

Inside IEMA

Monthly Newsletter



Illinois Emergency Management Agency

August 2017

From IEMA Director James K. Joseph

It's hard to fathom the magnitude of the devastation inflicted on residents of Houston and southeast Texas by Hurricane Harvey. In addition to hurricane-force winds and storm surge, up to 50 inches of rain fell in some places as the storm stalled for days. Fifty inches. Unbelievable.

The images and stories on TV and social media show the desperation of thousands of people forced from their homes, many plucked from their rooftops by helicopters or boats after they escaped rapidly rising waters that engulfed their homes. We saw senior citizens up to their waists in floodwaters waiting to be rescued. Our hearts broke when we learned of the lives lost in this horrific tragedy.

But media reports are also bringing the heartwarming visuals of people helping their neighbors and complete strangers in their time of need. Whether it be using their boats to ferry others to dry land, or bringing donations, or standing in long lines to offer their help however and wherever it is needed, we truly saw how Americans band together during hard times.

The state of Illinois stands ready to provide assistance requested by Texas and other impacted states through the national Emergency Management Assistance Compact system. We also are coordinating with state agencies and our mutual aid partners with deployable personnel and assets to ensure a state of readiness.

While the rains have ended and floodwaters are receding, the impact of this disaster will be felt for many months, even many years. Illinois is committed to helping the state of Texas and its residents as needed throughout the response and recovery process.

Another tragic event that happened halfway around the world recently also has saddened the hearts of Americans. Ten sailors lost their lives after their ship collided with another vessel near Singapore. The tragedy hit close to home as one of those sailors, Petty Officer 2nd Class Logan Stephen Palmer, was from Decatur, Illinois. Please keep his family and friends in your thoughts and prayers.



Logan Palmer was posthumously promoted to Interior Communications Electrician Second Class.

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2017 IEMA Training Summit

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Breakout Session Wednesday, Sept. 6, 3-4 p.m.

Verizon Next Gen Public Safety (Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery, 5G, CDMA Shutdown, Mobile Biometrics, Surveillance, Tactical Mobile Incident Command and FirstNet)

Presented by: Todd Biebel, Manager of Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery

Steven K. Miller, Verizon's National Security Team

From the worldwide shutdown of CDMA networks to the launch of Verizon's next gen 5G network, many exciting wireless advancements are happening. All of these are having an enormous impact on public safety and emergency communications response. Verizon's national security team will provide an overview of the Verizon Wireless Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery program along with next generation solutions and Verizon's value proposition for FirstNet. Verizon Wireless remains steadfast in its commitment as a viable strategic partner to public safety and first response groups and continues to be a leader in the innovation of emergency communications response.

Gold

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Solar Eclipse Brings Crowds to Southern Illinois

As large crowds flocked to southern Illinois to experience the total solar eclipse on Aug. 21, emergency management officials, first responders, medical personnel and many others worked behind the scenes to ensure public safety.

Planning for the eclipse and days leading up to the rare celestial event began months earlier, when state, county and municipal public safety agencies and partner organizations began the process to ensure safety for everyone before, during and after the eclipse.

The planning efforts for the eclipse were similar to those public safety officials undertake for other events that involve large crowds. Officials worked to address every possible contingency, including such issues as crowd control, public health and medical considerations, highway congestion, mass care and communications.

To facilitate coordination among response organizations, IEMA established a State Unified Area Command (SUAC) in Effingham, where representatives from the state departments of Transportation, Natural Resources, Public Health, Corrections, IEMA, the Illinois State Police, Illinois National Guard, fire, law enforcement and emergency management mutual aid organizations and the American Red Cross were staged from Aug. 18-22.

Two Area Commands, one in Fairview Heights and the other in Marion, reported to the SUAC. Personnel in the Area Commands interacted with response organizations in its nine-county area in order to maintain close-range situational awareness of issues related to traffic, medical needs, cooling centers and other situations. The National Weather Service in



The SUAC was located at the Effingham County Emergency Operations Center.

Paducah was present in the Marion Area Command to provide regular weather updates for the entire 18-county area.

The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) in Springfield was activated Aug. 18-22 to support the SUAC and the Area Commands. Representatives from several state agencies and mutual aid partners staffed the SEOC, prepared to expedite deployment of personnel or resources if needed during that time.

