

# Inside IEMA

Monthly Newsletter



Illinois Emergency Management Agency

March 2018

## Message From Acting Director William P. Robertson

If someone had said a few years ago that I would be appointed as IEMA's Acting Director, I would have told them it would never happen. But you know the old saying, "Never, say never," and here I am!

I have my own saying, "Never be late to need." I believe this mindset is paramount in this line of work. My first few weeks at IEMA have shown me an agency with superb people dedicated to fulfilling an ambitious and worthy public safety mission.

My first week was spent visiting agency facilities and meeting the great folks from IEMA. Within the first hour on the job I was at the ILEAS conference introducing myself to some of Illinois' finest law enforcement leaders. It made me realize the crucial role IEMA plays in the state's public safety efforts and the importance of our mission.

IEMA's programs are impressive and our mission makes me realize the citizens of this great state are extremely lucky. From exercises and planning, operations and deployments to the field, maintenance of an impressive fleet of response vehicles, and nuclear power plant monitoring, IEMA has a huge responsibility. I am honored to be a part of IEMA and look forward to meeting and working with our many public safety partners throughout Illinois.

If you're wondering where the heck I came from, I've been involved in the Illinois Air National Guard since 1980, enlisting as a Security Policeman. I began my flying career around 1983 and have flown several different aircraft, including the A-37, F-16 and C-130. I've served in many capacities of supervision and command to include being a Joint Task Force Commander and Dual Status Commander for Domestic Operations if ever called upon.

I left the 182nd Airlift Wing in Peoria after commanding it for 13 years. I still serve as the Chief of Staff of the Illinois Air National Guard at Camp Lincoln as a part-time Guardsman. My commitment now is to supporting IEMA's continuing service to the citizens of Illinois.



Acting Director William P. Robertson

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## Teams Assess Damage to Homes, Businesses from February Floods

Personnel from IEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Small Business Administration and local officials teamed up during the week of March 19 to assess flood damage in Iroquois, Kankakee and Vermilion counties. The floods resulted from heavy rains and snow melt in mid-February, which caused many rivers and streams throughout the state to rise above flood stage.

The state requested federal support for the damage assessments after initial damage assessments from officials in the three counties indicated more than 120 homes suffered major damage or were destroyed, while another 850 homes sustained lesser damage. At press time, IEMA was reviewing information collected during the joint federal/state damage assessments.

The three counties were included in a disaster proclamation issued Feb. 23 by Gov. Bruce Rauner to ensure state support as communities in those counties battled flood waters.

The State Emergency Operations Center in Springfield was activated for more than two weeks to coordinate state assistance to several counties across the state



**Staff from IEMA, FEMA and the SBA confer during flood damage assessments in Watseka.**

affected by flooding. State assistance included 50,000 sandbags, 18 pumps with hoses, nine inmate work crews and two Emergency Management Assistance Teams.

## IEMA, NWS, USACE Provide Flood Preparation Briefings

On March 14, IEMA hosted flood preparation meetings in two areas along the Illinois River. Local emergency managers, levee district officials, municipal, county and state elected officials and others involved in flood preparedness and response were invited to the meetings in Ottawa and Peoria.

The meetings included an overview of flood potential for this spring and summer by the National Weather Service, an explanation of flood prevention and flood fighting resources available through the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, and a review of the state's preparedness and response capabilities.

IEMA has used the flood preparation meetings for many years to enhance communication and coordination before spring flooding. Additional flood preparation meetings may be scheduled this spring in other areas of the state.



**IEMA Region 6 Coordinator Bob Flemming explains the process for requesting state resources to participants at the Peoria briefing.**

# ITTF Group to Offer School Safety Recommendations

Under Gov. Bruce Rauner's leadership, the Illinois Terrorism Task Force (ITTF) created the School Safety Working Group in the aftermath of the mass school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. The group includes representatives from state and local law enforcement, statewide school associations, campus emergency management and the State Fire Marshal.

The mission of the School Safety Working Group is to focus specifically on the threat of an intruder/aggressor/active shooter in schools. The group is not focusing on gun control measures or other largely political debates, instead honing in on practical recommendations to assist school officials in making their schools even safer. The group is focusing primarily on three main areas:

- **Behavioral threat assessment:** Looking at the need for schools to have teams that include mental health professionals, law enforcement professionals and school officials to help identify students who might need assistance and then to intervene to provide assistance. Also, looking at information sharing between schools and law enforcement, and finding ways to encourage students to participate in the "See something, say something" program as an important prevention layer.
- **Hardening of facilities:** Developing a prioritized list of security measures for school officials to consider as well as finding a way to



**Eric Arnold (left), of Western Illinois University, and John Mack (center), of the Illinois State Police, co-chair the ITTF School Safety Working Group. Mike Chamness (right) is chairman of the ITTF.**

provide site assessment resources to schools.

- **Response protocols:** Looking at the most effective procedures to protect students and staff in an active shooter situation.

