Inside

A Time To Remember. A Time To Prepare

Ten Years Later -
The Song Remains the Same as Hospital Preparedness Continues

Department of Health Launches Social Media Options

Have You Heard About the Florida Silver Jackets?

Register Your Emergency Contact Information Today!
Preparing for disasters, whether natural or man-made, is a message the Division continually promotes. This year, in light of the numerous disasters the country has already endured and the somber observance of the 10th anniversary of 9/11, we are again urging Floridians to Get A Plan!

It is estimated that 57 percent of American families have emergency supplies set aside, while 44 percent have a home emergency plan. Statistics also indicate that only about 40 percent of businesses have recovery plans. To help increase these numbers, the Division and emergency management organizations throughout the country continuously promote awareness through a variety of channels.

One such effort is the ‘If You See Something, Say Something™’ campaign initiated by Governor Rick Scott prior to the 10-year anniversary of 9/11. Originally adopted by the Department of Homeland Security and launched in partnership with other public and private entities, this service now provides a variety of extra security options for Florida, such as a 24-hour watch desk at FDLE.

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) also continues to upgrade its efforts to assist the State in promoting disaster preparedness. Its latest effort is the recent launch of two social media platforms to provide Floridians with public health information through modern online formats. Florida’s Hospital Community (FHC) is also improving its services to meet disaster challenges. In league with DOH, FHC offers the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP), an effective partnership that strives to expand health care communities and strengthen hospital preparedness.

Another tool for emergency preparedness is the Emergency Contact Information system (ECI) offered by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. With this online service, First Responders can readily contact designated family members of accident victims.

The Division also worked closely with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and other state agencies to form Florida’s Silver Jackets team, a state-affiliation of the National Flood Risk Management program. Partnership in this program will enhance the State’s disaster response and recovery efforts in floodplain mitigation. The Florida team officially signed for their charter October 21 in Highlands County at the Pearce-Lockett Estate, along the Kissimmee River.

Whether through diligent case studies of current procedures or providing assistance to other emergency operation efforts, we are well equipped to provide any necessary services when needed. One such effort was recently noted by the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency Director Mike Womack, who commended the FL SERT IA Team. This team assisted with the aftermath of tornadoes that landed in Mississippi this past April. During the two-week deployment they provided a wealth of support that enabled the Mississippi EMs to provide disaster response measures to those impacted by the storms.

The Division will continue its mission of providing top-level emergency management to the State of Florida, knowing that by doing so we can offer our fellow-Floridians peace of mind.
This year commemorates the tenth anniversary of 9/11 and Americans were asked to remember those who lost their lives, those who were injured and the heros who responded to the terrorist attacks.

In response to the September 11th attacks, each year September is designated National Preparedness Month. If you and your family did not participate in this year’s campaign to be prepared, make plans to do so today. These preparations aren’t just for hurricanes season – disasters can happen at any time. With preparation plans available through Florida’s state and county emergency management offices, as well as through FEMA, your opportunity to draft a plan to help your family survive disasters is readily available.

Begin your design with these four steps in mind:
1. Make a Plan: Discuss, agree on, and document an emergency plan with those in your care.
2. Get a Kit: Keep enough emergency supplies on hand for you and those in your care – water, non-perishable food, first aid, prescriptions, flashlight, battery-powered radio – for a checklist of supplies visit floridadisaster.org.
3. Be Informed: Free information is available to assist you from federal, state, local, tribal and territorial resources.
4. Participate: Contact your county emergency management office to get a listing of opportunities to help your county prepare for potential disasters.

Police, fire and rescue workers may not always be able to reach you quickly, especially if trees and power lines are down. The most important step you can take in helping your local responders is being able to take care of yourself and those in your care; the better prepared your community is, the quicker it will recover.

Governor Rick Scott joined Florida Department of Law Enforcement Commissioner Gerald Bailey, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Assistant Secretary of Intergovernmental Affairs Betsy Markey, and the leadership of Florida’s Domestic Security Oversight Council September 1 to launch Florida’s “If You See Something, Say Something™” campaign. This initiative features a toll-free, statewide hotline and online reporting form for citizens to report suspicious activity.

Launched prior to the 10th anniversary of 9/11, Governor Scott reminded Florida’s citizens and tourists of the need to remain vigilant and encourages them to use this new tool to report any issues.

Tips received through the hotline and online reporting form will go to the Florida Fusion Center, a 24-hour watch desk at FDLE, where intelligence analysts assess the information and take action when necessary in conjunction with the state’s Regional Domestic Security Task Forces.

DHS’s awareness campaigns include television and radio public service announcements broadcast nationwide, as well as displays on mall posters and various transportation hubs. The Florida Outdoor Advertising Association donated space on digital billboards statewide through mid-September.

“Incorporating If You See Something, Say Something™” provides a readily accessible service anyone can use to help identify and report suspicious activities and threats,” said Gwen Keenan, the Division’s Preparedness Bureau Chief. “By continually offering such prevention measures, Florida will offer a safer, more secure State for residents and visitors.”

Originally created by the New York City Transportation Authority, If You See Something, Say Something™ was subsequently adopted by the DHS, which partnered and launched the initiative with the NCAA, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, the NBA and the NFL, Colorado, Minnesota, New Jersey, more than 9,000 federal buildings nationwide, WalMart, Mall of America, the American Hotel and Lodging Association, Amtrak, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the general aviation industry, and state and local fusion centers across the country.

To report suspicious activity call 1-855-FLA-SAFE (1-855-352-7233) or visit www.fdle.state.fl.us.
Ten Years Later - The Song Remains the Same as Hospital Preparedness Continues

John Wilgis, M.B.A., RRT, Director - Emergency Management Services, Florida Hospital Association

Ten years after the events of September 11, 2001, hospitals across the country continue to improve their disaster preparedness capability and capacity. Florida’s hospital community is no different and their progress, together with other public and private partners, has set the bar for preparedness, response and recovery activity for others to follow.

“Having a prepared Florida is a shared responsibility for government, non-profit entities, private business and the public,” said Rhonda White, M.B.A., Bureau for Preparedness and Response, Florida Department of Health. “While serving as a community leader for health, Florida hospitals’ focus on providing quality care is augmented by their role in maintaining a level of all-hazard preparedness.”

