate on when service will be fully restored.

The National Weather Service confirms at least two tornadoes touched down in southeastern Minnesota Tuesday night, An EF0 tornado touched down east of Dennison just before 8 p.m., and an EF1 tornado touched down about a half-hour later near Lake City.

And the threat of more rough weather looms. Forecasters say two more rounds of severe weather are possible Thursday.

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Farewell To The Floodwaters

By Lauren Caruba

Houston Chronicle, July 6, 2016

More than two months after a storm deluged large swaths of the Houston area and filled the city's two reservoirs to record-breaking levels, the Army Corps of Engineers is finally draining the last of the floodwaters.

On Tuesday morning, the Corps emptied Addicks Reservoir, which had reached an elevation of 102.65 feet above sea level after heavy rains on April 18. The

Corps expects to empty Barker Reservoir, which reached 95.24 feet, in the next two or three days.

"This is great news," said Richard Long, a longtime project manager for Addicks and Barker. "We're ready for the next storm event now."

The normally dry reservoirs, which sit adjacent to each other in the west Houston area, are used for flood control. They collected a massive amount of water – a combined 209,000 acre-feet – during what's come to be known as the Tax Day Flood, bringing them to levels not seen since repeated storms in late 1991 and early 1992. This year's flooding shattered the previous record pools of 97.46 feet at Addicks and 93.6 feet at Barker. The maximum elevation at Addicks is at 108 feet above sea level, and at Barker, it is at 104 feet.

Both reservoirs are parts of systems that include earthen embankments, concrete spillways and metal gates to control the release of water. Addicks stretches for 11.6 miles. Barker is 13.6 miles long.

The Corps monitored the dams around the clock from April 19 until the end of May, once the waters were brought down to safer levels. The structures always operated as intended, Long said.

"We didn't find any major issues at all that needed to be addressed," he said. "We were very pleased with the way the reservoirs and the dams performed."

The dams prevented 24,000 structures from being inundated and an estimated \$5 billion in damage, according to the Corps.

Flooding in April and around Memorial Day this year has generated more than \$84 million in aid to victims across Texas, according to Federal Emergency Management Agency data.

In Harris County, the latest estimates submitted to the Texas Department of Public Safety show more than 11,200 homes affected by spring storms, with more than \$44 million in damage to public infrastructure.

In Brazoria County, close to 1,600 homes were affected with more than \$22.7 million in damage.

In Fort Bend County, the totals stand at 1,200 homes and about \$19 million, which includes flood damage from when the Brazos River overflowed its banks.

Since the April flooding, the Corps has collected water in the reservoirs several times during rainfalls. It has been metering out millions of gallons at controlled rates.

The Corps received permission to release water at a rate of up to a combined 4,000 cubic feet per second. Normally, releases are limited to 2,000 cubic feet per second to prevent erosion of Buffalo Bayou and flooding downstream. After a few weeks, the Corps lowered the rate to 2,900 cubic feet per second.

The emptying of the reservoirs means contractors will soon be able to resume repairs on the two dams, both of which were designated “unsafe” by the Corps in 2009.

The dams were classified at the agency’s highest risk level – “urgent and compelling” – because they might fail under normal operations and because of the consequences given their location in the nation’s fourth-largest city.

Addicks and Barker are about 70 years old, built after floods devastated downtown Houston in 1929 and 1935.

The Corps spent about \$3 million in recent years to inject grout and polyurethane into voids under the dams, install filters to prevent soil erosion and increase monitoring.

Last year, it awarded a \$72 million contract to Granite Construction Co. to replace much of the infrastructure for both dams. Work began in February but slowed after flooding inundated the reservoirs. The Corps had initially expected to finish the work in the summer of 2019.

On Tuesday, workers surveyed the sites for the first time. Long said they hope to resume “productive work” within the next few weeks after a clean-up process.

Block Floodplain Land Grab

Eugene (OR) Register-Guard, July 6, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is supposed to help communities recover from disasters. But now the agency is creating a disaster of its own in Oregon by using its insurance program to place floodplains in 271 communities off-limits to development, agriculture and forestry. If FEMA and the agency it claims is forcing its hand won’t back off, Congress will have to intervene.

The areas affected by a de facto moratorium on human activity in floodplains would include Glenwood,

the Eugene Water & Electric Board’s riverfront property, much of the Coast, chunks of Portland’s waterfront and swaths of farm and forest land. It’s not just Oregon’s problem — the rest of the country could soon be under the same restrictions, with Oregon providing a template.

The disaster has its genesis in a lawsuit seven years ago that forced FEMA to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service to ensure that its flood insurance program is compliant with the Endangered Species Act. Like a hurricane gathering force as it approaches landfall, the consultations worked their way through the bureaucratic process, resulting in the final draft of a plan last April that would alter the flood insurance program beyond recognition.

In the course of this process, FEMA has on occasion complained that it is being asked to exceed its legal authority. On other occasions, however, the agency insists that it has no choice but to comply with the directives of NMFS. The fisheries service, for its part, insists that floodplain restrictions are needed to protect endangered salmon and minimize future flood damage.

On Tuesday, the Democratic members of Oregon’s congressional delegation sent a letter to FEMA’s administrator, noting that the agency “will exceed its congressionally authorized authorities by requiring communities to prohibit private development in order to participate” in the flood insurance program. The letter described FEMA as forcing communities to choose between imposing a floodplain development moratorium, or implementing as-yet unspecified floodplain protection measures. Communities that fail to either stop development or adopt the non-existent measures would be subject to enforcement actions.

Rep. Peter DeFazio has taken the lead on this issue, and he sent a letter of his own Tuesday to the regional head of NMFS, recognizing that the fisheries service is the force behind the draft plan. The entire exercise, DeFazio wrote, is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the purpose of the National Flood Insurance Program. “Nothing in the NFIP grants FEMA regulatory authority over land use, and NMFS cannot use the guise of the Endangered Species Act to expand FEMA’s jurisdiction under the NFIP into federal land use regulation,” the letter said.

One reason this issue has attracted so little attention can be divined from DeFazio’s letter: Any discussion of it leads into a briar patch of jargon and acronyms. But it boils down to this: A voluntary program that was designed to insure against flooding

and to discourage development in flood-prone areas is on the verge of becoming a federal instrument for tight control over local land-use decisions. The result, as DeFazio wrote, would be “severe detrimental economic effects” for Oregon’s cities, forests and farms.

The history of litigation over the flood insurance program placed Oregon first in line for the new regulations — ironically so, because Oregon’s statewide land-use planning system provides stronger floodplain protections than can be found in most other states. But the rest of the nation will be affected before long, making it even more important for FEMA, in consultation with NMFS, to ensure that any changes in the flood insurance program are sensible and workable. If FEMA can’t or won’t do that, Congress will have to act.

Human Workplaces Are Changing The Way We Think About Giving And Receiving

By Erica Keswin

Huffington Post, July 6, 2016

In October 2011, two young boys decided to have a bake sale to raise money for charity. Their Father, Chris Russell, who had worked his whole career in the food business and was a passionate chef, agreed to help. The family decided to make mini rice krispie treats and began to forage through the pantry looking for “fun” ingredients, and ended up making three kinds of treats: mint-chocolate cookie, butterscotch sprinkle, and cherry-dark chocolate. The kids set up shop on the corner of 86th Street and Central Park West in NYC and quickly made \$300 dollars and saw repeat customers over the course of two hours. People kept asking where they could buy the treats and couldn’t believe it when the boys said that they had made them. A business was born.

When Chris and his wife, Jennifer Russell finally set up their company, Treat House, it was very important to them that they stay true to their origin story and keep social impact at the heart of their business. After searching for the right fit, a number of friends were affected by cancer, so it felt natural to partner with the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS). Now Treat House provides illustrious rice krispie treats at LLS fundraisers as dessert, or in gift bags (which is also great marketing for the brand). But the most meaningful way they engage with the cause is that for every \$15 dollars raised for LLS, they send out a box of goodies to a low income sufferer of blood cancer. “We are not curing cancer, but if someone is under so much stress they barely able to afford their co-

pays, the treats put a smile on their face.” Chris and Jennifer share the letters and feedback they receive with their staff, so everyone can appreciate the good deed, and its impact.

Companies are increasingly embracing the human need to make a difference. Think Toms, Warby Parker, Kind Bars--businesses that are changing the way we think about giving and receiving. Employees want to feel like they’re making a difference, and be connected to a purpose larger than making a profit. And smart companies, like Treat House, are providing ways for those connections to thrive. Which--it turns out--is good for business.

Here are some stories from companies that I have recently spoken to who are throwing their hats into the social impact ring in three distinct ways: Top-down, bottom-up and inside-out. These are all ways people are bringing their human values to work.

Top Down: Jet Blue’s values inspire giving back and community-wide.

On a recent visit to Jet Blue, I sat down with their “People Team” and talked about how their mission of Inspiring Humanity informs everything they do from who they hire, to how they engage employees, to their social impact work. At first, JetBlue came up with organizations to partner with in the community, but they realized they could make a bigger difference if they allowed crew members to volunteer where they are personally drawn. Rachel, a member of the People team, is an avid runner, so she chose an organization that helps young girls realize their full potential through running. And for every 50 hours of volunteering, crew members receive two tickets on JetBlue to donate to the charity of their choice. This is what JetBlue does on an ongoing basis, but they also respond to in-the-moment needs, as well.

For instance, after Hurricane Sandy, JetBlue responded with its human values front and center. For the local communities, employees brought much needed food trucks to Far Rockaway and provided blankets and other supplies. Crew members who lived in affected areas were automatically sent money to keep them on their feet and were given a month off without worrying about job security. One crew member described standing in line at FEMA to get support. He shared that he allowed other people to jump ahead of him in line because he knew their time off was limited. Being treated as a human being during this stressful time made such a difference, this crew member said he will “bleed blue forever.”

Bottom-Up: Business Talent Group’s Leadership

empowered its Associates to Design its Social Impact Program.

Business Talent Group is a global consulting marketplace that connects exceptional independent talent to the world's top companies to "get critical work done." It's a new way to work, and BTG is leading the charge. The firm has experienced tremendous growth and has hired many Millennials to support that growth. As folks may have heard, in addition to Millennials being concerned about purpose in the workplace, it is also important for this generation to feel like they are doing something for the greater good.

A few of BTG's Millennial associates wanted to do something in their own communities. They brought it to the attention of the leadership team, and were told to make "a business case" and design a program. After doing some searching, the associates chose Junior Achievement because as "business consultants what we are teaching the kids will impact them throughout their lives and careers," and indeed, they are now delivering workshops on entrepreneurship and personal finance to local youngsters. And instead of everyone volunteering on their own time, the BTG Employees decided they wanted to volunteer together. "It's definitely brought the employees in the offices closer together. We gather in one big group, and work toward one shared purpose. A lot of people work remotely so gathering was great for culture and morale."

Other interesting side benefits also came out of the new program. The women who got it off the ground felt that owning the experience was a great leadership development and growth opportunity for them, and they have also found that it is helpful in the recruitment of new talent. It is a win for these employees, a win for the company who needs engaged employees in a tough market, and a win for their local communities.

Inside-Out: Vynamic created a social impact role for a passionate employee

Dan Calista, the CEO of Vynamic, a healthcare consultancy based in Philadelphia wants to create the "healthiest company in the world." And he's on track to do just that, devoted as he is to the health of his employees and to investing in local communities in some fresh and powerful ways.

Laura Pappas joined the company in 2008 as a consultant. Over the years, Laura and Dan had many conversations about her career and interest in wellness. As the company got bigger, Laura approached Dan about turning her passion into a full-time position at Vynamic, which become known as the Health and Care Lead, which Dan agreed to. Dan even paid for her to go back to school to get certified in Nutrition. Now Laura

runs Vynamic's CYOCA--Choose Your Own Community Adventure--Program. From Memorial Day to Labor Day, team members are encouraged to spend time with a local nonprofit of their choice in an effort to create new relationships between Vynamic and its community. In exchange for volunteering, Vynamic donates \$100 to the cause. Dan's hope is that the program can "break the ice" for people who don't think they have time to volunteer and can lead them to taking on a larger social impact role. "This is one way how our company can round out our employees as people."

And here's the thing: In Fortune's List of 100 Best Companies to Work for, companies with social impact programs are increasingly highlighted. Now, will JetBlue's 150,000 volunteer hours in 2015 change the world? I can't say. But changing the way we think about profit and loss--giving and receiving--not to mention being human at work, certainly will. And you don't have to be a giant to begin to make an offering. Even small companies are getting into the game. The June edition of Inc. magazine profiled the Best Places to Work with up to 500 employees. Even in small businesses that are focusing on making payroll and staying afloat, 74% give time off for volunteering.

Let's face it. The days of accepting work as a soul-crushing Dilbert-esque nightmare are coming to a close. And while all the small acts of kindness and community-building are exciting, the best news is that this trend is seriously catching on, and has the potential to truly change the way we think about and take care of all of our human business.

I'm in! Are you?

– Erica Keswin

OPR Consulting Firm.