The School Safety Working Group will send its recommendations to the Governor's Office for consideration. Most of the recommendations are expected to be in the form of "best practice" recommendations. Other recommendations might suggest tweaks to existing statutes or new legislation. The group held its first meeting on March 7 at IEMA and has continued to meet weekly to work on the school safety issues.



**Lt. Gov. Evelyn Sanguinetti (second from left) visited IEMA's headquarters on March 7. Sanguinetti received a briefing on IEMA's responsibilities, then toured the State Emergency Operations Center, the agency's Communications Center and the Radiological Emergency Assessment Center (REAC), pictured above. Kay Foster (second from right), chief of the Bureau of Nuclear Facility Safety, explains REAC's role in protecting the public in the event of an accident at a nuclear power plant.**

## Liquid Nitrogen Generator Installation Complete

A recently completed project will cut agency costs and reduce staff time while ensuring the continued transmission of vital data to the agency from nuclear power plants in Illinois.

The innovative liquid nitrogen generator project to purchase, test and install liquid nitrogen generators at each of the six operating nuclear power plants in Illinois concluded in late March with installation of the final liquid nitrogen generator at the Clinton Nuclear Power Station. The generators replaced liquid nitrogen tanks that were used for nearly 30 years to cool radiation detectors within IEMA's Gaseous Effluent Monitoring System (GEMS).

The GEMS continuously monitors releases in the effluent stacks at each of the nuclear power stations and transmits that data to IEMA's computer system in Springfield, where it is monitored 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It is part of the agency's Remote Monitoring System (RMS), which also collects and transmits data inside the nuclear power reactors and in a two-mile radius around each nuclear plant.

During an incident at one of the plants, data from the RMS would be analyzed by the agency's reactor and health physics experts to determine actions to protect the public from exposure to radiation.

The liquid nitrogen generators address several issues posed by the tanks, including decreasing evaporation losses and elimination of time-consuming tank delivery issues.



**Liquid nitrogen generators like this have been installed at all six nuclear power plants in Illinois.**

The first liquid nitrogen generator was installed at the Byron Nuclear Power Station in November 2016. Following that installation, staff worked to optimize the process to minimize issues from increased building temperature, liquid nitrogen fill time and compressor run time.

## State Selected for Public Health Emergency Workshop

Illinois is one of six states selected to participate in a National Governors Association (NGA) workshop to develop strategic action plans for public health preparedness and response.

States were selected by the NGA through a competitive application process. Other states selected are Arizona, Hawaii, New Jersey, Oregon and West Virginia.

Senior-level policy representatives from the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Governor's Office and state Rep. Tim Butler (R-Springfield) will participate in the two-day workshop. The workshop will be held May 1-2.

Participants will complete pre-workshop activities to identify legal, regulatory and administrative challenges to responding to a public health emergency. During the workshop, strategic action plans will be developed to address those challenges. Following the workshop, representatives will work toward implementing the plans.

Throughout the process, participants will receive insight and support from NGA Center for Best Practices staff and national subject matter experts.

The NGA Center for Best Practices will cover expenses for state participants in the workshop.

### *What is radioactivity and radiation?*

Radioactivity is the natural process by which unstable atoms release their excess energy. This emission, or giving up of energy, is called radiation.

Radiation is divided into two types: non-ionizing and ionizing. Non-ionizing radiation includes microwaves that cook food, ultraviolet light waves that are used in tanning beds, and the waves that transmit radio and television signals. Ionizing radiation is radiation that has enough energy to remove electrons from atoms. Gamma rays, X-rays, alpha particles and beta particles have sufficient energy to cause ionization.

Radiation and radioactive materials are a natural part of our environment. Naturally occurring ionizing radiation is given off by rocks, soil, trees, plants and even the human body. Everything on earth is continuously exposed to cosmic radiation from outer space. The level of radiation naturally existing in our environment is called "background radiation." It may vary greatly from one location to another depending on related factors such as solar radiation, geographic elevation, soil composition and the presence of radon gases from the soil, and building materials.

Man-made sources of ionizing radiation are used in medical diagnosis, such as X-rays, medical treatment and a variety of industrial applications. Products such

as smoke detectors and gas lantern mantels also give off ionizing radiation.

The effects of radiation on people depend on the amount and length of time of exposure, how much of the body is exposed, how much radioactive material stays in the body, and the general health and age of the exposed person. The effects of radiation can be decreased by reducing the amount of time the person is exposed, placing shielding between the source and the person, and increasing the distance from the source of radiation.

There are four types of radiation people typically encounter: alpha particles, beta particles, gamma rays and X-rays. Alpha particles pose the least danger to people in terms of external exposure; in fact, they are stopped by clothing and skin. However, they can be dangerous if ingested or inhaled.

Beta particles are moderately penetrating and can be dangerous both externally and if ingested or inhaled. Beta particles can be stopped by a layer of skin, clothing in some instances, or a sheet of aluminum.