The past has led the hospital community to be more prepared for emergency events. The future lies in expanding effective partnerships across local communities with others in the health care system. Leveraging the assets and means of hospitals, trauma centers, free-standing emergency departments, acute care facilities, primary care networks, county and federal health clinics, pharmacies, dialysis centers, blood banks and other health providers establishes a broader health system better suited to cope with the impacts of a disaster. “We need to be cautious to not let our guard down and to maintain our posture of continual readiness,” said Melinda Stibal R.N., M.S.N., M.B.A., Disaster Response Coordinator, Memorial Healthcare System.

Hospitals play a critical role in community preparedness and resiliency. Since 2001, concentration has been on promoting progress towards common goals centered on emergency management principles and the sustainment of health and medical priorities. Assisting in this effort, the Florida Department of Health, Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) seeks to strengthen hospital preparedness by improving their capability and capacity to meet the challenges presented by disaster response. Dan Simpson, FPEM, Health and Medical Regional Coordinator for Florida’s Regional Domestic Security Task Force – 4 says the Hospital Preparedness Program has provided hospitals and the communities they serve with tremendous benefits in a number of areas.

The number of hospitals changes as the community reorganizes, expands and reshapes the way health care services are provided across Florida. The HPP focused on hospitals with emergency departments and provided funding for equipment, training and exercises. Through FY 2009-2010, more than $120 million in HPP funds have been awarded to hospitals.

Since 2002, hospitals have participated in the HPP grant program, which provides support for the continuous development of target capabilities and capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from an all-hazard emergency event of any size. Approximately $9.5 million of the funding was used by hospitals to conduct training. Almost $7.35 million more was used for exercises to test, evaluate, and improve response capacity. The bulk of funding, over $76 million, has been spent providing equipment to hospitals to enhance their medical surge capacity to manage a disaster event. Simpson noted that the HPP provided the region with both measurable and intangible benefits on significant levels, such as an increased mass casualty and burn treatment capacity, as well as improvements in community-wide communication and cooperation.

Funding has helped better align federal capability based objectives with disaster preparedness requirements of Florida State licensure and Joint Commission accreditation standards for emergency management. “The over-arching success of the HPP program for our hospital and health care system is the maturation of our all-hazards preparedness program. From training, exercises, equipment and collaboration with other health care providers in our community, we have become better prepared to respond to situations that present themselves,” Melinda Stibal adds. Together, hospitals and their local and state health and medical partners have improved the overall health system preparedness for Florida’s citizens.

In 2009, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services published the handbook Medical Surge Capacity and Capability: The Healthcare
Coalition in Emergency Response and Recovery. In it, the goal of health care response through the application of a systems-based approach is defined to “... promote health care system resiliency and adequate surge capacity and capability across the affected community during a mass casualty and/or mass effect incident.”

Expanding preparedness activities from a health systems approach prioritizes several actions:

- Maximizes the medical surge capability and capacity for individual health care organizations;
- Strengthens community resiliency through improved situational awareness, mutual aid support, patient distribution/redistribution and other support functions;
- Capitalizes on regional, state and national capabilities and capacities; and,
- Introduces a health care delivery system that is better suited to maintain critical medical services when needed.

These activities serve as strategies supporting the goal and objectives of health system preparedness, which in turn promotes and supports the coordinated response activities between other health care organizations and any relevant jurisdictional agency interfaced with that coalition. Different organizations working together to achieve a common goal – a response system situated to achieve success.

As hospital preparedness evolves, the emphasis of building a public health and medical system of public and private entities supported through partnerships that are well-matched becomes a priority. Health care coalitions can critically address competing priorities for limited resources and gaps in the level of preparedness throughout the system.

A coalition of health system partners provides a method for individual health care organizations to coordinate their response actions in an efficient and effective manner.

“To develop this resiliency to support the whole community, healthcare agencies will need to come together through strong healthcare coalitions to ensure comprehensive plans are developed and limited resources are maximized,” continues Rhonda White. The success and long-term sustainability of Florida’s hospital preparedness activities relies on the ability to develop a cost-effective system, founded on common operational elements and supported by the many public and private partners whose responsibility is to prepare for, respond to and recover from major health care emergencies and disasters.

Register Your Emergency Contact Information Today!

Courtney Heidelberg, Communications Director, Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles

If disaster strikes and you find yourself in an emergency situation, would law enforcement officers be able to immediately contact your loved ones?

To help ensure that families of accident victims can be readily contacted, the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles worked with Florida lawmakers and citizens to create the Emergency Contact Information system (ECI). This system enables licensed drivers and identification card holders to register up to two contacts to notify in the event of an emergency, such as a vehicle crash. The information can then be accessed only by law enforcement officers to find designated contacts in the case of an emergency.

To date, nearly 5 million Floridians have registered their contacts by logging on to www.flhsmv.gov/eci. You can register in any Florida driver license office, too, including those operated by county tax collectors.

Signing up is quick and convenient. Register from the convenience of your home or at work through the Internet at www.flhsmv.gov/eci and at any driver license office in the state, to include those operated by county tax collectors. There is no cost to register your contact information.

Florida driver license offices also issue identification cards for children as young as age five, so parents can register their children’s emergency contact information, too.

The concept for the ECI program came to fruition after the tragic death of Tiffany Olson, who died in a motorcycle crash in December 2005. Law enforcement officials did not have any contact information to timely notify her mother Christine Olson of the crash that led to her daughter’s death. Christine Olson founded To Inform Families First and with the help of her state representative, Rep. Bill Galvano, she brought an idea to the Department to allow people to register and law enforcement to access emergency contacts so that other families may receive quick notification. DHSMV launched the program during the first week of October 2006.
A Gallup poll in 2010 reported that people spend more time online viewing and posting to Facebook than they do checking their e-mail. Not surprisingly, Facebook has more visitors/viewers than any other social media site. Financial Times recently reported that social media sites such as Twitter have grown from 27 million tweets a day last year to 95 million a day today. Similarly, Facebook has grown globally from 350 million active users to 640 million – half of which log in daily.