Follow Erica Keswin on Twitter:
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Comments

From Our Partners Presented by LendingTree

FEMA HOUSING

FEMA Offers A Number Of Grants And Loans

By Daniel Tyson

[Beckley \(WV\) Register-Herald](#), July 7, 2016

As flood recovery continues, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has boots on the ground with programs to assist victims in regaining a semblance their former lives.

FEMA and state agencies are now operating nine Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) in impacted areas, where affected residents and business owners can

receive face-to-face, one-on-one help with an array of relief and recovery-related assistance and services. The DRCs are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily.

FEMA's Disaster Survivors Assistance teams man the DRCs to help impacted residents. Renee Bafalis, a media relations specialist for FEMA, said teams have also fanned out to displacement shelters to assist victims who may have trouble visiting a DRC.

As of Tuesday evening, FEMA had registered nearly 6,000 people and provided more than \$18 million in assistance.

The agency is aware of a number of scams occurring in which victims are asked for personal information over the telephone.

Bafalis said FEMA only asks for personal information when victims register for assistance. If someone calls claiming to be a FEMA representative, Bafalis suggests the victim ask the caller about the registration number that was assigned when they signed up for assistance.

"Always protect yourself," she warned. "FEMA does not ask for personal information when doing followups."

Also, every FEMA employee will have identification, as well as wearing FEMA logoed clothing. Claim inspectors, who are contractors, will also have proper identification, she said.

As of Tuesday evening, FEMA's 67 field inspectors had inspected more than 4,700 structures and issued more than \$15 million in housing assistance funding.

Bafalis noted that there is a growing frustration by victims about documentation need to register for assistance. Many had official documents washed away by floodwaters and are wondering how they to obtain the correct legal papers to file a claim.

Bafalis said there are ways to obtain the documentation needed. Victims need to show a Social Security number, insurance information and proof of ownership or occupancy.

"We understand a lot of folks lost everything," she said.

She suggested the victims work with county administrators who can help with tax information, showing ownership of a house, contact the county's Emergency Operations Center, which will have proof of the victim's address or contact the mortgage company. If the victim is a renter, contact the landlord who can provide a copy of the lease, Bafalis.

FEMA also suggests having a description of damages before filing a claim; photos are best, she said.

When filing a claim, victims should have a current telephone number and an address where mail can be received, Bafalis suggested.

If the victim wants direct deposit, have banking information, including routing and account numbers.

FEMA is offering essential home repair grants in varying amounts to the victims, said Bafalis.

"The catastrophic weather that affected West Virginia did not discriminate between homeowners and renters and neither do we," said Federal Coordinating Officer Albert Lewis, who leads FEMA's mission in the Mountain State.

Renters and homeowners may be eligible for grants from FEMA to help with such disaster-related expenses as renting a new place to live when the victim's previous home was lost due to the disaster; disaster-related medical and dental expenses; replacement or repair of necessary personal property lost or damaged in the disaster, such as appliances and furniture, textbooks and computers used by students, and work equipment or tools used by the self-employed; repair or replacement of vehicles damaged by the disaster and disaster-related funeral and burial expenses.

FEMA grants are not loans and do not have to be repaid. They are not taxable income and will not affect eligibility for Social Security, Medicaid, welfare assistance, SNAP benefits and several other programs.

Grants are also available to aid the repair of damaged privately owned access roads and bridges through FEMA's Individuals and Households program. The survivor must meet all basic eligibility criteria for the Individuals and Households Program assistance, is the homeowner and the home is their primary residence.

The survivor meets at least one additional requirement: the road/bridge is the only access to the property, the home cannot be accessed due to damaged infrastructure, the safety of the occupants could be adversely affected because emergency services vehicles, such as ambulances or fire trucks, could not reach the residence. However, this will only be considered if access was available prior to the disaster.

Additionally, victims may qualify for low-interest loans of up to \$40,000 from the SBA to repair or replace personal property.

SBA loans are key to obtaining funding, said Bafalis. She explained after a inspection, the claim is turned over to FEMA officials who decided to approve or deny it.

A decision is mailed normally within seven to 10 days. Included in some responses is an SBA loan

packet that should be filled out. If the original claim is denied, send the SBA packet back completed for additional consideration.

“Your basically leaving money on the table” if the packet is not filed out and returned, she said.

SBA loans are open to homeowners, renters and business owners. The interest is about 1.5 percent, she said.

The SBA has opened two business recovery center in impacted areas. One is at the Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corp., 804 Industrial Park, Suite 5, Maxwelton. It’s open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Business Recovery Center is offering help to businesses and non-profit organizations applying for disaster loans.

FEMA Assistance

By Jessie Slater

WOAY-TV Bluefield (WV), July 7, 2016

CHARLESTON-- Twelve teams of disaster survivor assistance specialists are now working in affected areas across West Virginia, helping survivors of the devastating floods, mudslides and landslides that began on June 22.

The teams are made up of disaster specialists from the federal emergency management agency. Using the latest mobile technology DSA teams can register survivors with disaster assistance, update their records and make referrals to whole community partners. Team members tailor the information and services they provide to the individual survivor’s needs.

By registering with FEMA, survivors may qualify for federal disaster assistance such as:

Grants to rent a temporary place to live

Grants for essential home repairs not covered by insurance

Grants for disaster-related needs not covered by insurance – such as medical, dental, transportation, funeral expenses, moving and storage fees, personal property loss and child care

Like all FEMA field personnel, team members carry official identification. Residents are encouraged to ask for official identification before providing personal information.

To find current shelter locations for displaced survivors who need a place to stay overnight,

Please call the American red cross at 800-red-cross or download the FEMA app on a mobile device.

FEMA Opens More Recovery Centers

By Rachel Ayers

WOAY-TV Bluefield (WV), July 6, 2016

OAK HILL-- Disaster specialists from across the country are in southern West Virginia to help flood victims start to rebuild.

FEMA has brought in twelve teams of disaster survivor assistance specialists to help flood victims register for aid. All home and business owners and renters are encouraged to register for help through FEMA. By registering you may qualify for grants to rent temporary housing, grants for home repairs not covered by insurance, and grants for disaster related needs such as medical, transportation, funeral expenses and more. If you do not qualify for grants though FEMA, the Small Business Authority will also be on hand at disaster relief centers to help business owners and individuals apply for loans through the SBA. Both FEMA and SBA representatives say going through this process is not as difficult as some may believe.

“Once people register they will get a call from an inspector who going to make an appointment to come and review the losses and damages in your house,” FEMA representative Maria Padron said.

“Home owners and renters must register with FEMA first. They will go through an initial evaluation, based on their answers they may be referred to the SBA. If they are, they will be contacted by the SBA to find out the best way for them to complete their application,” SBA representative Michael Peacock said.

FEMA disaster relief sites are already open at Clay County High School and Nicholas County High School. The last day to register for FEMA is august 24th.

Harris County Added For Individual Assistance For May Floods

Cypress Creek (TX) Mirror, July 6, 2016

The federal government has granted a disaster request for Individual Assistance for Harris County residents who sustained damage or loss from the storms and flooding May 26-June 24.

In addition, more Harris County residents may be eligible for disaster assistance with the announced extension of the Tax Day Flood disaster declaration for severe storms and flooding. The new incident period is April 17-30, 2016. Harris County Added to May Floods Declaration

Harris County has been added to the June 11th federal disaster declaration that now includes 23 other Texas counties affected by severe weather May 26-June 24.

FEMA assistance may include grants for homeowners and renters to help pay for rent, temporary

housing and home repairs, as well as other serious disaster-related needs, such as medical and dental expenses or funeral and burial costs.

Low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) also are available. SBA helps businesses of all sizes, private non-profit organizations, homeowners and renters fund repairs or rebuilding efforts and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover losses not fully compensated by insurance or other recoveries and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations.

Residents can apply for FEMA assistance online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or call 800-621-3362 toll free from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily until further notice. Multilingual operators are available. Incident Period Extension

Survivors who previously registered with FEMA for damage between April 17-27, whose applications were not fully processed, will be automatically reviewed.

Applicants already registered with FEMA, who had additional damage between April 27-30, should call FEMA at 800-621-3362 to receive an evaluation on whether they may be eligible for additional aid.

Meyerland Residents Wait For City To Approve Funding For Elevating Flood-prone Homes

By Syan Rhodes

KPRC-TV Houston, July 6, 2016

HOUSTON – Twice-flooded homeowners in Meyerland are demanding answers from the state and the city of Houston about why they have yet to receive federal grant money to elevate their homes.

Chris Bisel is just weeks away from finishing repairs and renovations on his home, which sits just a block from Braes Bayou, after it flooded on Memorial Day 2015 and Tax Day 2016.

“It was pretty traumatic, most everything got washed away,” Bisel said.

He applied for a FEMA elevation grant that would be distributed by the Texas Water Development Board and the City of Houston to raise his house 4 feet.

“I applied in June 2015. In October 2015, we were told we were one of 42 candidate homes and we were 18 on that list,” he said.

In February 2016, FEMA approved \$15.3 million in funds for the Texas Water Development Board and the city to pass on to homeowners. The city said the TWDB received the funds in March, and in a statement to Channel 2 a city spokesperson wrote:

“Currently, the City of Houston staff is working with the Texas Water Development Board on the contract/agreement for the City to receive the federal funds. The agreement is expected to go to City Council in late July/early August for consideration. Following City Council approval, contact will be made with the property owners included in the grant to hold a General Meeting to explain the process for securing the funds, finding qualified contractors, securing proper building and floodplain permits and payment processing to complete the work. At that time individual property owners will be working with city staff on their specific property issues and the grants for their home elevation project. Overall time period for completion of work under the grant is approximately 18 months.”

Bisel says the city’s flood management office has told him work won’t begin until January 2017 at the earliest.

The city says the overall time period for completion of work once it starts is about 18 months.

2016 Click2Houston/KPRC2

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

NFIP Panel Tackles Inaccurate Flood Maps, Lack Of Private Insurers

By Lyle Adriano

Insurance Business America, July 6, 2016

More private insurers should participate and flood map inaccuracies must be rectified—both were the major points in a Congress panel held Thursday discussing the future of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

Sen. David Vitter, R-La., called the hearing. The Senate panel interviewed members of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and small business leaders, looking for ways to improve upon the flood insurance program.

“Going forward, we need to find a way to deal with the solvency of the NFIP in a responsible way” without placing “this burden solely on the back of policyholders,” said Vitter. “It is important that we examine how FEMA spends every dollar of premiums paid into the system.”

Vitter believes that private insurers resorted to “cherry picking”—choosing policies with the lowest risk and leaving the federal program with the higher-risk ones—hence the solvency issues with the NFIP.

To this, Association of State Floodplain Managers chair Ceil Strauss suggested that private insurers only be allowed to operate in areas that use the NFIP. She also recommended that Congress assess a fee on

insurers to help pay for the ongoing mapping of floodplains under a provision in Senate Bill 1679.

While the NFIP is up for reauthorization in September next year, it is facing a \$23 debt resulting from the various disasters the program had to cover for the past 11 years, reported nola.com.

Changes to the NFIP would greatly affect Southeast Louisiana—particularly New Orleans, which was subjected to intense flooding during the onset of Hurricane Katrina. When FEMA altered the city's flood map in 2012 and 2013, the modifications nearly made flood insurance premiums in certain areas skyrocket. Public outcry forced FEMA to revise the flood map, moving more than half of the city's properties previously classified under "special flood hazard areas" out of the designation. City Council approved this iteration of the flood map in May.

After Sandy, Congress passed the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 in an attempt to assess flood risks more accurately, among other things. The law, however, sought to achieve this by increasing rates for policyholders by as much as 25%, threatening the real estate and construction industries as well.

"The worst thing in real estate is uncertainty, and that's what it created," commented Baton Rouge-based real estate broker David McKey during the hearing.

During the hearing, senators asked FEMA deputy associate administrator Roy Wright to take note of the methods North and South Carolina used to map their floodplains and to consider allowing the states to have a hand in creating the flood maps.

Floodplain Relief Coming To La Crosse This Fall

By Jourdan Vian

La Crosse (WI) Tribune, July 6, 2016

City officials moved forward Tuesday with a program, slated to get going in the fall, to help La Crosse property owners raise their homes out of the floodplain.

The Floodplain Advisory Committee unanimously approved a resolution to create the program, which would benefit the estimated 1,800 structures in the floodplain, as they hammered out eligibility details and discussed ways to resolve potential conflicts that could arise as the city works to offset the burden to its residents caused by high-risk flood insurance.

If the resolution is approved by the La Crosse Common Council later this month, the city would offer 50 percent up to \$20,000 for projects that result in a successful letter of map revision which states that FEMA agrees the structure is no longer in the high-risk

flood area. To be eligible, a property would need to have an assessed value of more than \$50,000 and be located within the city of La Crosse.

La Crosse City Planner Jason Gilman's main concern as the city works out the details is to keep program as accessible as possible.

"I don't want to make the program so complex and intimidating that no one uses it," Gilman said.