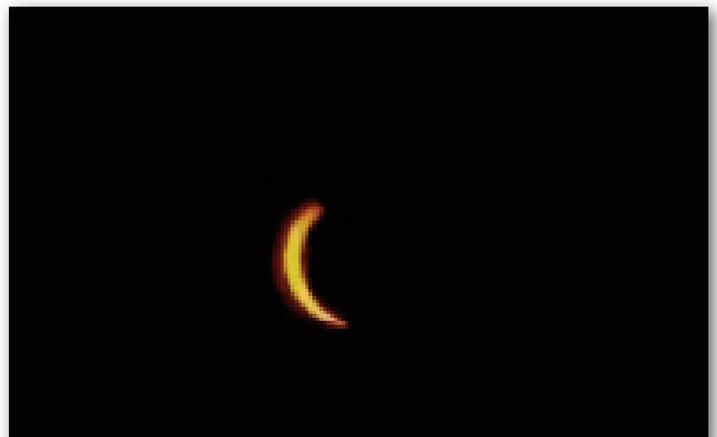
State, county and local agencies actively promoted safety messages related to the eclipse, such as eye, traffic and heat safety. An eclipse page was established on the Ready Illinois website where event-related information from several state agencies could be found.

The extensive planning appears to have paid off, as few incidents were reported. Traffic on roads leading out of southern Illinois was slow moving as many eclipse watchers tried to leave after the event.

Southern Illinois will once again be in the path of totality for a solar eclipse in 2024.



The Advance Planning Cell at the SUAC works on a map recon for Joint Reception, Staging and Onward Integration in the event additional resources are required.



The longest duration of solar eclipse totality was near Carbondale.

IEMA, FEMA, SBA Conduct Flood Damage Assessments

The state of Illinois continues to seek ways to support recovery efforts in northern Illinois after torrential rainfall events in July caused record and near-record flooding in both northeastern and northwestern Illinois.

A joint preliminary damage assessment of homes and businesses by IEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) was conducted Aug. 18-22 in Cook, Kane, Lake and McHenry counties.

In addition, IEMA and FEMA recently began the preliminary damage assessment process with municipalities, counties and other governmental bodies in these four counties to validate their costs related to the flooding. Information from that process will determine if the state could meet the \$18.3 million threshold for federal assistance that would reimburse government entities for some of their disaster-related expenses.

IEMA personnel also are working with emergency management officials in northwestern Illinois, where flooding affected Carroll, Henry, Jo Daviess, Lee,



Assessment team members document flood damage.

Ogle, Rock Island, Stephenson and Whiteside counties. The state requested a joint preliminary damage assessment for Stephenson County with the SBA to determine if it meets requirements for an SBA disaster declaration.

The State Emergency Operations Center in Springfield was activated for two weeks to support flood fighting efforts in these four counties along with subsequent flooding in the northwestern part of the state.

Power Outage Exercise Tests Response, Recovery

Think about the inconveniences you experience when your power is out for a few hours. Now imagine that outage covers a large portion of the state and lasts for several weeks. Grocery stores and other businesses, including banks, remain closed. Schools using power from generators have been turned into shelters. The area's economy has been severely impacted.

These are just some of the issues that challenged participants in a recent long-term power outage response and recovery tabletop exercise in the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). The National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) invited Illinois to participate in a pilot of the exercise, which enabled the state and its partner agencies to evaluate capabilities for response to and recovery from such an event.

The exercise focused on several areas, including public and private sector integration, energy sector and critical infrastructure interdependencies, resources and capabilities related to restoration following a widespread power outage, human and societal impacts of a long-term power outage, and decision-making for power restoration and fuel allocation priorities.



Participants engage in small group discussion during the exercise.

The exercise provided an opportunity for State Emergency Operations Center liaisons to review current plans and procedures, discuss roles and responsibilities with critical partners and begin updates on plans to address this type of event. Illinois will build on the exercise activities as the planning process continues for a wide range of hazards including earthquakes, improvised nuclear devices and significant power outages.

Rail Safety Week Set for Sept. 24-30

The first-ever national Rail Safety Week, a joint effort by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the national rail safety education nonprofit Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI), will take place Sept. 24-30. The goal of the event-filled week is to raise awareness, encourage rail safety education and empower the public to make smart decisions near railroad crossings as a person or vehicle in the U.S. is hit by a train about every three hours.