In response to these trends, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) recently launched its own statewide presence on these two social media platforms to provide Florida’s diverse audiences with public health information through tools that encourage communication in a modern, effective online format.

Facebook and Twitter users now have access to vital health information, events and updates; easily accessible links, resources and materials; and the ability to generate open, real-time discussions between parties who share the common objective of protecting and improving public health in Florida. DOH is using these communication channels to further increase public awareness, enhance customer service and garner community relationships to help carry out its vision of a healthier future for residents, visitors and stakeholders across the state.

“We are excited to embark on this new journey into the online community where we can better serve the public with more immediacy and accessibility,” said State Surgeon General Dr. Frank Farmer. “The use of social media will reinforce DOH’s goal of transparency by encouraging open dialogue and relationship building between government officials and the public.”

Twitter and Facebook will not only assist DOH in getting public health preparedness messages out to the public before a natural disaster or a potential outbreak, but also provides users a low-barrier method for interaction with subject matter experts to ask questions and receive feedback on health-related topics. In addition, both social networks offer a forum where the public can interact with others to share relevant health information and ideas locally and statewide and access health data, even when doctor’s offices are closed.

DOH’s initial focus is for county health departments, DOH Headquarters employees, healthcare professionals, response partners at the local, state, federal levels as well as other targeted audiences to follow the department on the social media sites and ultimately reach the general public/mainstream visitor.

DOH’s Twitter account will keep Florida proactively engaged in crisis communication and response efforts by prompting the public with emergency-related health preparedness information and updates through postings that include items such as: Public health preparedness facts, trivia and statistics; Notices of DOH public health preparedness news releases, media advisories; YouTube videos, PSAs and Online Newsroom features; Public health advisories and bulletins; and information on public health preparedness-related events, trainings and other resources.

DOH’s Facebook account will share family-oriented information and resources that will highlight the importance of health in families and communities statewide through postings that include items such as: Information, resources and materials that encompass family health issues and safety; Pre-announcements of upcoming events and happenings in the community; Online buttons and badges that users can share to increase awareness of health issues; and surveys about perceptions, beliefs and awareness regarding public health topics and campaigns.

Visit DOH’s Facebook page, and “like” the page to become a fan and receive daily health updates. You can also follow DOH on Twitter.
Have You Heard About the Florida Silver Jackets?
Devan Leavins, MSP
Deputy Disaster Housing Coordinator

This year the Florida Division of Emergency Management worked closely with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and other state agencies to form Florida’s Silver Jackets team, a state-affiliation of the National Flood Risk Management program. Partnership in this program will enhance the State’s disaster response and recovery efforts in floodplain mitigation.

The Florida team will officially sign for their charter October 21 at 1 p.m., in Highlands County at the Pearce-Lockett Estate, along the Kissimmee River.

Established by USACE, the Silver Jackets work diligently as a team to provide formal and consistent strategy efforts for a multi-agency approach to planning and implementing measures to reduce risks associated with flooding. By sharing information and resources prior to a disaster, these agencies can limit the potential catastrophe as well as provide greater response. Florida Silver Jackets will also identify gaps in or duplication of efforts, as well as productively share information, promote public education and initiate best practices within the State.

“The Corps and the South Atlantic Division are dedicated to and fully support the Silver Jackets initiative,” said Jacksonville District Commander Col. Al Pantano. “It provides the Corps and all of the agencies involved with a framework and strategy to better enable us to work cooperatively. This in turn results in top-notch flood risk management solutions.”

Along with the Division, Florida’s charter is composed of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Federal Highway Administration, the Florida Department of Transportation, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the United States Geological Survey, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Weather Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Northwest Florida, South Florida, South, west Florida, St. Johns River, and the Suwannee River Water Management Districts.

The Pearce-Lockett Estate was chosen to host Florida’s charter recognition because of its location and significance to the Kissimmee River Restoration Project (KKRP). “As a successful State-Federal partnership, the now-pristine Kissimmee River is the perfect site to initiate future alliances of Florida’s Silver Jackets team in floodplain mitigation,” said Director Koon.

Energy Assurance Exercise Tackled
Mike McElroy
Energy Assurance Project Manager

A coal mine accident, Mississippi River flooding and a misguided backhoe may seem like unrelated incidents, but they were all part of the challenges faced by Florida’s energy industry and emergency response team during a recent table top exercise at the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) in Tallahassee.

Representatives from Florida’s Electrical and Natural Gas industries joined with local and state emergency management personnel this past July to participate in the first of three planned exercises focused on Energy Assurance. This exercise looked at possible disruptions to the fuel sources that Florida’s electrical power plants rely on and how to keep the electrons flowing. Using a scenario based on actual events from this past year, the exercise planners helped the participants walk through a series of events that put the State of Florida into an energy emergency.

In November the State Emergency Response Team and its energy partners will again meet in the SEOC to focus on preparing and responding to a shortage of transportation fuels. This exercise will test the response efforts of both our government agencies and those of the private sector as they coordinate to ensure that adequate supplies of transportation fuels are available and delivered where needed.

The final exercise, planned for early 2012, will take on the challenge of a historic solar storm and its possible effects on Florida’s electrical grid and communications systems. This testing coincides with the peak of the most recent solar cycle. Space weather; solar flares and the associated coronal mass ejections (CME) can cause major disruptions to electric systems, satellites and communications systems, potentially causing catastrophic effects worldwide.

Funded through a grant from the United States Department of Energy, these exercises help enhance Florida’s energy resiliency and disaster response.
For the first time in Florida’s history, an evacuation study was completed on a statewide level involving all eleven planning regions simultaneously. A significant component of this study was the 2010 edition of the Statewide Regional Evacuation Study (SRES), which eliminated the potential for discrepancies between regions. Previous state studies were conducted at different times – often years apart – with varied methodologies. For this reason, the studies could not be accurately linked between the regions, nor could a statewide standard be applied.