Gilman proposed the program earlier this year to improve the economic stability and health and safety of residents of La Crosse's North Side. Homeowners no longer encumbered with a flood insurance bill for hundreds of dollars per month have greater financial flexibility if they stay in their homes and a better negotiating position when it comes time to sell the property. It also enhances the neighborhood by encouraging investment in homes.

Gilman added that if the worst should happen and the city does have a levy breach, there would also be fewer people in danger.

In the vein of keeping the program simple, the committee voted 5-1 against allowing the program to apply retroactively, which would have given people who have invested in related projects within the past year or so to utilize the funds. Council member Jai Johnson cast the dissenting vote, saying it would be more equitable to set a time period for people who have taken on the financial burden of raising property out of the floodplain some relief.

Eligibility for the program will also include a component that will take into account the impact on neighboring properties, particularly when it comes to stormwater drainage.

"If you lift the house up and it's draining onto a low point in the neighbors' property or next to their foundations, we don't want that," Gilman said.

Gilman also expects more subjective effects on neighbors, who might object to possible property value impacts associated with elevating adjacent homes.

Council member Ryan Cornett suggested bringing applicants before the committee on a case-by-case basis, saying if neighbors object, "They'd come to this group and plead their case."

City staff is also working with Wipfli LLC to research the possible income tax repercussions to people approved for the program.

"We're going to look at all the options to make sure we don't kick that can down the road only to have a citizen get really upset that they end up paying taxes on that," Gilman said.

Floodplain manager Doug Kern said he's had more than 15 people express interest in applying for the

program, which is expected to open for applicants in September or October after funding was approved by the La Crosse Common Council in June.

Proposed Flood Plain Update Could Change Boundaries

By Katie Collins

Brush (CO) News-Tribune, July 6, 2016

Members of the Colorado Conservation Board and City of Brush! will seek public commentary on proposed changes to the current flood plain at a public meeting scheduled for Tuesday, July 12. The open house will be held at the Mark Arndt Event Center at the Morgan County Fairgrounds. (Courtesy photo)

Since 1973, Morgan County has participated in the National Flood Insurance program which makes use of maps made in 1977 to outline the local floodplain. Although revised in 1981, those maps have remained largely unchanged for the past 35 years, despite the many updates experienced in the area through that time period. The maps and their drawn borders are utilized by community officials when planning for development and emergency management, to determine evacuation routes for critical care facilities and to set flood insurance rates for property owners.

Although the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) began a map modernization program in 2001, a lack of funding ended that initiative in 2008, halfway through the completion of Colorado area maps. In an effort to identify current and more accurate flood risks in the area, the Colorado Water Conservation Board signed up as a partner and in 2009 the program transitioned into the Risk Map Program, the agency took the FEMA maps and expanded them to provide in-depth and up-to-date floodplain risk awareness to community officials and citizens and to provide better assistance in flood mitigation.

“When we began the update, it was mainly an effort to convert from paper to digital offerings for all of Morgan County,” said Thuy Patton, E.I., CFM, who works as a Floodplain Mapping Coordinator for the Colorado Water Conservation Board. “However, when we met with many communities, we found that local flood data was incorrect and the topography was bad.

A map revision analysis was done and we incorporated that into the large scale map update, and distributed those preliminary maps to Morgan County Communities on March 16 of this year,” she continued as she spoke before the Brush City Council on Monday night.

Patton noted that two main items had stood out from that study concerning Brush, including a change

in flow rates, which found discharge had been reduced by 30 percent since the 1970s Beaver Creek study, going from 55,200 cubic feet per second to 32,400. The second big change found was that the original study hadn’t included all five structures that cross of the Beaver Creek in and around the city of Brush.

With the newly updated maps now complete, officials from the Colorado Conservation Board are seeking public commentary on the new borders that now include 100-year floodplain limits as well as 500-year areas. Among the many changes to the borders are many surrounding Mill Street, with those north of it possibly due to experience an increase in risk, and those south somewhat of a decrease.

As the new maps will also be used to set flood insurance premiums, National Flood Insurance Program Coordinator Stephanie DiBetitto also presented information, noting that one common misconception is that flood insurance is only available to those in high risk flood areas.

“Anyone can purchase flood insurance,” said DiBetitto, “and with the updated map, we have a better idea of the risks. With 25-percent of flood-related claims occurring outside of special flood hazard areas, it is a good idea to purchase flood insurance options, no matter where your property lies within the borders.”

According to DiBetitto, situations that could affect Brush property owners might include a move from high to low risk areas, which may allow for better insurance rates, as well as a move from low to high risk areas.

“By purchasing insurance before the map goes into effect, those low to high risk property owners may have the chance to secure a preferred rate policy, and that opportunity will still be available within 12 months of the maps going into effect.”

More information on the changes, the map history and on insurance rates and policies that could be affected by the map update will be available to all during a public open house, set to be held on Tuesday, July 12 starting at 4 p.m. at the Morgan County Fairgrounds’ Mark Arndt Events Center in Brush.

There, officials from the National Flood Insurance Program, the Colorado Water Conservation Board, FEMA and local officials will be on hand to help citizens understand the changes and how it may affect them. An interactive map that allows community members to plug in their address online to see where their properties lie within the new map borders will be made available there along with stations that will provide one-on-one assistance for anyone interested.

Following the open house, officials will post two publications in the Brush News-Tribune and Fort Morgan Times, and a 90-day appeal period will follow the second publication, in which anyone concerned can submit a technically based appeal. A period of resolving those issues will follow, should any arise. A date will set in which the map will officially go into effect and during the Monday night meeting, Patton proposed that date will likely lie somewhere in June of 2017.

More information on the updated maps, including links to the 1981 and current maps and to a video of the Monday night presentation, are posted on the City of Brush website at www.brushcolo.com and can be obtained by visiting City Hall at 600 Edison Street. Information from the Colorado Water Conservation Board can be found online at www.cwcb.state.co.us and on the National Flood Insurance Program at www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart. Updates can also be found by following www.brushnewstribune.com.

Skirvin Farms Annexation Moves Forward To Council

Corvallis (OR) Gazette-Times, July 6, 2016

When local resident and real estate broker Maryln Weaver sat down in front of the microphone during a June 20 public hearing before the Philomath Planning Commission, he had a few clarifications to share on the Skirvin Farms LLC application to annex 22.84 acres into the city.

Weaver, who represents the property's owners, Paul and Lola Skirvin, opposed wording in the annexation application's staff report, which says "if approved by the Philomath electorate, will allow the owner to develop the property with theoretically 113 homes, though there is no current intent to relocate the rodeo grounds."

Weaver prefers that the possible home development statement to be excluded from the staff report because he's concerned how that would sound to voters this fall.

"I don't think anybody in Philomath believes that's even theoretically possible because it's all in a flood plain ... It's almost easier to make a theoretical statement that no residential lots will go in there because of the flood plain," said Weaver, who is related to the Skirvins by marriage.

The planning commission later forwarded the application to the city council, which will hold a public hearing on both the Skirvin Farms and Chapel Drive annexations at its 7 p.m. meeting Monday. If the city

council moves it forward, the issue will appear on this fall's ballot.

The applicant in its annexation paperwork pointed out that Skirvin Farms has no plans to change the present use with this to be "the first step in preserving the Rodeo and Frolic tradition on this site for a very long time."

An extra twist to the Skirvin Farms situation involves a recent federal recommendation in response to a lawsuit from environmental groups. The National Flood Insurance Program, run by Federal Emergency Management Agency and administered by Congress, is a federally subsidized program for building and development in flood plains. Through the opinion, FEMA has been directed to map out flood plains and faces pressure to prevent development in those areas.

In Oregon, 251 communities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program would be affected.

Jim Minard, Philomath city planner, explained to Weaver that city code requires him to evaluate a property with maximum possible density, an equation that led to the 113-home figure. Minard said the Skirvins could submit additional evidence indicating that the land could not be developed based on flood plain issues.

"We're a little concerned about that theoretical aspect when we go to the voters because there's no development planned at this point. Nobody's looking to do a development plan right now," Weaver said. "We fully expect we're going to work something out with the rodeo people but we have some concern that people that might not support this annexation if they think it can put 113 lots down there and they might vote against it."

The Frolic and Rodeo submitted a letter as testimony in favor of the annexation that stated "no terms of a future sale have officially been made, but we foresee two issues related to zoning which would prohibit us from purchasing the rodeo grounds if this annexation does not get approved."

Chris Workman, Frolic and Rodeo president, said previously that those two issues involve 5 acres on the north side that sits higher and has greater value for future development, and also the 1.8 acres currently leased to Weist Logging, which holds greater value.

If the annexation fails, the rodeo would not be able to make its preferred 16-acre acquisition because county zoning minimums would not allow those two lots to be partitioned off.

"I can assure you that Paul and Lola in the very beginning have directed me only to see if the city has any interest in this property in part or total or if the

rodeo people have any interest in part or total or any variation thereafter,” Weaver said. “We have had some discussions with the rodeo people and made what we thought was an outstanding proposal, which they rejected because they didn’t want the shop building.”

Weaver made reference to an incorrect map in the application package, but Minard explained it was a “testimony map” submitted by the Frolic and Rodeo in support of the application and has no real bearing on the map submitted by the Skirvins.

“This other map may end up how it ends up getting negotiated ... but we don’t know that yet,” Weaver said. “In other words, that’s what the rodeo people want but the applicant — we don’t have an agreement with the parties yet.”

While moving the application forward, the planning commission struck a paragraph, which Weaver said made inaccurate references to the rodeo grounds, some residential development and future of the 1.8 acres.

One person spoke during the public hearing with a neighbor’s daughter testifying as a proponent, but expressing concerns about people living downstream and how any changes could impact their properties.

In an entirely separate issue, the planning commission also advanced a zoning code amendment that places restrictions on the location of a jail or correctional facility.

MITIGATION

Armstead Calls For Review Of Flood Protection Plan

By Ken Ward

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, July 5, 2016

West Virginia lawmakers need to revisit a more than decade-old flood protection plan to find ways to avoid a repeat of disaster that killed at least 23 people and devastated parts of a dozen counties, House Speaker Tim Armstead said Tuesday.

“Given the recent devastation, I am certainly interested in doing what we can as a Legislature to help mitigate future disasters,” Armstead, R-Kanawha, said in a prepared statement.

Armstead said he would like to have a “comprehensive review” of the flood protection plan added as a study topic for legislative interim committee meetings.

“I believe, given recent events, that it would be prudent for us to bring this plan back before lawmakers for discussion and review to see what aspects of the

plan have been implemented and what can be done going forward,” Armstead said.

Armstead made his statement following a Sunday Gazette-Mail article that described how a multi-agency task force spent years putting together a West Virginia Statewide Flood Protection Plan only to have legislation to carry on the group’s work die and no comprehensive implementation of the plan’s dozens of recommendations ever take place.

The 365-page plan, released in December 2004, included a wide variety of broad-bush recommendations, as well as dozens of specific proposals for better management of flood-plain construction, improved flood warnings, tougher building codes, new regulations on mining and timbering, more rigorous stormwater flow management, new rules for flood insurance and better public education efforts.

“Even implementing all of the recommendations provided in this plan will not completely eliminate the risk of flooding,” the report concluded. “However, implementing the recommendations included in this plan will reduce the flood-related risks to lives and properties in West Virginia.”

Also Tuesday, Armstead announced two community meetings later this week to provide information on flood-relief efforts and to answer residents’ questions about aid programs and recovery plans.

The meetings are being organized in conjunction with local, state and federal officials and agencies participating in recovery efforts in the area, according to a press release from Armstead’s office.

The first meeting will take place at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Clendenin Volunteer Fire Department, located at 109 Maywood Ave. East. The second meeting will take place at 7 p.m. Friday at Elkview Baptist Church, located at 1150 Main St.

“Our fire departments, first responders, law enforcement officers, agencies, churches and thousands of volunteers have done so much over the past few weeks to help residents begin the recovery process,” Armstead said. “As we look to the future and the tremendous work that still must be done, my hope is that these meetings will help residents, organizations and small business owners find the information they need to move forward from this tragedy as quickly as possible.”

Officials Eye Hazardous Mitigation Plan For Town

By Phyllis Booth

The Landmark (MA), July 7, 2016

A preliminary natural hazardous Mitigation Plan that was compiled with the help of town staff and the Central Mass. Regional Planning Commission and Homeland Security was introduced at the June 27 selectman's meeting.

The plan was developed through a FEMA/MEMA grant, said Trish Settles from CMRPC, who explained that her group met with people from Princeton to develop a plan that would look at how natural disaster affects a community and how it can be mitigated.

"What's really important is you have to have this plan in place in order for FEMA to consider giving you a grant," she said.

Having a plan in place for best practices opens the door to MEMA and FEMA funding, said Andrew Loew, Principal Planner Municipal Collaboration for CMRPC. He said there was a collaboration with Andrew Dufresne and John Bennett from the fire department and other fire department members, the police, planning board, conservation commission, highway and light departments.