For railroads, safety is an all-year, round-the-clock priority. Every railroader's job starts with a focus on keeping train crews, highway crossings and the customers and communities railroads serve safe. Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) statistics announced earlier this year show that 2016 was the safest year on record for freight railroads. Last year marked not only the lowest train accident rate on record, but likewise the lowest derailment rate, which declined 10 percent from 2015. These gains are not anomalies, but examples of how steady rail investment pays safety dividends. For example, since railroads were economically deregulated in 1980, they have spent over \$630 billion, and the train accident rate has decreased 79 percent.

Trains have come a long way since the days of the Iron Horse. State-of-the-art technologies like big data, drones, and ultrasound technology are just a few of the innovations railroads use to advance rail safety. For example, while today's inspection technology currently makes it possible for railroads to identify 90 percent of track defects before they lead to an incident, multidimensional ultrasonic technology, currently in testing, aims to identify the remaining 10 percent of track imperfections.

In Pueblo, Colorado, railroads jointly support the world's leading rail research and testing facility, Transportation Technology Center, Inc. or TTCI. Many of rail's new technologies — like the world's first laser-



based rail inspection system, or on-board computer systems that analyze track geometry — are developed and tested at TTCI. Also housed at TTCI is the Security and Emergency Response Training Center (SERTC), which trains thousands of first responders every year. SERTC is a collaboration between railroads and the FRA, where responders get hands-on experience with simulated hazmat incidents. The center also offers free, web-based training for those who cannot attend in person.

Additionally, thousands of first responders around the country have signed up for one of freight rail's latest innovations: a mobile app called AskRail. Launched in October 2014, the app is designed to prepare responders for a rail emergency by providing immediate access to accurate, timely data about what type of hazardous materials a railcar is carrying. AskRail can only be downloaded by qualified emergency responders who have completed rail emergency training. Railroads can also offer the app to known emergency responders along their routes.

Article provided by GORAIL. For additional information on rail safety in Illinois, visit the Illinois Commerce Commission website at <https://www.icc.illinois.gov/railroad/>.

How to Help Hurricane Harvey Survivors in Texas

Many people are asking what they can do to help the thousands of people affected by Hurricane Harvey. As with any disaster, the most effective way is to donate money and time to trusted, reputable, voluntary or charitable organizations.

The Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters has a list of vetted disaster relief organizations at <http://txvoad.communityos.org/cms/node/104>. A list

of approved national organizations can be found on the National Volunteers Active in Disasters website at <https://www.nvoad.org/>.

It's important to remember that recovery from a disaster of this magnitude will take months, even years. So, too, will the need for generosity from caring Americans.

SIREN Enhances Emergency Communications at State Fair

Notifying key personnel scattered across the 366-acre state fairgrounds in Springfield of threatening weather and other significant issues can be challenging. Coordination between IEMA, the Illinois Department of Agriculture, the Illinois State Police and others resulted in an enhanced communications system for quickly alerting officials of potential public safety issues.

IEMA offered the use of the State of Illinois Rapid Electronic Notification (SIREN) system, which is used by IEMA and the Illinois Department of Public Health to simultaneously send telephone, text and e-mail notifications to staff members and key partners with a click on a computer.

A list of key State Fair staff was developed and entered

into the SIREN system, and the IEMA Communications Center was enlisted to send messages when necessary. SIREN proved its value the first night of the fair, when a severe weather front moved through Springfield. The National Weather Service sent out five messages over SIREN to fair staff via the Communications Center in a 3 ½ hour period.

The weather for the rest of the fair was generally good, so it wasn't necessary to send that many messages in a single day during the run of the fair. However, the system proved its worth, was highly complimented by all, and will continue to be a part of State Fair operations in the future.

September is National Preparedness Month

"Disasters Don't Plan Ahead. You Can." That's the theme for the 2017 National Preparedness Month, which begins Sept. 1. While we never know when the next disaster will strike, everyone can take actions to be better prepared for the unexpected.

The goal of National Preparedness Month is to increase the overall number of individuals, families and communities that engage in preparedness actions at home, work, business, school and places of worship.

Weekly themes during September will focus on various preparedness actions. They include the following:

- Week 1: [September 1-9](#)
[Make a Plan for Yourself, Family and Friends](#)
- Week 2: [September 10-16](#)
[Plan to Help Your Neighbor and Community](#)
- Week 3: [September 17-23](#)
[Practice and Build Out Your Plans](#)
- Week 4: [September 24-30](#)
[Get Involved! Be a part of Something Larger](#)

The national Ready Campaign has several tools to help agencies and organizations promote preparedness during September, including logos, graphics, public service announcements, instructional



videos and other emergency preparedness publications. These materials are available at www.ready.gov/september.