“Previous editions only provided the worst possible scenarios for decision-making,” said Sandy Meyer, Operations Chief. “Studies will now provide a broader set of scalable scenarios, in addition to the worst case. By having more scenarios to choose from, protective-action decisions will be more accurate, as well as reduce unnecessary costs to the public due to over-evacuation.”

The purpose of a regional evacuation study is to provide emergency management officials with realistic data that quantifies major factors in hurricane evacuation decision making. This data is provided as a framework of information that counties can use to update and revise their hurricane evacuation plans and operational procedures to improve their preparedness and response to future hurricane threats.

The critical areas of the study that can assist with reducing impacts from hazards are the Storm Surge Zones, the Behavioral Study and Analysis, the Shelter Analysis, and the Transportation Analysis and modeling software (TIME – a Transportation Interface for Modeling Evacuation).

In previous studies, storm surge zones were compiled based on topographical data and computing mean sea level. The critically important upgrade to Florida’s new Statewide Regional Evacuation Study was the use of Light Detection and Ranging (LI-DAR). This new technology involves laser ranging systems attached to aircraft, capturing precise elevations across Florida’s entire coastal region. Previously, this extremely accurate method of determining land elevation was only intermittently used across the state due to cost. The National Hurricane Center in Miami then took the data and processed it into Sea, Lake and Overland Surges from Hurricanes (SLOSH) models for all 12 Basins throughout the state.

Through these methods Florida’s coasts have been mapped to show where storm surge can be accurately expected (Zone Level A, B, C, D and E, which correlate indirectly to Storm Categories 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5). This separation in identification of Storm Surge Zones (by levels) and Storm Wind Intensity (by Categories) is particularly important so that emergency managers can better advise at-risk populations of specific dangers and evacuation timing. As an example, Hurricane Ike in 2008 was a large intense Category 4 Storm in the Gulf of Mexico but at landfall in Galveston it decreased to a Category 2 hurricane with winds of 110 mph. However, the surge produced by the storm’s energy in the Gulf as it approached land produced a much larger and earlier arriving Level D / Category 4 Storm Surge with surge values of 10-15 ft. It is the speed, size of the storm, the shape of the coast, and the Gulf/Ocean floor that determine surge heights, not the wind and intensity level of the storm. A depth analysis is to be conducted throughout the state to further refine the data by determining the depth of the surge in specific locations within each Surge zone.

As a result of these highly accurate measurements, areas that previously weren’t expected to receive storm surge are now shown to be vulnerable. Conversely, some areas thought previously to be prone to storm surge are no longer shown as vulnerable. In this study, speculation was replaced with reliable data for planning and operational purposes.

The Behavioral Study provides guidance in selecting behavioral assumptions to be used in evacuation transportation modeling and shelter planning. The process included telephone interviews with residents of the regions as well as analysis of that and other data to derive indications of how the population would respond in the event of certain threats, most notably hurricanes. An accurate sampling of Florida’s population was interviewed, resulting in the most comprehensive Behavioral Survey related to evacuation in Florida’s History.

The results of these regional surveys will give local emergency managers a better understanding of the public’s reaction to ordered evacuations and decisions on sheltering. This effort lowered the expected
The Division and HURREVAC

Release New Risk Profile for Florida

Amy Godsey, State Meteorologist

HURREVAC 2010, a hurricane planning tool for federal, state and local emergency managers, was released in 2010. A welcome upgrade from the 2000 version of software, HURREVAC 2010 offers a modernized user interface, more streamlined connections to live-forecast information for hurricanes and a variety of new functions. With this new release came the need to update Florida’s Risk Profile in HURREVAC.

The Risk Profile is an Add In to HURREVAC, which is specifically programmed and customized for an individual state using a series of criteria (questions) and conditions (possible answers) identified by emergency managers in that state as most relevant. The Risk Profile extracts the required information from the main HURREVAC program and presents it in a series of tables organized by topic.

The information is presented visually as a set of color-coded boxes which depend on criteria specifically requested by the state. For each criterion, each color coded box (red, yellow or green) highlights the severity of the condition. When certain criteria reach either a yellow or a red condition, they are further flagged with ‘Critical’ or ‘Of Concern’ indicators to give special notice to their importance in the evacuation decision making process.

The intention is to lead the emergency manager toward a decision in a logical manner that takes advantage of the information that is available, but which may not be readily apparent to all but the most experienced. Thus, the Risk Profile is a great tool for novice HURREVAC users or to display to other external partners such as local elected officials to give a concise, yet detailed analysis of the hurricane threat to the county, area or state.

demand for evacuees planning to use public sheltering from 30 percent down to a 15 percent demand across the state. In some cases, counties no longer have a deficit on shelter space because the new anticipated lower demand. The urgency on funding shelters spaces has diminished and future funding will be more effective with these planning assumptions.

In addition to the reduction in public shelter demand numbers, other elements were captured in the survey in terms of choice of destinations, impediments to evacuation, estimated number of vehicles used to evacuate, etc. The results of these elements will assist with future evacuation planning and public education efforts to make evacuations more efficient and effective.

The SRES Program identified the need to have a user friendly and intuitive way of interacting with transportation modeling for evacuations. Florida’s Regional Planning Councils and County Emergency Managers do not have the funding to retain highly trained modeling staff to run and maintain evacuations models, so something was needed that allows planners and emergency management staff to use the model with a minimal learning curve.

This lead to the creation of the Transportation Interface for Modeling Evacuations (TIME) software, a custom written interface for evacuation scenario management and modeling designed in partnership with the Florida Department of Transportation. TIME allows the user to update key database in the model needed for preparing evacuation scenarios. For example, if a major road for evacuations in a county is expanded the county emergency staff can input the change in TIME, run the evacuation scenario and determine the new clearance time for residents in that area. The tool also allows adjustment in population densities as well as the number of shelter spaces available during a given scenario and resultant impact on evacuation timing.

Evacuation Study cont’d from page 8
Working closely with the Bureau of Mitigation, the City of St. Augustine signed contract documents for an innovative project to mitigate flood damage in the ‘Oldest City’ while preserving its historically significant coquina seawall. The historic wall has suffered severe deterioration over the years, resulting in failure to keep seawater and the Matanzas River out of city streets and businesses following Tropical Storms Gabrielle in 2001 and Fay in 2008.