"This relates to all departments in the town," he said. All facilities in town were mapped out, including day care, elderly housing and school, he added. "Local knowledge helps us map out a community," said Loew. Most town have flooding issues but here, heavy snowfall and wildfires could be a concern because there is a large wilderness space, a small fire department and no municipal water system, he added.

Other hazardous threats to Princeton include drought, earthquakes, winter storms, hurricanes, tropical storms, severe thunderstorms and tornadoes.

"We had our first meeting in December 2014," said Lowe. "We're looking for public comment and will have the working draft of the plan on our website."

The public will have a two-week window to submit comments. Loew said the plan will be reviewed by MEMA and then sent to FEMA for approval. It may take 90 days and once that has been done the plan will come back in the fall for the town's approval and adoption of the plan which is good for five years, said Loew.

Settles said a survey was put on line last November and they had 80 responses which is a strong representative from a town she noted.

Hazardous mitigation is an effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of natural disasters. It is not a disaster response; its goal is to reduce hazard impacts before a disaster occurs by identifying natural hazards, the risks they pose,

prioritize projects, policies, education and procedures for reducing the risks.

Loew said part of the education process is to explain to residents how to run generators in the event of a power outage, distribute information regarding earthquakes and wildfires, investigate the implementation of a tornado warning system, review local plans and policies to ensure new construction will not occur in flood prone areas. "Princeton is less susceptible than many other towns regarding floods because you are so high," said Loew.

Adoption of the plan establishes a road map for achievable actions that can substantially reduce risks, and formal approval of the plan by FEMA allows the town to receive non-emergency federal disaster assistance and mitigation funding.

Some of the activities already under way to mitigate problems during a disaster include the light departments tree trimming program to protect utility lines, grant applications for improvements to emergency operations center, Code Red notifications, and collaboration with DCR of fire access roads in state conservation lands for fire control purposes.

Some of the recommendations in the draft plan include: repair of the Worcester Road water hole used by the fire department. Select board chairman Stan Moss said repair of the water hole has run into problems due to the sediment in the pond and the testing of those and the expense associated with that. He also noted a fire along the railroad tracks in the past that required an all out response from surrounding communities and the cost of fighting that fire. There are railroad ties all along the tracks that are soaked with creosote, he said. "Can we do anything about that?"

"It seems like it's just making a fire hazard," said Settles.

Lowe said other mitigation activities are the new roof at fire station II, replacing emergency generators at key town facilities, installing lightning rods at public safety buildings, repair warning sirens, improving drainage on Hobbs, Ball Hill and Sterling Roads, rebuilding unpaved roadways, continue to work with DCR on fire access roads, participate in flood hazard training, coordinate roadway information, snow removal and evacuation plans among state and local officials.

We've worked with 60 towns to develop evacuation planning and looked at highway access and met with fire chief John Bennett to discuss that, not just about Princeton but also the abutting towns, said Settles. "Towns should have that plan on a thumb drive," she added.

We're working with the fire department on an emergency management plan to list all our resources and how to find transportation if necessary, said Town Administrator Nina Nazarian.

Breckenridge Police Chief Harder Resigns, His Last Day Is Aug. 5

By Carrie McDermott

Wahpeton (ND) Daily News, July 6, 2016

With regret, the Breckenridge City Council accepted the resignation of Breckenridge Police Chief Nate Harder, effective Aug. 5, during their meeting Tuesday night. He has accepted a position with another agency near the Twin Cities.

"I personally want to thank the chief, he has told me more than once that without my support, he wouldn't have gotten a lot of things done. I find that to be the opposite," Mayor Cliff Barth said. "Without his support, we wouldn't have gotten a lot of things done. Chief, you've been phenomenal as far as what you've brought to this community. The way you've worked with this community, become part of the community, taking your rock wall around, training your officers. Your officers have been fantastic, the way they operate, protect us and themselves. I can't say enough. Thank you, I hate to lose you."

"This one hurts," added Alderman Jason Butts. "I thought we had a diamond in the rough up here in Breckenridge with the chief. You're going to get a series of accolades over the next month and every one of them is well deserved and heart-felt. It always seemed that whatever you did came from a place of trying to make Breckenridge better. I'm really going to miss you and think most people will."

"It's rare that a department head is as loved and respected by the people he supervises as he is with the people he serves and you really are," Alderman Stacy Hennen said. "You've been an incredible asset to the city of Breckenridge and you'll be greatly missed."

City Administrator Marthaler said Harder has looked out for the city, he's been extremely thrifty and he's set the bar high.

"I have confidence the officers that have worked under the chief have been well trained," Barth added, "and ready to step up and do their job."

Harder said he appreciated the kind words.

"This is a healthy environment because you guys have made it a healthy environment," Harder said. "It's like the expression, 'I hate to break up the band,' but I do feel like this is Team Breckenridge. This place is going to be just fine without me, because of the council and how supportive they are and the team that's in front

of me right now. Any success that's happened here is because of you guys and these officers here."

In other action, a public hearing was held during the meeting concerning Catholic Health Initiatives' bond issuance.

Jessica M.J. Zaiger, shareholder with Polsinelli PC law firm, explained the bonds via telephone during the meeting. The bonds will be used to both refinance bonds that were previously issued and new bonds. A portion of the proceeds will be used in the city. As a result, the federal income tax code requires that the public hearing is held and they get approval from a local jurisdiction.

There is no obligation to the city in terms of debt and no levy on taxes.

The city has done this previously, most recently in 2008.

"There is less than half a million (dollars) of routine capital expenditure that we think may be used to finance local projects, primarily equipment for the hospital," she explained, although it had not been finalized yet.

The resolution was approved by the council concerning the bonds.

The projects are, or will be owned and operated by CHI St. Francis Home, CHI St. Francis Health and/or their affiliates or subsidiaries and consist of the acquisition, construction, renovation and equipping of certain capital projects at 2400 St. Francis Drive and/or 601 Oak St., Breckenridge, Minnesota, the resolution states.

Breckenridge Community Education Director and Superintendent of Schools Diane Cordes and Arly Ohm, outgoing youth director, gave an update on the recreation program. The city contributes \$75,000 annually to the school district to help run the programs, which go year-round. In addition to the city's contribution, every activity charges a fee for student participation.

The fees, along with the funds from the city, pay for all salaries — the director, position coordinators, clerical staff, custodial staff — along with other costs associated with putting on the activities.

The programs are for all youth in the community and those within the school district. Attendance at a certain school is not a requirement to participate, Cordes explained.

The council reviewed the program's revenue over the past three years as well as expenditures. Summaries of youth participation, which are increasing, were also reviewed.

“Two of the new classes are in the STEM area – science, technology, engineering and math – we’re introducing two summer rec activities in that area,” she said, noting that the program is adding academic- and enrichment-oriented courses along with the traditional athletics offerings.

Cordes directed anyone with questions about the recreation program to contact her at the Breckenridge School District. Ohm has been hired as the head high school basketball coach and the search has begun to fill the youth director position.

“It’s a big position and will take a special person to fill those shoes,” Cordes said.

Ohm said even though enrollment is decreasing, participation is increasing.

“It’s been neat to see how the city can work with the school, all the volunteers, it’s amazing,” he said.

Barth noted the successful partnership between the city and school district regarding the recreation programs. He also read a recognition of Ohm regarding his work on the Jefferson Park renovations.

Tom McSparron, West Central Initiative, gave an Endowment Fund presentation. The city has committed a total of \$46,000 through the years as a partner to the organization, which works to strengthen the economy of the region.

The final pay request from Tradesmen Construction, Inc., for the City Hall repairs project, in the amount of \$3,500, was approved. City Administrator Marthaler noted that not all final costs are in, there are still some outstanding bills for landscaping and signage, but it looks like the City Hall project will end up about \$100,000 under budget.

Hennen thanked the city staff for their diligence in making sure the project costs stayed within budget and that the city didn’t end up paying extra for items that they weren’t responsible for.

“I appreciate that and think the people who live here appreciate that, that you’re paying attention to how we’re spending their money,” she said.

Bills and claims through July 5 for the city, totaling \$43,063.71, were reviewed and approved. Bills and claims for public utilities through the same period, totaling \$22,226.39, were also reviewed and approved.

Election judges for the Primary Election on Aug. 9 and the General Election on Nov. 8 were appointed by the council.

The next City Council meeting will be at 5:30 p.m. Monday, July 18. Representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and FEMA will be at the meeting to take questions regarding flood protection

around the city. The public is encouraged to attend, Barth said.

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

City Assistant Fire Chief Completes FEMA Program

Martinsville (VA) Bulletin, July 6, 2016

Martinsville Assistant Fire Chief Troy “Greg” Reeves has successfully completed the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) U.S. Fire Administration’s National Fire Academy (USFA) Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP).

“The intensive EFOP is designed to provide senior fire officers with a broad perspective on various facets of fire administration,” according to U.S. Fire Administrator Ernest Mitchell, Jr. “This program provides fire service officers with the expertise they need to succeed in today’s challenging environment.”

Each of the four courses required a written Applied Research Project (ARP) to demonstrate application of course theory and concepts to real-life situations within the student’s own organization, according to a news release from the City of Martinsville. Each of these projects was evaluated through a formal process, and progression through the program was contingent on completion of each project.

Mitchell also stated, “It is important that these senior fire executives apply what they have learned in the classroom to existing situations in their own communities. This makes completion of the EFOP and the Applied Research Projects particularly valuable to these fire service leaders.

Six months after completion of each of the courses, the EFOP participants were required to complete an ARP in their own organization. The required executive-level courses are:

Executive Development: The entry-level course emphasizes team development and consensus decision-making to enhance organizational effectiveness.

Executive Analysis of Community Risk Reduction: A mixture of philosophy and application, the course teaches the value of community risk reduction and the process of applying risk reduction to the community. It involves developing partnerships with the community to implement programs, initiatives, and services that prevent and/or mitigate the risk of human made or natural disasters. Traditional fire prevention programs also are addressed.

Executive Analysis of Fire Service Operations in Emergency Management: Administration of incident response in light of the Federal Response Plan, the

Integrated Emergency Management System, emergency operation center functions, planning, documentation, are some of the topics covered.

Executive Leadership: The course examines all aspects of executive-level leadership and ties together the educational experience of the three previous years.

There have been nearly 4,000 individuals that have graduated from the EFOP, of which 190 are from Virginia. Martinsville has had six chief fire officers complete the program. Those officers are Fire Chief Clarence Monday (retired) – 2002, Deputy Fire Chief Kris Shrader – 2012, Fire Chief Kenneth Draper (retired) – 2013, Assistant Fire Chief Dan Howell – 2014, Assistant Fire Chief Bill Hooper (retired) – 2015, and Assistant Fire Chief Greg Reeves – 2015.

Assistant Fire Chief Reeves was formally recognized for his accomplishment in completing the EFOP with his family and peers over lunch at the department on Wednesday.

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

DHS Announces \$10M In Countering Violent Extremism Grants

Homeland Security Today, July 6, 2016

On the heels of the devastating terrorist attacks in Orlando and Istanbul last month, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on Wednesday announced \$10 million in federal grants for local communities to combat homegrown violent extremism.

The Fiscal Year 2016 Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Grant Program will support and scale local community efforts to prevent radicalization, counter extremist propaganda, and curb terrorist recruitment efforts. The program specifically targets those communities that have been targeted by violent extremists.

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson stressed that these grants could play an important role in building community resilience. State, local and tribal governments, as well as non-profit organizations and institutions of higher education, are eligible to apply.

“As I have said before, given the nature of the evolving terrorist threat, building bridges to local communities is as important as any of our other homeland security missions,” said Johnson. “This new grant program is an important step forward in these efforts and reflects the Department’s continued commitment to protect the homeland and uphold our values.”

In addition, the CVE Grant Program seeks to develop and support US efforts to combat the online

recruitment efforts of violent extremists. Foreign terrorist organizations and domestic terrorists are increasingly using social media and other on-line tools to recruit and inspire individuals to action.

As Homeland Security Today previously reported, it is no secret that social networking sites have become hotbeds for terrorist activity. Over the past several years, Islamist jihadi organizations in particular, including the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Al Qaeda, have demonstrated mastery of social media as a mechanism for spreading propaganda, recruiting followers and luring thousands of foreign fighters abroad to receive jihadi training in Iraq and Syria.

The grant program was developed by the DHS Office for Community Partnerships, which leads the Department’s CVE mission, in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

CVE has become integral to DHS’s mission. Earlier this year, Johnson established a CVE Task Force to tackle the challenge of deterring radicalization and recruitment of violent extremists in a unified and coordinated manner.

The CVE Task Force is permanently housed within DHS as an interagency task force primarily managed by DHS and the Department of Justice, with supplementary staffing contributed by additional supporting departments and agencies.

“Countering violent extremism has become a homeland security imperative, and it is a mission to which I am personally committed,” said Johnson in reference to the newly established CVE Task Force.

Online, An Uphill Battle For US Agencies Against Terror Recruitment

By Shaun Waterman

FedScoop, July 7, 2016

Government isn’t good at being a counter-extremism messenger, so DHS is launching a \$10 million grant program to fund credible voices that are.

