

# Briefly Speaking



# FEMA REGION V



## Newsletter

## Region played key role in TOPOFF- 2 Terrorism Exercise

Staff members from the region participated in TOPOFF-2, a week-long exercise held May 12-16. The exercise, which included federal, state, county and local emergency managers and first responders, was designed to provide a yardstick of the capabilities of top officials during a major terrorism event. The main scenario developed for TOPOFF in the Chicago area involved a mock outbreak of pneumonic plague released at Union Station, and Chicago’s United Center 20,000 seat stadium during a sporting event. The “plague” was also released at Chicago O’Hare International Airport by a mock terrorist organization known as GLODO.

Although portions of the exercise “play” were known at the outset, several unexpected scenarios were introduced during the exercise to provide as realistic an environment as possible. The purpose of TOPOFF-2 was to test the decision making process and coordination of response and recovery efforts among the various agencies and to seek ways to improve. Members of the region staff were assigned to perform their duties at several venues including the Joint Operations Center and the Joint Information Center at Argonne National Labs, and the City of Chicago 911 Center. FEMA’s Regional Operations Center was fully operational with federal agencies tasked under the Federal Response Plan. The TOPOFF-2 exercise also included a simulated nuclear detonation or “dirty bomb” in Seattle Washington, which was run by Region X.



*Regional Director Ed Buikema speaks to the media at a press conference announcing the TOPOFF-2 exercise. Chicago Emergency Management Director Cortez Trotter (left foreground) hosted the news conference at Chicago’s Emergency 911 Center.*

### INSIDE

- Illinois Tornado Disaster Declared.....2
- Regional Director’s Message.....3
- Employees Honored By FEMA.....4
- Tribal News.....5
- DR-1469 Photos.....6-8

**Briefly Speaking is published by FEMA Region V External Affairs, 536 S. Clark St. Chicago, IL 60605. Comments or suggestions may be sent to [vincent.davis@dhs.gov](mailto:vincent.davis@dhs.gov)**

## Illinois counties get disaster aid after tornadoes, storms

Severe storms, high winds and devastating tornadoes touched down in west central and far southern Illinois during the week of May 6-11. The resulting damage to homes and businesses caused further hardship to the state, which is facing a record budget shortfall. Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich requested federal disaster assistance on May 14. The Governors Request was approved May 15 by President George W. Bush, as 12 Illinois counties were approved for Individual assistance. The counties of Adams, Alexander, Brown, Fulton, Hancock, Mason, Massac, Pope, Pulaski, Schuyler, Tazewell, and Woodford were included.

Immediately following the disaster declaration, region recovery teams were deployed to open a Disaster Field Office (DFO) in Springfield to begin the recovery process. Community Relations and Public Affairs were dispatched to the declared counties to distribute fliers and handle media inquiries. Within a few days of their arrival, region staff had opened three Disaster Relief Centers (DRC) in Lima, South Pekin, and Metropolis to assist applicants for federal assistance. Federal Coordinating Officer Ron Sherman was assigned to lead the team and oversee the recovery efforts. Following the initial declaration, Governor Blagojevich requested three counties, Greene, Pike, and McDonough, be added for Individual Assistance.

Damage in the declared counties included destruction from several tornadoes, the most severe being an F-4 according to the National Weather Service. Some flooding was reported as a result of the heavy rains, and volunteer organizations including the American Red Cross assisted residents with temporary food and shelter. **(See Illinois Disaster Photos on Page 6-8)**

## Region hosts State Homeland Security Meeting

The region hosted a State Director/Homeland Security Advisor meeting at the regional office Tuesday and Wednesday, June 3-4. The meeting, believed to be the first of its kind, featured briefings by Washington D.C. representatives of DHS officials on Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection, Science and Technology, Office of State and Local Coordination and Office of Domestic Preparedness. Regional representatives from several DHS partners also provided briefings including, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection, Citizenship and Immigration Service, U.S. Coast Guard and the Secret Service.

Wednesday's session included state briefings by Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. Representatives of the region's National Preparedness, Response and Recovery, and Federal Insurance and Mitigation Divisions provided briefings to close the two day meeting.

"It is important for us to provide State Directors and Homeland Security Advisors with as much information as possible about DHS, and to build and maintain partnerships with our other DHS partners and states " said Regional Director Ed Buikema.



*State Directors and Homeland Security Advisors meeting at Region V Headquarters.*



# Regional Director's Message

*Edward G. Buikema*

Effective March 1, FEMA and 21 other Federal Agencies officially became part of the Department of Homeland Security. As you may be aware, a Transitioning Newsletter from DHS is available via e-mail, with updates of overall plans, policies, and changes that affect the new department. In addition, several region staff members continue to participate in committees designed to provide input into procedures and policy issues that will affect FEMA's role within DHS.

As we have stated in the past, the roles and responsibilities of FEMA and other DHS agencies are yet to be fully defined. This is a work in progress and continues to be the focus of many people at DHS responsible for the enormous task of transitioning 177,000 employees into the new department.

As we move forward into the months ahead, rest assured FEMA's mission to respond to disasters and to protect the lives and property of our citizens will continue to play an important role in DHS.

Meanwhile we should continue to perform our daily duties and responsibilities with the same energy and dedication to excellence as always. We must also continue to focus on preparedness, planning, training and exercises that are important elements of our mission.

The senior staff will do our best to keep you abreast of any changes in your daily duties and responsibilities as the DHS plan is implemented. Thank you all for your hard work and dedication.