“We continually strive to help communities achieve creative and successful solutions for mitigating flood threats by working closely with them to show how they can maximize FEMA funds for their projects,” said Helen Johnson, the Division’s Mitigation Manager.

The multi-agency partnership project became a reality on August 18 when FEMA awarded St. Augustine $4.74 million Flood Mitigation Assistance Program grant. The project has undergone careful environmental and historical review through a close working relationship between DEM’s Bureau of Mitigation, FEMA Region IV, Florida’s Division of Historical Resources and the City’s Public Works Department.

“The partnership of the Federal Government and the Nation’s Oldest City to create this ‘protective promenade’ for the residents and visitors alike will be a legacy project for our 450th birthday celebration,” said St. Augustine Mayor Joseph Boles. “I want to thank Congressman John Mica for his tireless efforts for making this a reality.”

Since its construction in 1844 by graduates of West Point, the seawall has provided flood control and protected the riverfront, but over the nearly 170 years of wave action by tides, boat traffic and frequent hurricanes, the coquina brick and mortar seawall and constructing a new reinforced concrete sheet pile seawall at the river’s edge to protect the City against a Category 1 hurricane. The new seawall creates a two-tiered barrier against high water and battering storms.

The lower section of the new seawall will be constructed of concrete precast driven panels with concrete piles driven to 22.0 – 27.0 feet below Mean Sea Level (MSL) and soil anchors supporting the seawall. The upper section will be constructed of cast-in-place concrete with a top elevation of 7.7 feet NGVD, which creates a new higher barrier against extreme high tides, waves and storm surges. The promenade walkway provides a safer, more attractive access by the public to view St. Augustine’s storied waterfront. Storm water improvements will be added to the promenade that will connect to three existing outfalls to provide treatment for urban runoff from approximately 18.3 acres in the City.

“The need for addressing the frequent flooding in this historic area is long overdue, and we look forward to a solution that both protects the seawalls historic integrity and lowers the threat of flooding,” said Leanna Freeman, Vice-Mayor City of St. Augustine. “This will be a beautiful promenade for everyone to enjoy the pure beauty and ambience of the scenic views and historic ambience.”

Cost for preserving the historic seawall, with the installation of the new 1200-foot seawall and promenade, will be shared through a matching federal-state grant consisting of a $1.58 million local cost share to FEMA’s $4.74 million mitigation grant.

Photo and graphic courtesy of City of St. Augustine
Post-Disaster Environment and Historic Preservation
Kyla Gatlin, Environmental Scientist and Larissa Pallo, Deputy State Debris Coordinator

During the recovery phase, emergency protective measures and permanent repair activities take place to restore a community to pre-disaster condition. In performing these recovery actions, emergency managers should consider the impact of their actions on the environment as well as on historic and archaeological resources.

In order to receive funding under FEMA's Public Assistance program, local and state governmental entities must consider the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and any additional applicable environmental regulations prior to the recovery project's formulation phase. Environmental aspects can often be overlooked during the planning phase of disaster-related projects so it is vital for emergency managers to seriously consider these requirements; failure to consider applicable laws will result in a recovery project being denied further federal funding. Additionally, as there are many laws that only apply when federal funds are involved, potential applicants must understand the implications of these laws as well.

Most projects must be reviewed by FEMA for NEPA compliance prior to being approved for funding. While NEPA does not mandate any specific environmental policy, it does guide the decision making process during review and ensures that FEMA considers the project's impact on the environment. This includes projects that are deemed critical during post-disaster conditions, including debris removal, road repair and mosquito abatement.

NEPA also requires FEMA to consult with other stakeholders such as the State Historic Preservation Officer and any affected Indian Tribal governments. The impact of recovery activities on the state's archaeological resources must also be assessed in most projects where land-disturbing activities take place.

As an example, a project may take place in a habitat that was previously occupied by a protected species, such as the burrowing owl. Burrowing owls and their habitat are protected by the Migratory Bird Act; even if the burrows are no longer in use, a special permit is required to fill in the abandoned burrows before project work may begin. Additionally, historic preservation issues may require consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer and often require that specific materials be used to restore a facility in an effort to preserve historic and cultural aspects of our national heritage.

The Environmental and Debris Section (EDS), within the Division's Public Assistance Unit, works with local, tribal and state government to ensure that necessary procedures for environmental and historical preservation compliance are taken prior to any recovery actions occurring. With this oversight state resources protected and the EDS team works to minimize the possibility of funding loss in the future. EDS also conducts outreach prior

Historic Preservation cont’d on page 12

Share your thoughts. Write an article for our next edition.

Send an email to: donna.niordan@em.myflorida.com
Or call 921-0216
Hurricane Access Makes Landfall in North Florida

Chip Wilson, Statewide Disability Coordinator

In September, the Division offered the Hurricane Access exercise, a unique training opportunity which enabled Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) agencies and Community Partner organizations to work with emergency management officials from Florida’s northwest counties. Thoroughly successful, the entire force gained valuable working knowledge of actions needed prior to, during and following a category two hurricane striking their respective county; these measures will be used to enhance services for Florida’s residents and visitors who are disabled, are senior citizens, or are transportation disadvantaged, as well as those individuals who are limited- or non-English speaking.

“The exercise compelled participating organizations to identify creative solutions to address the needs of the simulated disaster survivors in collaborative and coordinated ways,” said Greg Strader, Executive Director for Escambia County’s Be Ready Alliance Coordinating for Emergencies (BRACE). “This group did so at a higher level of professionalism than I have ever seen in my nearly 40 years of working with emergency management.”

During the exercise, county emergency management officials worked in coordination with their local FNSS organizations to assess each other’s working knowledge of plans, procedures and processes associated with information gathering and resource sharing. The exercise also drilled down to the level of emergency management coordinating with Community Partners to deliver specific services to individuals and families with FNSS needs.

“The exercise was our county’s opportunity to bring together Community Partners with a focus on identifying the FNSS capabilities of each partner agency and organization,” said Mike Rundel, Franklin County Emergency Management Coordinator. “This exercise will assist us as we continue to enhance plans and procedures to meet the needs of county residents following a disaster.”