It’s an illustration of how great the challenges are for U.S. government agencies trying to counter online recruitment by Islamic terror groups, that the organizations and leaders overseas whose credibility they want to use to help steer young people away from extremism, mostly don’t wish to be known as American partners.

“We have pivoted from direct online engagement to partner-driven messaging and content,” Meagen LaGrafte, from the State Department’s Global Engagement Center, told a hearing of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations Wednesday.

That's meant abandoning the approach of the center's predecessor, the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications — whose small team of e-diplomats, always identifying themselves as U.S. government employees, hung out online with would-be Jihadis — and its trademark “Think again, turn away!” social media campaign.

“When CSCC was stood up” in 2011, LaGraffe said, “it was designed to fight a different enemy in a different time.”

Today, “While the U.S. government has a good message to tell, we are not always the most credible voice to tell it. Instead, there is an abundance of credible and diverse voices across the Middle East, Europe and Africa — governments, NGOs and civil society groups — that we are now leveraging in this fight,” she went on.

Alas, she couldn't discuss most of this work. “We are not publicizing who many of our partners are, so that we don't undermine their credibility,” she told lawmakers.

The hearing came amid growing concerns about so-called “lone wolf” or “self-radicalized” terrorists — like those who carried out the San Bernardino and Orlando attacks. While inspired by the violent online and social media propaganda of Islamic extremist groups like ISIL and al-Qaida, such attackers often have no substantive contact with them and their deadly plans are not directed by, or even coordinated with, terrorist leaders — making them all but impossible to detect in advance.

Underlining the difficulties, the attackers in both the Boston and Orlando cases had previously been fingered as possible extremists and looked at by the FBI — who found no evidence of any crime or conspiracy.

“We have to be aware of those first amendment issues,” said Michael Steinbach, executive assistant director of the FBI's National Security Branch, pointing out that merely reading and/or reposting online content, no matter how offensive, was not a crime.

“We depend on our partners to reach these individuals before they become radicalized,” he said. The time it took a radicalized convert to take action could be very short indeed: “That ‘flash to bang’ time is down in some cases to a number of days,” he said.

“By the time they've come to our attention, and we've predicated and opened a case against them, it's too late,” Steinbach concluded.

But even domestically, the federal government probably isn't the best partner to help the FBI in

countering violent extremism, or CVE, Department of Homeland Security Office for Community Partnerships, or OCP, Director George Selim, told lawmakers.

“We are aware that there is a limit to the effectiveness of government efforts with regard to countering terrorist recruitment and radicalization to violence, particularly in the online realm,” he said.

“We at DHS can act as a facilitator, connector and convener, but ultimately, communities and individuals are best positioned to take action to counter violent extremism.”

That is why DHS is focused on “cultivating and empowering partners — particularly those in civil society and the private sector — to develop and amplify content that resonates” with the intended audience for violent jihadist propaganda: Young Muslims who because of their lack of theological background or emotional or mental problems are vulnerable to extremist recruitment.

Selim unveiled Thursday a \$10 million grant program to help “empower credible voices in communities that are targeted” by ISIS for recruitment. The money, allocated by Congress in the fiscal year 2016 Omnibus Appropriations Act, will be administered jointly by OCP and FEMA.

“This is the first time federal funding at this level will be provided, on a competitive basis, specifically to support local CVE efforts,” Selim added.

LaGraffe said the new CVE approach was “focused on changing audience behavior not attitudes.”

“Any long-term strategy to counter violent extremism cannot focus only on killing terrorists; it also means preventing the recruitment of new ones,” added LaGraffe, who was previously chief of staff in the Pentagon's Office of Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict or SOLIC. Her boss, the head of the Global Engagement Center, Michael Lumpkin, was previously assistant secretary for SOLIC and is a 20-year Navy SEAL veteran.

LaGraffe told lawmakers they were determined to quickly develop metrics to ascertain the effectiveness of their interventions. “We're building a data analytics shop,” she said.

“For each campaign we bake in a requirement for analysis on the back end,” she said.

Columbia County Awarded Federal Funds From Emergency Food And Shelter National Board

St. Helens (OR) Chronicle, July 6, 2016

Columbia County was notified there would be an award for Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) funds for Phase 33 to supplement emergency food and shelter programs in the county. The award amount posted on the EFSP website is \$27,914.

The selection was made by a National Board that is chaired by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and consists of representatives from The Salvation Army; American Red Cross; United Jewish Communities; Catholic Charities, USA; National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S. A.; and United Way of America which will provide the administrative staff and function as fiscal agent. The board was charged to distribute funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in high need areas around the country.

A local board made up of representatives from the VFW, American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Community Churches, Homeless and other community representatives will determine how the funds awarded to Columbia County are to be distributed. We have no information regarding the actual distribution of these funds.

Under the terms of the grant from the National Board, local agencies chosen to receive funds must:

- Be private voluntary non-profits or units of government
- Be eligible to receive Federal funds
- Have an accounting system.
- Practice nondiscrimination and provide a copy of their policy on their letterhead.
- Have no previous noncompliance or returned funds via the emergency food and shelter program.
- Have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter programs within Columbia County.
- If they are a private voluntary organization, they must have a voluntary board.
- Organizations must have a permanent Columbia County presence.

Qualifying organizations are urged to apply. Completed applications may be submitted by July 21, 2016 by 1 p.m.

To request an application contact the United Way of Columbia County call 503-556-3614 or email uwcc@hotmail.com. Send applications to Attn: EFSP Board, PO Box 538, Rainier, OR 97048.

United Way To Distribute Federal Funds

Montana Standard, July 6, 2016

Butte-Silver Bow County has been awarded federal funds in the amount of \$12,413 made available through the Department of Homeland Security/Federal

Emergency Management Agency under the Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program. United Way of Butte and Anaconda is the fiscal agent and will convene a local board which will determine how the money is to be distributed among the Emergency Food and Shelter Programs run by local service agencies in the area.

Under the terms of the grant, local agencies chosen to receive funds must: 1) be private voluntary non-profits or units of government, 2) be eligible to receive federal funds, 3) have an accounting system, 4) practice nondiscrimination, 5) have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter programs, and 6) if they are a private voluntary organization, have a voluntary board.

Public or private voluntary agencies interested in applying for Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds must contact Juliann Crnich at United Way of Butte & Anaconda, 1880 Harrison Ave, 406-782-1255, between 9:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. for an application. The deadline for applications to be received is July 30.

FIRE GRANTS

WITCC Saves Denison's High School Firefighting Classes

Daily Nonpareil (IA), July 6, 2016

DENISON – A firefighting course at Denison High School will continue with support from Western Iowa Tech Community College.

The Denison Fire Department stopped providing an instructor, Assistant Fire Chief Blake Deiber, for the course after the past three years. The instructor will now be an employee of the community college.

Deiber's tenure was funded by a federal Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response grant awarded to the Denison Fire Department by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 2011. When the funding ran out, the classes were in danger of being canceled.

Denison Fire Chief Cory Snowgren said Deiber will stay with the department but Josh Hoffmeier, a Denison firefighter, will teach the classes. Snowgren said he was concerned with whether the city attorney would let an outside instructor use the city equipment and training facilities.

"Josh stepped up," Snowgren said. "Josh knows our trucks, he knows our equipment and he has hundreds of hours in our training building."

Snowgren said he felt more comfortable with a Denison firefighter teaching the class.

When the instructor was a city employee, students were part of the department's cadet program and were insured through that program, Snowgren said. Those details will still need to be worked out.

The college and high school were interested in seeing the firefighter classes continue, Snowgren said. Denison High School has 28 students signed up for class this fall.

Since the classes launched three years ago, the average age of Denison firefighters responding to fire calls was 53. Now that's dropped to 34, Snowgren said.

Younger firefighters have also had the opportunity to learn from senior firefighters who have been around for a while, he said.

"We've got some great new firefighters in our department now," Snowgren said. "Its benefit to us has been huge."

Senators Stabenow, Peters Announce Support For Bruce Township

WJMN-TV Marquette (MI), July 6, 2016
WASHINGTON, D.C.

– U.S. Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters today announced \$88,096 for the Bruce Township Fire Department to help purchase equipment. This grant comes from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Assistance to Firefighters Grants program.

"Our firefighters in Bruce Township put their lives on the line to protect our families and homes," said Senator Stabenow. "Thanks to these new resources, these brave men and women will have the equipment they need to help them do their jobs more safely and effectively."

"The Upper Peninsula's firefighters serve their communities each day with courage, integrity, and pride," said Senator Peters. "I am very pleased that this grant will help ensure these brave men and women have the tools and training they need to protect themselves as they respond to emergencies."

Eligible fire departments and Emergency Medical Services organizations in Michigan and across the country can apply for Assistance to Firefighters Grants. These competitive grants help first responders purchase the equipment and obtain the training needed to handle fire-related hazards. More information about the grant can be found at

<http://www.fema.gov/welcome-assistance-firefighters-grant-program>

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Youngstown And Austintown Receive \$440k In Firefighter Grants

WFMJ-TV Youngstown (OH), July 6, 2016
WASHINGTON, D.C. –

Two Mahoning County fire departments will be able to buy new equipment after receiving more than \$440,000 in federal grants Wednesday.

According to Congressman Tim Ryan, the Youngstown Fire Department received \$372,013, and the Austintown Fire Department received \$71,593.

The money was awarded through the Assistance to Firefighters Grants program and administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Department of Homeland Security.

YFD Battalion Chief Gary DiTullio says their share of the grant will be put toward purchasing new breathing assistance machines, called a self-contained breathing apparatus.

The department's current SCBAs, according to DiTullio, were aging and in need of frequent repair.

Austintown Fire Chief Andrew Frost says that they will use the AFG grant to replace a structural firefighting turn-out gear that has reached its maximum 10-year life span.

Frost thanked DHS, FEMA, and legislators for the AFG grant, which he says the department relies heavily on for funding.

Assistance to Firefighters Grants have been awarded since 2001 in an effort to meet the needs of fire departments and emergency medical service organizations.

Congressman Ryan says that the grants can be used for professional training, fitness equipment, personal protective equipment, facility modification, and supplies that support firefighting and EMS operations and safety.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

Suit: FEMA Money Was Meant To Restore Medical Services In Long Beach

By Anthony Rifilato

Long Island (NY) Herald, July 6, 2016

A group of mostly Long Beach residents filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the Federal Emergency Management Agency on Tuesday over South Nassau Communities Hospital's proposed use of

\$154 million in FEMA funds that it was awarded after it acquired the former Long Beach Medical Center.

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Central Islip by several members of the Beach to Bay Central Council of Civic Associations — a group that has been advocating for the rebuilding of a local hospital — claims that the funding was meant to restore medical services in Long Beach.

South Nassau, which is not named as a defendant in the complaint, has earmarked the bulk of the funding for an expansion of its Oceanside campus, while planning to use \$40 million to construct a medical pavilion with an emergency department on the former LBMC property.

The 911-receiving facility, which would operate 24 hours a day, is expected to open in 2019. And though it would also offer X-ray and CT imaging capabilities, and may include services such as dialysis, behavioral health and family medicine, the facility would not operate as a full-service hospital, which many residents have called for.

LBMC was badly damaged in Hurricane Sandy, and despite efforts to reopen, the state Health Department pressured the cash-strapped facility to declare bankruptcy and merge with SNCH.

South Nassau was awarded the FEMA funding when it acquired LBMC in 2014 for \$11.8 million in a bankruptcy sale. The deal hinged on an agreement between South Nassau and FEMA, which pledged to release the Sandy aid to South Nassau to redevelop health care services in Long Beach and surrounding communities.

South Nassau officials have explained that under “alternative use” legislation introduced by Sen. Charles Schumer after Sandy, the hospital can also use the funding to bolster services and infrastructure at its Oceanside campus.

South Nassau officials say that the expansion is needed direly. The hospital’s emergency department is designed to handle 35,000 visits per year, but actually takes in around 67,000. The expansion would expand the emergency department from 16,000 to 30,000 square feet, allowing the hospital to see more patients in better settings. The hospital will also expand its critical care unit from 22 beds to 46, more than doubling its capacity.

However, the lawsuit claims that FEMA violated the plaintiffs’ constitutional rights under the 14th Amendment by allowing the funds to be spent in Oceanside and disregarding community input. Members of Beach to Bay — Barbara Bernardino Dubow, Mark Tannenbaum, Dr. Martin Gruber,

Constance DiBeneddeto and Ed Glister — are seeking an injunction to halt the distribution of the funds and an advisory opinion from the court to determine whether the money is being used appropriately.

“We are asking the court for a decision regarding the alternative plan option,” said Francis McQuade, the attorney representing the group. “We are asking if the distribution of the FEMA dollars transferred from Long Beach to Oceanside is justified. We are asking the federal court to give an opinion on whether due process was followed, and whether the alternate use in Oceanside was justified. I think we’re going to win and it’s in the people’s interest.”