In addition, the FEMA app is a great resource year-round for preparedness and disaster information, including alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations, safety reminders, tips and emergency checklists, and locations of open shelters following a disaster. The app is available on the Apple App Store and on Google Play.

The Great U.S. ShakeOut Set for Oct. 19

Get ready to Drop, Cover and Hold On during The Great U.S. ShakeOut Earthquake drill at 10:19 on Oct. 19. The annual earthquake drill centers around the actions people should take when the earth starts to quake: Drop down to the ground, take Cover under a table or other heavy piece of furniture, and Hold On to that item until the shaking stops.

Nearly 500,000 Illinois residents registered to participate in the 2016 ShakeOut drill.

With two seismic zones in the southern part of the state and Illinois residents who travel throughout the world, it's important that everyone know how to stay safe during an earthquake. In fact, some of the most powerful earthquakes to ever occur in the U.S. happened a little more than 200 years ago in the New Madrid Seismic Zone, which reaches into southern Illinois. That series of earthquakes lasted for several months, and shaking was felt as far away as the East Coast.

Schools, businesses, government agencies, families and others can register to participate in the drill at



www.shakeout.org/centralus. Registered participants will receive additional information about the drill and earthquake preparedness. While the international drill will take place on Oct. 19, individual drills can be conducted anytime within two weeks of that date.

IEMA Participates in National RadResponder Drill

On Aug. 17, personnel from IEMA participated in a national drill to test the data sharing capabilities of population monitoring in the event of a nuclear power plant incident. IEMA was one of several organizations invited to participate in the drill.

The drill was hosted by RadResponder in coordination with the Centers for Disease Control, the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors and the National Association of County and City Health Officials.

The RadResponder tool enables users to enter information on people who come to a reception center after a nuclear power plant incident. The total number of people screened for radioactive contamination, along with numbers of those found to have external or internal contamination, exhibiting signs of Acute Radiation Syndrome, and referred to hospitals is also entered into the system.

The drill gave participants an opportunity to work with the RadResponder tool within an accident scenario, as well as provide feedback to the developers.



IEMA was invited to have an exhibit in the Governor's Tent at the 2017 Illinois State Fair. The exhibit featured the earthquake risk in Illinois and the steps people can take to protect themselves and their homes. Visitors to IEMA's booth also could view several earthquake mitigation videos. Those videos and several more are available on the Ready Illinois website at www.ready.illinois.gov. The display board and information materials will also be in the Governor's Tent at the DuQuoin State Fair.

Safety Tips to Prevent Ladder-Related Injuries

Recent renovations at IEMA's Knotts Street facility in Springfield involved stepladders and overhead work, and served as a reminder of the importance of safety when using ladders. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission states that more than a half-million people were treated for ladder-related injuries in the United States in 2014. With proper planning and precautions, these injuries can be eliminated.

According to the National Safety Council, it's important to choose the right ladder for the job. The height at which you need to work, the weight that will be placed on the ladder and the conditions at the site of use will all factor into ladder selection. The ladder must be placed on a firm, solid surface. Avoid wet, soft or slippery surfaces, and never place the ladder on top of objects to gain additional height.



Don't become complacent when using a ladder. Maintain three points of contact on the rungs at all times (one hand/two feet or two hands/one foot), and never stand higher than the third rung from the top. If ladders are being used near your work location, minimize activities and traffic in the area, and keep an eye out for unsafe conditions.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has identified five major causes of ladder fall incidents:

1. Incorrect extension ladder setup angle: An extension ladder should be placed at a 75° angle relative to the ground. This angle can be reasonably achieved by placing the base of the ladder one foot away from the surface it's resting against for every four feet of ladder height.
2. Inappropriate ladder selection: The ladder must have the proper duty-rating.
3. Insufficient ladder inspections: Regularly inspect ladders for damage and follow manufacturer recommendations for maintenance.
4. Improper ladder use: Follow the manufacturer's safety instructions.
5. Lack of access to ladder safety tools and information: NIOSH has an app available for iOS and Android to help prevent ladder fall incidents. The app, "Ladder Safety," was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and contains helpful selection and setup tools for safe ladder use.

(Information for this article was obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Safety Council, and U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission websites.)

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<http://www.illinois.gov/iema/Info/Pages/Newsletters.aspx>.



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