The exercise was facilitated via an Internet-based exercise application, which allowed all counties to participate in the exercise simultaneously. In using the Internet, teams located at each EOC were able to identify new Community Partners via several resource identifier web sites that were incorporated into the exercise.

“Hurricane Access was an extremely effective means to bring about serious planning and partner development for FNSS in disaster response,” said Bill Dion, American Red Cross - North Florida Region Planner. “It is the first positive step to learning what needs to be done after a disaster, as well as clearly identifying what resources can be truly counted upon to meet FNSS needs during a local disaster response.”

October 2011

Historic Preservation cont’d from page 11

to disaster events to ensure that stakeholders are aware of environmental and historic preservation issues and that these have been incorporated into local and state planning processes. EDS staff can also help at later stages of the project process by collaborating with Public Assistance Coordinators, applicants and state agencies to ensure that proper documentation is maintained. Compliance issues may also be resolved by working with state regulatory entities, federal agencies and FEMA to coordinate and clarify the steps necessary to receive federal reimbursement.

Overall, the best option for minimizing future project delays is for local partners to adopt sound planning practices and to anticipate the possible effects of environmental review throughout the project timeline. Stakeholders need to know appropriate laws and regulations before a disaster so they can maximize their potential for federal funding and minimize delay. The Section has created the Florida Greenbook to assist stakeholders in determining the potential applicability of environmental regulations to their specific projects. The Greenbook contains a summary of major federal laws that are reviewed during the NEPA process, as well as guidelines for specific project types.

In conclusion, the Environmental and Debris Section is always available to assist in any part of the process from planning, to project formulation, to documentation requirements. Further resources on environmental and historic preservation, as well as the Section’s contact information, are available at floridadisaster.org.
The Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA, FL) presented the Division and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity an Award of Merit in the Best Practices category for Post-Disaster Redevelopment Planning: A Guide for Florida Communities at the 2011 APA Florida Conference in West Palm Beach.

This guidebook was based on the Florida Post-Disaster Redevelopment Planning Initiative, which began in 2007 and is directed by a statewide group of experts on planning and long-term recovery. The guidebook includes research on lessons learned from previous disasters and the applied experience of a series of pilot communities who embarked on this planning process.

Allison Megrath, Chair of the APA Florida Awards Committee, called the project the first statewide effort of its kind to encourage pre-disaster planning for post disaster redevelopment in the nation. “The award jurors found that the publication is a comprehensive, user-friendly handbook for communities,” Megrath stated.

Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plans (PDRP) enable communities to take advantage of windows of opportunity to rebuild a more sustainable and resilient community after a disaster. Additionally, the plans can lay out a path for a more efficient and locally-driven disaster recovery.

The Division’s GIS Team Receives the Esri Special Achievement Award

This past July, the Division’s GIS team received a Special Achievement in Geographic Information System (SAG) award at the Esri 2011 International User Conference in San Diego, California. This award was based largely upon the deployment of GATOR and its use during the Deepwater Horizon Response. This system readily enables users to capture, manage and analyze geographically referenced information pertaining to a disaster. The GIS team was also noted for improvements with data management and desktop analysis, as well as participation in Virtual USA. A thought leader for GIS Emergency Management nationwide, the Division’s GIS team continues to help lead and further develop the community.

“By acknowledging the use of GATOR during the Deepwater Horizon Response, Esri is acknowledging every representative of the Florida State Emergency Response Team,” said Richard Butgereit, the Division’s GIS Administrator. “Efforts from the entire team enabled GATOR to inform Florida’s residents and visitors of SERT’s awesome response to this disaster on a continuous basis.”

The SAG Award ceremony was held at the annual Esri International User Conference and presided over by Jack Dangermond, the president and founder of Esri. Candidates for the Special Achievement in GIS award are submitted by Esri staff from thousands of organizations worldwide, then personally reviewed and selected by Dangermond.
This past April, two extremely large and violent tornado outbreaks affected the Southern, Midwestern and Northeastern United States. These systems were amongst the most prolific and destructive tornadoes in U.S. history with a total of 515 confirmed tornadoes, resulting in 389 tragic fatalities and estimated damage costs of more than $10.5 billion dollars.

On May 3, due to the projected longevity of recovery and a need for additional personnel to effectively manage the event, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) made a formal request through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) for Individual Assistance (IA) staff from the Florida State Emergency Response Team (SERT). On May 5, SERT deployed six IA staff members to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in Pearl, Mississippi. These members are subject matter experts in Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) management and operations.

Upon arrival, the team became aware that MEMA’s IA Team had a low ratio of IA personnel who were overwhelmed with current operations. Jamie McDaniel, MEMA IA Branch Director, was fully briefed by the Florida SERT IA Branch Director on each Florida IA team member’s expertise and was assured that the team was fully prepared to support MEMA. McDaniel directed the team to act as MEMA’s IA liaisons and assume full operations for all IA functions in the Joint Field Office (JFO). The team immediately began coordinating IA operations on behalf of MEMA as the Temporary Disaster Housing Team, the DRC Coordinator and the Community Response (CR) Coordinator.

The Temporary Disaster Housing Team worked vigorously to expedite temporary disaster housing to the heaviest impacted areas and assist communities with preparing to accept housing units. This team also worked with ‘Operation Clean Sweep’ to determine operational priorities for debris cleanup, which was being conducted by the US Army Corps of Engineers.

The DRC Coordinator quickly mobilized 16 fixed location DRCs and three mobile DRCs to ensure state and federal assistance was readily available in the affected areas. As additional counties were declared, the CR Coordinator mobilized, trained and deployed 39 FEMA/MEMA teams to the field. These teams were the ‘boots on ground’ for the JFO staff and provided the communities with essential disaster-related information.

“The Florida IA staff members were an incredible source of support for Mississippi emergency management following the devastating tornadoes that hit our area in April of 2011,” said MEMA Director Mike Womack. “Their depth of experience in managing Disaster Recovery Centers, community relations and housing issues was a tremendous help to our own IA staff.”