South Nassau officials said they have not yet reviewed the complaint. “We believe any action taken by the plaintiffs, which impedes the restoration of important health care services to the barrier island or may imperil federal aid in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, is without merit,” the hospital said in a statement. “The hospital will continue to work with responsible civic leaders and local legislators to work toward the further development of vital services which meet community need while assuring the appropriate stewardship of limited financial resources to all the south shore communities it serves.”

Susie Webb, a spokeswoman for FEMA, declined to comment on the lawsuit, but said that South Nassau qualified for the funding after it acquired LBMC, and that FEMA is currently reviewing the state’s request “for a project change that would cover alternate use of funds.”

A number of public meetings and forums were held with South Nassau and the state Health Department over the past few years, most recently in March, when South Nassau presented its plans for the medical pavilion and the results of an independent study that concluded that a full-service hospital on the barrier island would not be sustainable, and would lose money every year.

The report recommended expanding emergency medical services in Long Beach so that the new facility is capable of handling 65 to 75 percent of all local ambulance calls; increasing access to primary-care physicians; and improving behavioral health services and care for the elderly, among other steps.

SNCH officials maintain that a temporary emergency department in Long Beach, which opened last year, is capable of stabilizing and treating patients, and those who require hospital admission or advanced treatment are transferred by ambulance to South Nassau or a hospital of their choice.

SNCH officials maintain that a regional hospital with local ambulatory hubs is the trend in health care. They recently said that the temporary emergency room has treated nearly 7,000 patients, and a survey in May found that respondents were “overwhelmingly” satisfied with the care at the new facility.

Still, the residents who filed the lawsuit have questioned the survey and maintain that the proposed medical pavilion would be inadequate to meet the needs of a “geographically isolated” community, and could not accept ambulances with patients suffering from certain “time critical” medical conditions, including trauma, stroke, hip fractures, difficult pregnancies and other emergencies. Beach to Bay has pushed for a smaller hospital, with fewer beds than the LBMC’s 162, offering in-patient care that it says would be financially viable.

“Our fear,” Bernardino Dubow said, “is that they’re going to build a campus in Oceanside and we will not get the medical facility that we need on a barrier island that’s isolated.”

East Rockaway High School Gets FEMA Sandy Grant

By Mary Malloy

Long Island (NY) Herald, July 6, 2016

Nearly four years ago, East Rockaway High School was hit hard during Hurricane Sandy when the Mill River, which runs directly behind the building, overflowed, causing extensive damage to the interior and exterior of the building.

On June 30, U.S. Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand and U.S. Rep. Kathleen Rice announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency had awarded nearly \$4.5 million to the East Rockaway School District for Sandy-related repairs and mitigation work at the high school.

“There is no better federal investment than one that helps educate our students in a safe and learning-friendly environment,” Schumer said. “East Rockaway High School was hit hard by Superstorm Sandy, and these funds will help provide critical mitigation measures to make the school stronger and prevent damage in the event of a future storm.”

“The East Rockaway School District sustained \$12 million in damages from Superstorm Sandy, and our students were displaced for six months while we worked to repair the building,” said district Superintendent Lisa Ruiz. “While we continue to seek additional federal and state funds for further mitigation work and a retaining wall along the Mill River, this first grant award will help to better position the district to

minimize future damage in the event of a reoccurrence, and will serve to protect our school campus and facilities from the devastating effects of another major storm.”

“We need to ensure that our children remain safe at school,” Gillibrand added, “and I will continue to fight for resources so we can rebuild even stronger as recovery efforts continue.”

A high school in distress

Sandy severely damaged the school’s electrical system, the main boilers, the gymnasium floor, a number of classrooms and the auditorium. The federal grant funding, totaling just under \$4.48 million, will cover extensive work to help prevent damage from future storms, including the installation of submersible sump pumps, backflow preventers, 22 flood doors along the building’s exterior, 15 flood planks at specified openings, flood hatches at interior crawl space entry points, and a generator.

According to James P. Robinson, the district’s assistant superintendent for finance and operations, the funding will take the form of reimbursements of district spending. “As part of this process, [we] will now be evaluating various financial strategies that can be used to initially fund these mitigation projects,” he said.

Funding sources, Robinson explained, could include a bond or a revenue anticipation note. “The Board of Education will soon be discussing these options and finalizing a plan sometime in the early fall,” he said, “with the outcome and ultimate decision largely dependent on market conditions at the time, as well as the forecast timing of receiving this grant funding as a reimbursement.”

“After working hard to repair damage from Sandy and get students back into their classrooms, the East Rockaway High School community is now working hard to make the school more resilient,” Rice said. “I’m grateful that these federal funds have come through to support their efforts, and I’ll keep working with school district officials to ensure they get the resources they need to make the school stronger and more prepared to withstand future storms.”

“We really want to do everything we can to safeguard the district from any negative effects of a similar storm in the future,” Ruiz said.

An update of the current FEMA restoration projects and reimbursements, as well as further discussion of the grant, will be the focus at a Board of Education meeting scheduled for Aug. 30. Check the school district’s website, www.eastrockawayschools.org, for more details.

FLOODS

Volunteers, Donations Still Needed; Local Business Pitch In To Help

Beckley (WV) Register-Herald, July 7, 2016

Additional cleanup volunteers needed in disaster areas

Volunteer West Virginia reports that while communities made great progress last weekend, many needs remain unmet. About 1,750 volunteers have been placed into work sites, but families and responding agencies are still indicating significant needs for extra support. Also, local volunteers need to take a break or return to work, so VWV is asking new volunteers to sign up to help this week or this weekend.

Volunteer Reception Centers are open in Lewisburg and Richwood/Summersville. Groups and individuals can visit these locations to volunteer. For more information on flood relief visit wvflood.com.

To volunteer in Greenbrier or Nicholas, including Richwood, Rupert, Rainelle, Alderson and White Sulphur Springs contact the reception center between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. at 304-808-1872 or email LewisburgVRC@gmail.com.

Volunteer opportunities are available for:

- Lewisburg – Community needs assessments and wellness checks
- Nicholas County/Richwood – Various needs for volunteers. Placements occurring at the Family Life Center in Richwood.
- Nicholas County – Muck out/debris removal. Report to Nicholas County High School, Team Rubicon, by 7:30 a.m. daily. Wear work boots, long pants and bug spray.
- Rainelle and Lewisburg – Volunteer leadership needed for administrative positions in Greenbrier and Nicholas counties. Must be available multiple days for at least four hour shifts.

Panera donating 15 percent of sales today to flood relief

Panera Bread bakery-cafés in West Virginia, St. Clairsville Ohio and Ashland, Ky., will lend a hand to West Virginia flood victims Thursday, July 7 by donating a portion of sales to the Red Cross. Customers can support the cause by dining at any of the participating bakery-café locations from 4 to 8 p.m. when it will donate 15 percent of its sales.

Participating West Virginia locations include Beckley, Morgantown, Clarksburg, Wheeling, Parkersburg, Charleston, Teays Valley and Barboursville.

Justice urges hiring out-of-work West Virginians for recovery

Businessman Jim Justice is calling on all companies and government agencies taking part in the flood recovery effort to hire out-of-work West Virginians.

Justice is encouraging FEMA, state agencies and businesses involved in restoring flood-ravaged communities to hire unemployed craftsmen and coal miners from West Virginia. The Justice Corporation has already requested for all of the recovery work being done at The Greenbrier to include as many job-seeking West Virginians as possible.

Jim Justice wants local workers on the job so the state can recover quickly.

Donations needed to help replace school technology

In light of the recent flooding that has devastated many areas across the state, members of the Leadership West Virginia Alumni Education Committee have collaborated with state leaders and community organizations to help raise funds and secure replacement technology for schools within the impacted areas.

In addition to the infrastructure, equipment such as routers, printers, copiers and other devices such as iPads, laptops and smartboards have been destroyed by the flood waters.

Initial assessments estimate that nearly 30 school facilities – impacting nearly 63,000 students – in five counties including Greenbrier and Nicholas were damaged. Funds raised will go directly to schools to purchase technology equipment that is not covered by insurance or other emergency funding.

The LWV Alumni Education Committee has also partnered with The Education Alliance to collect financial donations that are specific to education and technology restoration.

To make a financial contribution, please visit <http://floodsofsupport.com>. There is an option that will allow you to note for the funding to go toward technology specifically.

Additionally, if any business or person has equipment such as desktop computers, servers, printers, laptops, iPads, routers and any other technology-related items they would like to donate, contact David Cartwright by August 1 at 304-558-8869 or dcartwri@k12.wv.us.

School of Harmony donating plants to flood survivors

School of Harmony Inc. will donate to the flood victims bedding plants, vegetables and flowers. Casto's

Greenhouses in Oak Hill donated several truckloads of plants to benefit the school's scholarship fund. However, this is a greater need and School of Harmony and Casto's Greenhouses want to share these plants with all who could use them. If you are interested in cabbage, tomato, kale, green peppers, banana peppers, etc., or flowers, call 304-253-3095.

More Than \$39 Million In Road Repairs Due To Flood

By Katy Andersen

WSAZ-TV Huntington (WV), July 6, 2016

CLENDENIN W.Va. (WSAZ) – The floods from June 23 forever changed families and communities. Not only do homes and businesses have to be rebuilt, but also the roads that lead to them.

On Wednesday, engineers, road inspectors and contractors assessed road damage left behind from flood waters.

According to the West Virginia Department of Highway, more than 100 roads in 17 counties are in need of repair.

WVDOH said the estimated cost for road repairs is more than \$39 million. Of the 17 counties affected, the hardest hit were Clay and Nicholas, worth \$8 million in road damage. Kanawha and Greenbrier counties suffered more than \$5 million in road damage.

The most expensive projects are Left Fork of Leatherwood and Valley View Drive. Both roads were washed out.

The Department of Highways will pay for the road repairs up front from the state road fund. The department expects to be reimbursed up to 75 percent from the Federal Highway Administration or FEMA.

"It's a lot of work," Jeff Goins, a state road inspector, said.

According to Goins, the WVDOH has hired 10 contractors, all from West Virginia, to make the road repairs.

"They're trying their best to get it fixed as fast as they can," Goins said.

People in Clendenin said they are trying to clean up as fast as they can, but said it is impossible with all of the traffic.

"It has been awful," said Alan Harper, who is helping his sister clean out her home that was destroyed by flood waters.

"We can fill a dump truck up real quick but you cant dump it real quick," Harper said.

Harper said the construction has caused a lot of traffic in Clendenin. Because of the traffic, Harper said the clean up process is very difficult.

"Normally you can do it there and back in 10 minutes. Now it's taking more than two and a half hours," Harper said. "Fix this after we get cleaned up. But let us get cleaned up first. At least get some of the stench that's in the air up here."

Contractors told WSAZ it will take several months before all of the road repairs are complete. Some project may even take up to six months.

The WVDOT released a specific damage report in District 1, including in Boone, Clay, Kanawha, Mason and Putnam counties:

Bridges

Total Loss: 4

Closed or significantly damaged: 7

Slides

Kanawha: 6

Clay: 20

Work on roadways that will be put out for contractor to repair

Kanawha: 12

Clay: 25

FEMA Adds Liberty County To Assistance Rolls For Late May Floods

Liberty County (TX) Vindicator, July 6, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency approved Liberty County late Wednesday as an "add-on" county for federal disaster recovery assistance stemming from flooding in late May.

Waters along the Trinity River have receded some, but remain above flood levels. And added flow is coming from upriver, where the dam at Livingston is now releasing 47,100 cubic feet per second of water.

Other counties added by FEMA this week were Bastrop, Burleson, Eastland, Lee, Stephens and Tyler Counties.

FEMA offers assistance for each disaster for 60 days from the presidential declaration, which is listed as DR-4272. That will establish a deadline in filing for assistance at August 10, accounting for the July 4 holiday.

Friday (June 24) is the last day to file for assistance in the previous disaster, DR-4269, The April flooding also known as the Tax Day Flood.

\$2 Million In FEMA Money Coming To The Brazos Valley

By Abby Knight

KBTX-TV Waco (TX), July 6, 2016

WASHINGTON – Tx For families and businesses looking to rebuild after May's storms, federal aid is on its way.

FEMA is giving more than \$2 million dollars to people who were affected by the severe weather.

News 3 spoke with Reverend Randy Wells with Faith Mission and help center in Brenham. They partnered with FEMA after the flooding in late May. Wells said he has not seen many physical changes in the area, but said he's got faith that they are on the way.

"Seeing people who say they have a check for \$110,000 dollars. I have a check for \$50,000 dollars. We haven't seen that yet, but we know that process is coming," said Wells.

Randy Wells has seen the devastation of May's flooding firsthand. Faith Mission in Brenham has lent food and shelter to hundreds of residents. Wells is its director, and said the county is now in good hands as FEMA works to deliver nearly \$900,000 to the community.

FEMA's Danny Campbell tells us what the money is going toward.

"Damages to the home, and rental assistance, and rental insurance if that person has to move out of that home because it is unsanitary," said Campbell.

Seven hundred people filed for FEMA assistance in Washington County.