## Congressional Briefing



*Congressman Rahm Emanuel (D-Illinois) (right foreground) meets with Regional Director Ed Buikema, (left) Deputy Director Janet Odeshoo (l-center), and Public Affairs officer Linda Sacia (upper left). Congressman Emanuel, who previously served as an advisor to former President Bill Clinton, visited the region to learn more about FEMA.*

## Region sponsors PIO Workshop for federal partners

Public Affairs staff conducted a joint federal Public Affairs Workshop April 1-2. The second annual workshop involved training, briefings, and discussion groups for state and federal agency PIO's from throughout the region, including many agency partners now part of the Department of Homeland Security. "The workshop was a great opportunity for PIO's to discuss mutual issues and concerns regarding media relations, Joint Information Center (JIC) operation and the current focus on homeland security," said Regional External Affairs Officer Linda Sacia. "It is important for our federal partners to exchange ideas and develop plans for handling PIO issues during a disaster situation."

This year's the workshop attracted 30 PIO's representing federal agencies from throughout the region.

## “Get Ready” display touts citizen readiness

Citizen preparedness for natural or man-made disasters is the focus of the Department of Homeland Security’s GET READY campaign. In the spirit of the DHS initiative to provide information and tips to individual citizens about ways to prepare, the region developed a display, complete with replicas of the items needed in a home readiness system. The display, which resides in the lobby of Region V Headquarters, has everything from items of non-perishable food, to bottled water, first-aid kit and yes, the infamous duct tape.

The display is divided into three sections, office, home, and vehicle kits, containing the necessary items to help a family survive during a shelter-in-place situation or outside in their car. A checklist showing all the items displayed and a list of resources with web sites are also available to the public, as are brochures and other information on the GET READY program. The display was developed by the region National Preparedness Division staff.

## Pair honored as top FEMA employees

Deputy Regional Director Janet Odeshoo and Federal Insurance & Mitigation Division’s Richard J. Roths received the annual Director’s Award at a ceremony held February 27th in Washington D.C. The award is given annually to FEMA employees for outstanding performance and was presented to 26 individual recipients by outgoing FEMA Director Joe Allbaugh. DHS Undersecretary Mike Brown also attended the ceremony.

In presenting the awards, Director Allbaugh praised Mrs. Odeshoo “for your extraordinary performance, leadership and demonstration of FEMA’s strategic goals and values as Deputy Regional Director.” Director Allbaugh also praised Mr. Roths for “ your outstanding contribution in promoting mitigation planning to better prepare communities for disasters and reducing disaster damage.”

A reception honoring all the recipients was held at the Holiday Inn following the ceremony.



## Multi-Agency Work Group addresses Tribal concerns

The Multi-agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Work Group for Tribal Affairs held its quarterly meeting at regional headquarters on Wednesday May 7th. The Work Group included tribal affairs representatives from a variety of Federal Agencies including; Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Health & Human Services (HHS), Department of Energy (DOE) and Prarie Island Indian Program. The Work Group was established to bring Federal agencies together who have common responsibility for tribal programs within their respective agencies.

The meeting included 16 representatives from various federal agency tribal programs. Region V Tribal Liaison Clara Gatewood-Brown, hosted the meeting. Environmental Officer Jeanne Millin also attended in her capacity as Alternate Tribal Liaison for the region. National Preparedness Program Coordination Branch Chief Jim Duncan provided a briefing on Homeland Security issues, and how these issues affect tribal governments. Another topic of discussion was Compliance with Hazardous Environment Removal Act, and its implementation within the tribes.



*Members of the MOU Tribal Work Group discuss issues at their quarterly meeting*

## Ohio Disaster Field Office set to close

February ice storms and record snowfalls resulted in damage to homes and businesses in central and southern Ohio. Power outages were widespread and county and state resources were taxed to clear roads, remove snow and storm debris for the residents of fifteen counties.

Downed trees, power lines, other damage was caused by heavy ice and snow. At the height of the storm, Ohio officials estimated more than 22,000 homes and businesses were without electricity. As a result of the Ohio ice storms, President George W. Bush declared 15 counties eligible for federal disaster assistance on Friday, March 14. (DR-1453-OH).

A Disaster Field Office (DFO) was opened in the town of Chillicothe on Monday, March 17 to stage recovery operations. The DFO is scheduled to close Friday June 6.



*Crews clear a road of fallen trees resulting from ice and snow storms in Portsmouth Ohio. Residents of fifteen Ohio counties were affected and several counties received Public Assistance to help with snow removal and other costs resulting from the storms.*

*Tornadoes like the one shown below swept across sections of southern and west central Illinois the week of May 6-11. Scores of homes were damaged or destroyed and 3 fatalities were attributed to the storms. Photo courtesy of Adams County Highway Department.*



*(BELOW) Residents of the town of Lima, IL attempt to salvage personal effects from their home following the tornado.*



*(RIGHT) South Pekin, IL home suffers severe damage from the tornadoes.*



*(BELOW, CENTER) Twenty cars of a freight train are derailed in rural Massac County, IL.*



*(BOTTOM) Infant seat and several toys are all that remain of this home in Tazewell County, IL.*





*(LEFT) Adams County Church lost its front doors but was left standing.*

*(BELOW LEFT) FEMA and state workers open Disaster Relief Center in Lima, IL.*

*(BELOW RIGHT) Lima, IL home is destroyed.*



*(LEFT) Workers begin repairs on roof of Adams County residence.*

*(BELOW) Utility workers restore power lines knocked down by the storms.*