After their 14-day deployment, the FL SERT IA Team was awarded with a Certification of Appreciation for a job well done. Along with this certification, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the State of Mississippi extended their appreciation for Florida’s dedicated efforts during the recovery operations of FEMA-1972-DR-MS and FEMA-3320-EM-MS.

The IA Team was headed by Joseph Borras, IA Branch Director; Sandy Lanier, Emily Meyer and Sara Whitehead served as the Temporary Disaster Housing Team; Stormy LeBlanc served as the DRC Coordinator; and, Thomas Robinson served as the CR Coordinator.
The State Watch Office (SWO) is the Division's 24-hour information collection, dissemination and initial operations center for all potential disasters that threaten the State. SWO also serves as the initial point of contact for local jurisdictions or agencies needing state assistance for situations beyond their response capabilities.

Initially referred to as the State Warning Point, new and evolving responsibilities for situational awareness brought about the title of State Watch Office. Housed under the Division’s Bureau of Response, the SWO is physically located in the State Emergency Operations Center in Tallahassee.

As the Division’s situational awareness hub, the SWO provides warning to appropriate state and local agencies and individuals of impending danger or existing hazardous situations. Among the entities SWO provides notification and warning to are the State Emergency Response Team (SERT), county dispatch centers, nuclear power plants and federal agencies. On average, the SWO can take anywhere from 150 to 200 calls a week, and 8,000 to 10,000 calls per year.

When fully staffed, the SWO has two State Watch Officer (supervisor) positions, two Duty Officer positions and six Operations Officer positions – including one position funded by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Bureau of Water Facilities Regulation. To enhance situational awareness and the capability to manage developing incidents, the Division’s meteorology staff and a member of the Plans Section are also located in the SWO.

The SWO receives ‘incident of concern’ calls, which may be related to a number of categories ranging from aircraft incidents to wastewater spills to incidents involving public drinking water supplies. Each incident varies in levels of severity by its impact or potential impact to the people of the State.

There are currently 18 Emergency Service Functions (ESF) that represent SERT. Each ESF has two Emergency Coordinating Officers (ECO) each that represent that function for the State as an on-call representative and are responsible for disseminating information to the supporting agencies within their function.

The SWO routinely contacts the ECOs with incident reports and it is the responsibility of the ECO to notify the respective agency and follow up any actions as needed. DEP’s relationship is unique among the ECOs in that specific DEP groups/employees will be notified of specific incidents for direct action. The SWO has no operational control over any of the incidents reported.

When SWO receives a report, such as a petroleum spill in Jacksonville during regular business hours, a report of the incident is emailed to the Jacksonville Office alerting them to take any necessary action. For after-hours incidents, the SWO will contact an assigned representative.

For Environmental Crimes that come into the SWO, DEP offers a toll-free number, which allows individuals to report environmental crimes privately. After a call is received, the Operations Officer collects required information and notifies state partner agencies for their action or situational awareness.

In collecting information regarding potential disaster, it is imperative that the operations officer clearly understands the hazard, and any related potential hazard, to provide the correct notification report to our state and local partners. With proper notification, all agencies within the ESF will have a more accurate report to base their response on, enabling them to effectively respond to the incident. For most incidents, local-level response is required with no assistance from the state; however, DEP generally provides response for nearly all reported incidents.

After the SWO refers the incidents of concern to appropriate state regulatory offices, further action concerning incident response details will be directed to the appropriate State regulatory office for any necessary processing.

With the goal in mind to provide timely, accurate information to all of our SERT partners, the State Watch Office continually adheres to a high level of responsibility and professionalism. In doing so, Florida’s residents and visitors can be assured that the Sunshine State is ever-ready to respond to disaster.

To report an Incident to the State Watch Office: 1-877-2-SAVEFL or 850-413-9911.
**Florida’s Severe Weather Awareness Campaign Encourages Students to Get Creative**

Living in the Sunshine State offers a wide variety of enjoyable pastimes such as miles of sandy white beaches, vibrant cities and a wide variety of parks; however, it also means dealing with potential disasters such as hurricanes and wildfires. Because of these threats, the Division conducts campaigns year round to promote disaster preparedness through efforts such as Severe Weather Awareness Week (SWAW), which we sponsor in partnership with the American Red Cross.

One event of this year’s campaign are the poster and video contests, which challenge students to design a poster or a 30-second Public Service Announcement video to help increase statewide awareness of being prepared. Whether students attend public schools, private schools or are home-schooled, all are encouraged to enter.

“As a parent, I am fully aware of how important it is to include children in on disaster planning,” said Director Koon. “By offering events such as the poster and video contests, we help Florida’s children better understand disasters, as well as how to prepare for them.”

The poster contest is geared towards 4th and 5th graders and will use severe weather preparedness as the subject. The winning poster will be professionally printed and displayed in the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) for the entire year. The video contest, for middle and high school students, will focus on boating safety, rip currents and temperature extremes. Winning videos will be professionally reproduced for the Division’s awareness promotion in the statewide public awareness campaign. A video production team will come to the winners’ hometown to professionally produce the winning PSA, and the winners will be the project director for their respective spots. Students are urged to conduct research for pertinent information regarding these topics.

The deadline for the 2012 poster and video contests is January 9, 2012. Winners will be announced January 29 at a kick-off event for Severe Weather Awareness Week in Central Florida.

More than 800 students throughout the state entered the 2011 competition, making it the biggest year in the annual event’s history. “We hope to further increase the number of students who participate in the 2012 contest,” said Karen Hagan, Florida Disaster Officer for the American Red Cross. “With greater involvement in initiatives such as this campaign, the more widespread our outreach efforts will be to get Floridians prepared for potential disasters.”

For more information SWAW campaign, the contests, and the Division of Emergency Management, visit FloridaDisaster.org.