"We are finding flooding in places that shouldn't have ever flooded," said Campbell.

Twenty-six inches of rainfall in two short days left the county devastated. As many people were swiftly evacuating, Campbell said he was excited to get on the ground and do what he could for those in crisis.

"That's the reason I'm here. I don't need this job," said Campbell.

With more and more people getting FEMA approval. The county could receive over \$900,000 in FEMA money. In the meantime, money coming in is giving the community a brighter outlook on what is to come.

"That there is hope at the end of the tunnel, that they are going to have opportunities to not just rebuild their home, but to rebuild their lives," said Wells.

FEMA is open until 6:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Activity Center at Friedens Church in Washington.

Washington County was not the only county getting FEMA money:

- Brazos County \$637,444
- Burleson County \$193,887
- Grimes County \$433,932
- Washington County \$878,444

Evans Officials To Proceed With Contract Bid For 49th Street Road Repairs

By Katarina Velazquez

Greeley (CO) Tribune, July 7, 2016

EVANS — In its work session Tuesday night, Evans City Council decided to take road construction matters into its own hands — specifically, its 49th Street project.

After a struggle to come to a decision, the council agreed to allow staff to start a bidding process for contractors to take on the project within the next month. The city was originally waiting for a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to complete the project, but it did not receive a response.

The intersection of 49th Street, Brantner Road and Industrial Parkway was severely damaged by the 2013 floods, and those conditions were worsened after a flood in May 2015. The city of Evans has attempted to get a grant from FEMA since 2013 to help fund the repairs.

The road will become a designated truck route to lessen the impacts of trucking in residential areas along 42nd Street.

"It's a horrible road and it's only going to get worse in the winter," said Councilwoman Laura Speer. "We need to get it patched and take our chances that way."

Evans staff tried contacting FEMA several times again this year, but as of June, have yet to hear back — again.

The FEMA approval was needed in June to have the project completed this construction season, which typically ends in late October. The city will have to expedite the project to complete it in time.

Nancy Salazar, customer service and flood recovery manager for the city, approached the council with the available options. They could vote to repair the road without FEMA, costing the city about \$400,000 — maybe more, depending on bidding — or they could wait until spring 2017 to repair the road and try their efforts with FEMA again.

Before the council came to a final decision, Mayor John Morris was initially in favor of waiting for FEMA to help pay for the road to save city money, he said.

"I think it's important for us to keep our roads in good shape, but we could use that money for higher traffic roads," Morris said. "I hate to take \$400,000 — maybe more — of taxpayer money when it's something the federal government should be doing."

Morris was swayed, though, when it was noted the council did not have to pursue the bid if the cost was too high, and Salazar said city staff will update the council after the bidding is complete.

FEMA Approves Money For Cullman Road Repairs

By Edward Burch

WBMA-TV Birmingham (AL), July 6, 2016

More than six months have passed since heavy rains washed out a section of Larkwood Drive in Cullman.

Since then, the city was forced to wait for federal aid – because it would not be reimbursed if repairs were made before FEMA approved them.

Mayor Max Townsend confirmed to ABC 33/40, that the city got word from FEMA, that it is approved to repair a washed-out road.

FEMA granted the city roughly \$700,000 to replace the road. There's still a lot of work that needs to be done, but residents are happy to hear the news.

Mayor Townsend said the city is working with ALDOT on a plan to replace a bridge that connects to Larkwood Drive, over Eightmile Creek. The plan was already in the works prior to the Christmas Day flooding. It would be made possible through a \$1.5 million grant.

Until that bridge is replaced, the City of Cullman will not begin work repairing Larkwood Drive. Right now, the city is considering three different options to replace the bridge – that the public will get a chance to weigh in on.

“I hope it doesn't take too long,” said neighborhood resident Bridget Hayes. “I'm really, really glad that there's stories like this that people can know what it's like to be without this road and bridge, that we've had for so long, and to have it gone.”

Townsend adds, the FEMA funds would only pay for the replacing of the road. A public meeting for those who live in the area will take place in the coming weeks.

Townsend said work to replace the bridge on Larkwood Drive will likely begin within a year.

TORNADOES

WCSD Cites Successful Disaster Recovery Efforts

Webster (MS) Progress-Times, July 6, 2016

The 2011 tornado that destroyed the East Webster High School campus was no match for the teamwork that led to the rebuilding of the campus located in Cumberland, according to the Webster County School District.

The team, the district stated, consisted of the school, the community, local first responders, the

Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, the Webster County Emergency Management Agency, the Golden Triangle Planning and Development District, local state legislators, the architects and the insurance company.

Every person that assisted was an important member of this team, and without them this would not have been successful, the WCSD said in information released Thursday.

This is the breakdown of funds received:

• Insurance – \$11,742,505.34 • FEMA – \$3,296,565.96 • MEMA – \$549,430.38

• State of Mississippi – \$500,000 This total of \$16,088,501.68 was used to rebuild the new campus at East Webster High School in Cumberland and to perform necessary repairs at the Wood College campus, where classes were held until the new school was completed.

Jack Treloar, the Webster County superintendent of education, released this statement: “I am so proud of the team that worked diligently toward successfully completing this enormous task. Thank you to all who helped!”

The school district is current working with MEMA in completing the final closeout paperwork for the project.

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

Gov. Scott Calls On Obama To Declare Federal Emergency For Algae Blooms

By Nicholas Samuel

TC Palm (FL), July 6, 2016

Gov. Rick Scott asked President Barack Obama on Wednesday to declare a federal emergency because of the algae blooms in local waterways, and anticipated algae blooms surrounding the Caloosahatchee River in the western part of the state.

In a letter to Obama, Scott asked the president to “use the full resources of the federal government to eliminate the public health and safety threats associated with the unnatural discharge of nutrient-laden freshwater from Lake Okeechobee into the canals that flow east into the Indian River Lagoon and west into the Caloosahatchee River.”

“It's the federal government's sole responsibility to maintain the federally operated Herbert Hoover Dike,” Scott said in the letter. “Any damage caused by unnecessary water releases because of the federal government's lack of appropriate maintenance of the Dike is the federal government's responsibility.”

Scott said in a news release Wednesday that for more than a decade, the federal government has ignored proper maintenance and repair of the dike, leading to billions of gallons of water being discharged into the lagoon and river, "causing toxic algae blooms to cause havoc in the environment."

"Now, as a result of their releases, there is toxic algae which has caused environmental and economic devastation," Scott said.

Martin County Commissioner Doug Smith said he appreciates Scott asking for assistance from the federal government and he has met with hundreds of residents regarding the algae blooms.

"Public safety is our main concern. The next issue is how do we cut back the algae and remove it from the ecosystem," Smith said. "It takes all levels of government to deal with this disaster. The people do really need to know what's going on."

Mark Perry, executive director for the Florida Oceanographic Society, said a federal emergency would open up a dialogue between Obama and Scott.

"It's a step in the right direction. We have to get the federal and state working together to solve the problem," Perry said. "We need the Army Corps of Engineers to stop the discharges and we need either the federal or state government to buy the land and move the water south."

Both Martin County and Stuart declared a state of emergency for the toxic blue-green algae on June 29, followed by Scott declaring a Florida state of emergency later that day for both Martin and St. Lucie counties. On June 30, he expanded the emergency to include both Lee and Palm Beach counties for the potential spread of the toxic algae blooms. On July 2 in a visit to the Treasure Coast, U.S. Sen. Mark Rubio said it was his understanding Scott would ask for a federal emergency declaration.

Joe Catrambone, president and CEO of the Stuart/Martin County Chamber of Commerce, said the chamber was told by elected officials Obama's declaration of a federal emergency might be able help local businesses adversely impacted by the algae blooms.

He said he doesn't know exactly what type of monetary relief businesses could get, but it could be a grant they wouldn't have to repay.

He said the Small Business Administration earlier this year offered to give Martin County businesses loans, but there were no takers because business owners didn't know if they could repay them.

"We were looking for something like FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency)-type relief that would help in a disaster," he said.

FEMA Reps In Washington Area

By Arthur Hahn

Brenham (TX) Banner-Press, July 6, 2016

Representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency were in the Washington area today, helping property owners register their storm-related damages.

FEMA representatives were at the Friedens Church activity center until 6:30 p.m. The activity center is located next to the Washington Volunteer Fire Department.

Residents Receive Denial Letters From FEMA

KRGV-TV Harlingen (TX), July 6, 2016

MISSION – Many people in the Rio Grande Valley continue to rebuild after damaging storms, others are hitting road blocks. Some people are getting letters from FEMA denying their request for help.

FEMA said being denied doesn't necessarily mean they can't receive assistance.

The agency's arrival in Hidalgo County was welcome news to Julio Flores Jr. "We were waiting something, please Lord, give us an answer and this is like a Godsend," he said.

Ana Lilia Cerda said she's grateful for the lending hand. "We're very appreciative of the government, that it's taking that time and it's giving us the opportunity to get back," she said.

Many of the people in Granjeno and Madero who suffered damage reached out to FEMA for help. Alberto Pillot, with FEMA, said they're applying for help at FEMA's assistance center in Mission.

"So far, the center's been averaging 25 to 30 visitors a day, that's including appeals and people that have applied for the first time," he said.

Pillot said bilingual FEMA workers are on hand to help people who need it.

"Once you register, they'll walk you through the different areas. They'll look at your app, they'll make sure you got the right number, make sure your address is correct," he said.

Some people are getting letters in the mail informing them that their request for help has been denied. Pillot said in this case, sometimes no doesn't necessarily mean no.

"You have 60 days for the appeals that you receive, once you receive that letter. So the letter might say that for some reason you weren't eligible for, let's

say, insurance. You did call your insurance but you haven't settled with your insurance. You can come to the center and they'll explain to you what's missing in that," Pillot explained.

He said it's okay to keep asking for help even if the request was denied.

"Every situation is different. It's normal. You have that right to appeal 60 days. They give you plenty of time for that appeal so you can think about it," he said.

Pillot said those who need help shouldn't try to go through the FEMA process alone.

"The center is probably, I will say, one of the best ways for you to come over and get information. Don't take things into your own hands. Don't decide that, if you receive a letter, any type of information and decide that FEMA's not going to help you or if you don't understand anything, the center is available for all those questions," he said.

Pillot said they will be helping people who need it until the need has been met.

The FEMA Disaster Assistance Center is located in Mission at 115 South Mayberry Street.

You can also apply for FEMA assistance by:

Calling 1-800-621-3362

Visiting disasterassistance.gov

Use the FEMA mobile app

Para leer noticias en español, visite nuestra sección Español.

ZIKA VIRUS

GOP Proposes \$390 Million In New Zika Funding For 2017

By Pete Kasperowicz

[Washington Examiner](#), July 7, 2016

House Republicans on Wednesday released a spending bill for the next fiscal year that proposes \$390 million in new funding to fight the Zika virus, and another \$300 million that could be used to fight any emerging threat such as Zika or Ebola.

The bill would allow that spending only in the next fiscal year, which starts Oct. 1.

Until then, Republicans in the House have proposed a bill allowing \$1.1 billion in new spending using existing funds, without any new money. Democrats have opposed that proposal, and say new money is needed to fight what they say is a public health crisis.

Between that current proposal, which is stalled in the Senate, Republicans seem comfortably spending about \$1.5 billion on Zika, including both new and

existing funds, plus another \$300 million in new funds in the next fiscal year if needed.

That would be on top of the nearly \$600 million the Obama administration has already agreed to spend on Zika using existing funds.

However, Democrats continue to rebel against the GOP plan, and it's not clear at this point whether the \$1.1 billion plan would go forward. Democrats may also try to boost the spending levels in the FY 2017 bill this year.

Republicans on the House Appropriations Committee said the 2017 Zika funding would include money for "vector control activities; international and territorial Zika response efforts; and block grants for states."

"The bill includes additional funding dedicated to the Zika response effort, which gives the CDC director the ability to respond more quickly to the fight against Zika," said Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla.

The Zika money is part of a spending bill that authorizes \$161.6 billion in discretionary funding for labor, health and human services programs in the federal government. That's \$569 million less than the total current spending level, and \$2.8 billion below President Obama's request for those programs.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

FEMA Wants To Streamline Device Portfolio And Go Mobile

[FedTech Magazine](#), July 6, 2016

For the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), versatility is key in responding to emergencies. To that end, the agency that helps Americans recover from floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and various other disasters wants to gain more flexibility by restructuring and simplifying its device portfolio.

FEMA will likely be embracing more mobile devices, ones that can be used in the field across a wide swath of territory that the organization operates in. A Shifting Device Strategy

FEMA CIO Adrian Gardner said on a panel at the AFCEA Homeland Security Conference in Washington, D.C., on June 22, that the agency is trying to "shrink the footprint of the devices" its workers use, according to Nextgov.

FEMA, a unit of the Department of Homeland Security charged with coordinating disaster response

when state and local authorities are overwhelmed, operates in a variety of locales. In addition to operating in the contiguous United States, FEMA also works in U.S. territories, including American Samoa, Guam and Puerto Rico.