**New Employees and Promotions**

**July**
- Cory Dilmore, Career Service Planner IV, Bureau of Response
- Maurice Haynes, Career Service Education and Training Specialist,
- Maurice Black, Office Automation Analyst, Bureau of Response effective
- Gloria Cruz, OPS Administrative Assistant I, Bureau of Recovery
- Jeanette Frances, Grants Specialist V, Bureau of Recovery

**August**
- Shannon Hamilton, AA I, Bureau of Mitigation
- Tyler Pearce, Systems Program Analyst, Bureau of Response

**Employees and Promotions**
- Susan (Council) Harris, Grants Specialist V, Bureau of Recovery
- Dana Mulliens, Community Assistance Consultant, Bureau of Recovery
- Karen Thomas, Planner IV, Director’s Office
- Andrew Sussman, promoted to Career Service Planner IV, Bureau of Preparedness
- Sandy Meyer, promoted to SES Community Program Manager, Bureau of Response
- Paul Wotherspoon, promoted to SES Community Program Manager, Bureau of Preparedness
- Jim Roberts, promoted to SES Community Program Manager, Bureau of Preparedness
- Ed Aquino, Government Analyst I, Bureau of Mitigation
- Louis Vance Burns, Community Assistance Consultant, Bureau of Recovery
- Chantelle Carter-Jones, Planning and Evaluation Specialist, Gubernatorial Fellow, Director’s Office
- Alfred D’Antonio, Government Analyst I, Bureau of Recovery
- Jarvis Dennison, Systems Project Analyst, Director’s Office [GIS]
- Marcus Dixon, Planning and Evaluation Specialist, Gubernatorial Fellow, Director’s Office
- Benton Farmer, Meteorologist, Bureau of Response
- Megan Graham, Planner IV, Bureau of Response
- Jedidiah Hall, State Warning Point Communication Officer, Bureau of Response
- LaClarence Mays, Community Assistance Consultant, Director’s Office
- Amber Medlock, Grants Specialist IV, Director’s Office
- Beverly Payzant, State Warning Point Communication Officer, Bureau of Response
- Robert (Tripp) Ryon, Planner IV, Bureau of Response
Employees of the Month

Employee of the Month July 2011

Michelle Faircloth, Purchasing Agent III, serves the people of Florida as a member of the Procurement Unit. She never hesitates to help a vendor or a colleague regardless of the time of day. Michelle’s diligence, attention to detail and willingness to research and learn new information makes her such a valuable part of the Division. She strives to provide quality assistance by constantly conducting research, seeking counsel and double-checking with procurement/purchasing experts to ensure that she is ready and able to assist all customers.

Recently, Michelle was promoted into the lead position and is currently the only employee in the Division’s Procurement Unit. She has risen to the occasion of undertaking the workload of three employees with a determination and poise that makes her so good at her job. She always welcomes others with a bright smile and a great disposition, as well as handles all issues with the utmost professionalism. Michelle has proven many times that she is willing to wear many hats and go the extra mile to ensure that the job is done correctly, efficiently and in a timely manner.

In addition to her duties in the Procurement Unit, she also spearheaded the 2010 FSECC campaign. Though her duties as Chair are over, she is assisting with this year’s FSECC fund-raising efforts.

Employee of the Month August

While there are many grounds for such an award, the primary reason for Larissa Pallo’s nomination as Employee of the Month is due to the initiative, patience and technical/customer service skills she has shown during Recovery’s long-continuing efforts to close out Project Worksheets still open from the pre-2004 storm events. This has proven to be a multi-year task that has required coordination between the applicants, FEMA, a variety of technical/legal specialists, and various offices within the Division itself. Recently this arduous coordination paid off, in that FEMA obligated Project Worksheets for Miami-Dade County from these storms, with the total reimbursement approaching $14 million.

While this in and of itself may seem like no special task, the reviewer must understand that at this late stage in the game, open PWs from these storms are often fraught with issues preventing obligation of funds. Furthermore, at the 8-plus year mark, these projects often suffer from a lack of available documentation, lack of institutional knowledge, and often a lack of urgency from the applicant’s side. It is to Pallo’s credit that she has been able to consistently work through these issues, helping the applicants reach the end goal of returning this money to the public coffers.

Employees of the Month September 2011

Due to the overwhelming workload placed on several of our senior staff due to the Division moving under the Executive Office of the Governor, three employees will share the honor of being Employee of the Month for September 2011.

Cherie Trainor, Deputy Chief of Finance and Administration, has spent countless hours preparing paperwork, attending meetings, working directly with Secretary Buzzett to insure that issues regarding the smooth administrative transition for the Division to move under the Executive Office of the Governor were accomplished. She worked out details on the property transfer, set up multiple new financial and administrative accounts under the Division, removing them from under the Department of Community Affairs. Her daily efforts went primarily unseen, except to executive staff and we are all appreciative of her efforts.

Mark Helms has spent his time insuring that all employee coding was properly transferred into People First, which included recoding every employee from the DCA coding to the new Division codes under the Governor’s Office. New efforts were undertaken for the hiring processes so that our coding will align with those in the Governor’s Office. He worked directly with senior DCA leadership to insure furnishings were left as per the plan and most importantly worked with the Department of Management Services as the Division sought to acquire new and expanded space within the building.

The task of writing an entirely new set of divisional policies was handled with great skill by our attorney, Heather Komarnisky. Prior to October 1, the Division had primarily used the policies from the Department of Community Affairs. These all had to be rewritten in a 30 day period to align with the policies within the Executive Office of the Governor. Not only did Komarnisky modify policies but she also wrote many new policies. She was able to accomplish all of this ahead of time and received the approval of the Governor’s Office on each of the policies.

October 2011
Florida Division of Emergency Management

Our Mission
Working together to ensure that Florida is prepared to respond to emergencies, recover from them, and mitigate against their impacts.

Our Vision
Failure is not an option.

Our Motto
Semper Gumby - Always Flexible

Director’s Standing Orders
1. Take care of the needs of survivors.
2. Take care of the needs of responders.
3. When in doubt, re-read number one.
Florida Division of Emergency Management

Our Mission
Working together to ensure that Florida is prepared to respond to emergencies, recover from them, and mitigate against their impacts.

Our Vision
Failure is not an option.

Our Motto
Semper Gumby - Always Flexible

Director’s Standing Orders
1. Take care of the needs of survivors.
2. Take care of the needs of responders.
3. When in doubt, re-read number one.