As a result, FEMA's devices need to work in all of those regions, Nextgov notes. That means the devices that users carry into the field — especially smartphones and tablets with cellular capabilities — need to have the appropriate radios and chipsets to work wherever the agency's mission takes FEMA's workers.

Gardner said FEMA is looking into a multipurpose, mobile "tablet sort of platform," according to Nextgov. The agency also wants to provide workers with devices that can be used during emergencies, as well as during more normal operations.

The importance of mobile devices to FEMA's operations became clear in late June when the agency set up a Mobile Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) in White Sulphur Springs, W.Va, after massive flooding from heavy rainfall killed more than 20 people. As local newspaper the Register-Herald reports: "DRCs are one-stop shops for eligible storm survivors to receive one-on-one, face-to-face help from local, state and non-government organizations. Federal disaster assistance for individuals and families can include money for rental assistance, essential home repairs, personal property loss and other serious disaster-related needs not covered by insurance."

Such a response by FEMA requires federal workers on the ground to have mobile devices to record disaster survivors' data and provide them with information. The Importance of Mobile

Enhancing FEMA's mobile strategy has been a part of Gardner's portfolio since he joined the agency in 2013, and he has emphasized mobile technology as a way to speed assistance to disaster survivors.

Gardner told FedTech in 2015 that the agency was reconfiguring its facilities and redesigning its systems "to conform to our mobile strategy," which involved giving workers a greater ability to telework.

"There is a big push now on really making our workforce expeditionary, where our mobile platforms and capabilities will be used to maximize the speed, efficiency, accessibility and ease with which everyone can use FEMA information and data," he said.

Bill Would Force Broader Government Scrutiny On Red Cross

By Rebecca Koenig

Chronicle of Philanthropy, July 6, 2016

Three weeks after publishing a report critical of the American Red Cross, Sen. Charles Grassley introduced a bill Wednesday that would grant the federal government clearer authority to access the charity's records.

The "American Red Cross Transparency Act of 2016" would also require the charity's-internal investigations unit to report directly to the board, instead of the general counsel, which would make it more independent.

The bill, S. 3128, is a direct response to what the senator has characterized as the charity's refusal to cooperate with an audit by the Government Accountability Office about its disaster-response work.

The American Red Cross has a congressional charter that grants the head of the GAO authority to "review the corporation's involvement in any federal program or activity the government carries out under law."

The charity asserted that the GAO could only access its records regarding decisions that directly involve federal funds or work it does in partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, according to the report by Sen. Grassley, a Republican from Iowa. The senator has accused chief executive Gail McGovern of trying to thwart the GAO's audit. Government Rights

The new bill would make clear that the GAO has the right to access any American Red Cross information about internal governance and programs connected to "national preparedness," plus the right to interview any board member, employee, or volunteer.

Adding staff members to the internal-investigations unit is the only step that Board of Governors chair Bonnie McElveen-Hunter said the board would take in response to Sen. Grassley's report, according to an interview with The Chronicle three weeks ago.

The bill was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee, which Sen. Grassley chairs.

A spokesperson for the American Red Cross said the nonprofit "will review the proposed legislation and make our views known to Congress at the appropriate time."

State Unveils New Amber Alert Carrier

Great Falls (MT) Tribune, July 6, 2016

HELENA — The state Department of Justice on Wednesday unveiled a new emergency notification host system to issue the state's AMBER Alerts and Missing Endangered Person Advisories.

The state has switched to CodeRED, which officials said is a more efficient, faster system.

CodeRED is certified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Integrated Public Alert Warning System and will allow DOJ to issue wireless emergency alerts. Previously, WEAs, which generate cellphone tones/texts to the public, were issued for the Montana DOJ by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in Arlington, Va.

At a news conference Wednesday in Helena, DOJ officials thanked the Town Pump Foundation for its \$15,000 donation, which made the switch to the new alert system possible.

Attorney General Tim Fox said the funds would cover the costs for three years.

In noting the price tag, Fox said, "In the context of saving one child, it's priceless."

"CodeRED provides multiple methods of rapid communication to the public whenever a child has been abducted, which is critically important in situations when every second counts," Fox said.

The Montana Department of Justice had been using a free web portal to issue Amber Alerts; however, agency staff noted some technical difficulties.

Amber Alerts, America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response, began in the Dallas/Fort Worth area in 1996 after 9-year-old Amber Hagerman was abducted and murdered.

Radio stations in the area joined with law enforcement agencies to establish a program capable of quickly distributing information about child abductors to the general public.

The program is named in her honor.

Jennifer Viets, Amber Alert coordinator for the Montana Department of Justice, demonstrated the new system, saying it was faster. It can issue reports on how many people have received the message and send automated phone calls.

Since 2003, the Montana DOJ has issued 30 Amber Alerts. All 46 children involved were located; four of them were deceased. Three alerts have been issued so far this year, officials said.

Other advantages to using the CodeRED system, include:

- The same system uses one standard method to issue both Amber Alerts and MEPAs.
- Its use of Environmental Systems Research Institute mapping to target alerts to people in a specific area.
- Alerts can be sent across different platforms, including automated phone calls, text messaging, TDD transmissions, emails, and RSS feeds.

DOJ officials encouraged the public to download the free CodeRED app. While people will still receive

Amber Alerts on their phones without having the app, downloading it will let them receive more detailed Amber Alerts, such as those that include photos, as well as cancellation notices when Amber Alerts have ended. MPEA alerts will come across the phone as well.

To download the app, visit DOJ's website at www.dojmt.gov.

A statewide test using the new system is tentatively set for 10 a.m. Oct. 10. Details regarding the test will be released in early October.

CITIZEN CORPS

Volunteers Needed For Emergency Response Program

Southern Maryland Newspapers, July 6, 2016

Calvert County is looking for a few good men and women to aid the community in the event of a disaster. Volunteers are needed to join the Community Emergency Response Team, a training program that equips people with basic disaster preparedness skills to help save and sustain lives following a disaster until help arrives.

"Its volunteers helping their own community and also volunteers helping first responders. When resources are stretched, first responders can rely on CERT," said Shelly Siegel, county emergency management specialist.

According to Siegel, the CERT concept originated in 1985, when the Los Angeles Fire Department realized that in the early stages of an earthquake emergency responders were overwhelmed and couldn't get to victims quickly. Citizens stepped in to assist their neighbors until emergency personnel arrived. Seeing the effectiveness of the community's involvement, LAFD created a program to train others in basic disaster survival and rescue skills to address the immediate demands of an emergency.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recognized the need to replicate the model and worked in conjunction with the LAFD to make the CERT program applicable to all types of hazards and developed a training program which could be adopted locally across the county when the need arose. As a result, the program has grown over the last three decades. Currently, there are over more than registered CERT programs nationwide.

Using the template, Calvert County implemented a CERT program in 2005 and it ran until 2013. However, due to staff changes participation dwindled and the program went dormant. Siegel, who recently

was certified at FEMA's Emergency Management Institute in Emmitsburg, is the new program manager for the county's CERT.

"I wanted to take on this program. I believe in it and I am eager to get started," Siegel said.

Starting Aug. 4 from 7 to 10 p.m. and every Thursday through Sept. 29, Siegel and retired emergency personnel will conduct training. Those who sign up will receive basic-level training in emergency preparedness, disaster medical operations, fire suppression, light search-and-rescue operations, and terrorism awareness, as well as other disciplines.

The total length of the training program is approximately 20 hours, and it can be scheduled in two- to four-hour modules, over a period of weeks or months to accommodate various schedules. The training courses, student materials and equipment are provided at no cost to participants. Contrary to Siegel's training, volunteer training is held locally at the Harriet E. Brown Community Center.

Once becoming CERT members, individuals will maintain and refine their skills by participating in exercises and activities. Supplemental training opportunities exist as well. Siegel anticipates that volunteers will ultimately be more involved in the program and do some of the training themselves. Additionally, they will be encouraged to conduct preparedness presentations and outreach throughout their own community — ahead of emergencies, which Siegel said will take pressure off of emergency personnel.

The main priority is for CERT members to be integrated into the emergency response capability for their area. If Calvert County emergency response professionals are delayed by a disastrous event, local CERT members can assist others by applying the basic response and organizational skills that they learned during training.

During an emergency event, CERT members will go door to door to check on their neighbors and collect disaster intelligence to support first-responder efforts. The medical skills they acquired from training will allow them to open obstructed breathing airways, manage wounds, splint bone breaks and triage victims in preparation for emergency responders. Other techniques include debris removal, victim extrication and selecting and setting up treatment areas.

Previous county CERT members were active and instrumental during Hurricane Irene, a large tropical cyclone that hit the mid-atlantic region, and other regions along the East Coast to include New England and the Caribbean during August of 2011.

In the most likely event of a hurricane, Siegel said CERTs can be used as staff for shelter, as they have the ability to offset county resources, filling the void when fire and police are stretched.

CERT is not just for individuals. Groups can participate, too. CERT participation is open to businesses, clubs/organizations, faith-based organizations, neighborhood, and schools.

Currently, the program has interests from scout groups and five people have already signed up for the first round of training in August. Siegel plans to eventually do a teen CERT program that will be promoted throughout the schools. She said if school board approves it, teen CERTs can be trained in active shooter situations.

There is no pay for participation in CERT, but there are definite rewards to partnering with emergency services. Bill Smith, a retired Huntingtown resident, was a member of the in the initial CERT class in 2005. Through the program, Smith participated in two disaster simulation exercises. One was at Union Station in Washington, D.C., where FEMA staged a train car sabotage to train first responders. Smith played a hysterical and reluctant passenger in need of help.

While the county's program has been dormant, the Coast Guard Auxiliary volunteer and Neighborhood Watch member has stayed active by volunteering with the Calvert County Health Department's flu clinic.

"I wanted to be a person that can help out if you have an emergency situation. If there is a disaster somewhere I am willing to go to help out," said Smith, who plans to attend a refresher course and participate when the program restarts.

"What they will walk away with is a strong working knowledge of how to be a benefit to their community," Siegel said. For more information, contact Shelly Siegel, CERT program manager, with the division of emergency management at 410-535-1600, ext. 2302, or go to www.co.cal.md.us/CERT.

POLITICAL COMMENTARY, **COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS**

When Will West Virginia Recover From The Flooding?

By Don Smith

Fayette (WV) Tribune, July 7, 2016

It's been more than a week since the flood. State and national officials have declared much of the state a disaster area. The recovery is under way.

But when will the flood recovery end?

We should not consider the flood recovery finished until the elderly women stop crying.

The morning after the flood, at Capital High School, which is serving as a Red Cross shelter for flood victims, elderly residents were being transported to the shelter by National Guard trucks, by neighbors and — for the lucky ones — in their own vehicles that had somehow escaped the floodwaters.

Exhausted, they unloaded onto the plaza at CHS: a mass of dirty faces, gray hair, damp clothing and mud-caked pants. Slowly they began moving across the plaza and up the steps to the shelter in the school's gymnasium. Most were oddly dressed, wearing a mix of sleep wear, summer and winter clothing, clearly having grabbed whatever stitch of clothing they could during their rush to escape the rising floodwaters.

Many people were barefoot, struggling to walk across the hot concrete of the plaza. Volunteers began gathering shoes, sandals, flip-flops and asking if they could help.

It seemed necessary to ask, "Are you all right?" On hearing the question, one man, while helping his wife navigate across the plaza, offered a brave smile, "Yeah, we're OK." Well into his 70s, he was barefoot, wearing shorts and a long-sleeved flannel shirt on a 90-degree day.

Slowly his wife, a small woman who leaned on her tired husband's arm for support, looked up, tears filling her eyes, "We've lost everything."

Everything was possessions, home and hope. The plaza was full of families who had lost everything.

Putting his arm around his wife, as if to protect her from the reality she was expressing, the husband said, "We're just so embarrassed."

Embarrassed at being helpless, probably for the first time in 70-plus years. The floodwater washed away the hope and security of the elderly population it found along the banks of the Elk River, the Greenbrier River and other rivers and streams.

Rebuilding and starting over should be left to the young. Where do the elderly find the strength and resources to tear out flood-damaged appliances and furnishings? How do they bulldoze the remains of their home and lay a new foundation? How does a 70-year-old couple start over?

So many of the victims in the flooded communities are elderly, in ill health and on fixed incomes. They aren't physically able to rebuild or emotionally prepared to deal with government agencies, insurance companies or contractors.

They need more than Clorox, bottled water, used clothing, advice and ideas. They need help. Real arm-around-your-shoulder, I'll-be-here-tomorrow-too help.

They need family, friends, church members, volunteers and government workers to physically help them. To sit with them, explain to them, have patience with them, and help them start over. They'll need help rebuilding — someone to clean or pound a nail — or finding a new home. Not shelters, hotels, FEMA trailers or rooms in a family member's home, but some residence they can rent or own. Somewhere they can again call their home.

West Virginia will not recover from this flood until we join together to help all these victims ... not until the elderly women stop crying.

(Don Smith is executive director of the West Virginia Press Association, headquartered in Charleston.)

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