Gamma rays and X-rays are primarily an external hazard. Skin and standard clothing do not stop gamma and X-rays; they can be stopped by several inches of lead, concrete or steel.

## DePue, Peru Receive FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grants

The village of DePue and city of Peru recently received funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for flood mitigation projects that will protect critical infrastructure.

DePue received \$687,062 in Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) funds to construct a floodwall and floodwater storage basin that will protect the village's wastewater treatment plant. The grant represents 90 percent of the eligible project cost. DePue will provide the remaining 10 percent project cost.

Peru received \$365,428 in PDM funding for construction of a floodwall to protect the city's wastewater treatment plant. The FEMA grant will cover

75 percent of the project's eligible cost, with Peru providing the remaining 25 percent project cost.

The PDM program makes funding available to local and state governments to implement cost-effective hazard mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate the risk of loss of life that complement a comprehensive mitigation program. PDM funds may be awarded for development of an all-hazards mitigation plan or a hazard mitigation project.

More information about the PDM program is available at <https://www.illinois.gov/iema/Mitigation/Pages/MitigationPrograms.aspx#PreDisaster>.

# Training and Exercise Update

## **G557 Rapid Needs Assessment**

Effingham County EOC, Effingham  
April 10, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This course provides information and resources to enable participants to plan an effective damage assessment program and conduct rapid, effective damage assessments in order to save lives, protect property and the environment, and begin the process of recovery and mitigation.

The course is designed for local officials who are responsible for assessing, collecting and reporting damages during and after an event that causes damage to private, public and critical infrastructure.

## **FEMA 152 Building Evaluation in Preparation for an Earthquake**

John A. Logan College, Carterville  
April 19-20, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Learn how to identify potentially hazardous buildings before earthquakes occur and conduct safety evaluations of buildings following earthquakes. This course also covers Rapid Observation of Vulnerability and Estimation of Risk (ROVER) software that automates the paper-based screenings procedures.

This course is designed for emergency managers, building owners and officials, engineers, architects,

risk analysts and other interested residents and volunteers.

## **G290 Basic Public Information Officer**

Peoria Advanced Medical Transport, Peoria  
May 9-10, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This two-day classroom course is an updated, shortened version of the previous G290 course with the emphasis on skills development and the impact of technology on emergency public information. The Public Information Officer (PIO) training program is designed to provide PIOs with the essential knowledge, skills and abilities to support proper decision-making by delivering the right message to the right people at the right time.

This course is designed for individuals who have public information responsibilities as their main job or as an auxiliary function at the federal, state, local, tribal or territorial level of government, and in the private and nongovernmental sectors.

Registration for the courses mentioned above can be completed on the IEMA website at <https://public.iema.state.il.us/iema/Training/OnlineReg/classes.asp>

# Revisions Made to State Procurement Program

Recent revisions to a state procurement initiative should streamline the program that helps state and local governments save time and money when purchasing many commodities, services and equipment.

The program formerly known as the Joint Purchasing Program is now the Unified Procurement Program, which is administered by the Chief Procurement Officer for General Services (CPO-GS). The CPO-GS establishes contracts for supplies and services available to local units of government and officers of the state.

Public Act 100-0043 allows any governmental unit to purchase directly from these contracts, unless prohibited by its local policies. The state no longer requires local action, such as a board resolution, for a

governmental unit to participate in the program.

IEMA identified several items and services currently available through the Unified Procurement Program that may be particularly relevant for emergency management purposes. These include a variety of consumables, medical equipment and supplies, and shelter items, as well as security and other services.

In addition, the state has pre-negotiated discounts for items in the Grainger catalog, including pumps, generators, tools and many other products.

More information about the Unified Procurement Program is available at <https://www.illinois.gov/iema/LocalEMA/Pages/purchasing.aspx>.

# Volunteers in Preparedness and Response is April Theme

Volunteers can provide critical assistance in disaster preparedness, response and recovery efforts in Illinois. Throughout April, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and local emergency management agencies will highlight ways Illinois residents can help their communities be more resilient.

Disaster volunteer opportunities vary from community to community. People interested in learning more about how to volunteer to help before, during or after a disaster can contact local voluntary organizations or their local emergency management agency for information about opportunities in their area.

## IEMA Seeking Presentation Proposals for Summit

People interested in presenting a general or breakout session at the 2018 IEMA Training Summit are encouraged to submit a proposal by April 16. The summit will be held Sept. 4-6 at the Bank of Springfield Center in Springfield.

The summit planning committee is seeking presentations on timely topics that are relevant to participants from various response and recovery disciplines, including emergency management, fire services, law enforcement, military, public health, public works, voluntary organizations, local or state government, the private sector and other professionals dedicated to serving the public before, during and after emergencies.

General and breakout sessions will last one hour, including a question and answer period. Topics needing longer timeframes may be considered for post-summit sessions on the afternoon of Sept. 6.

Proposals should be submitted via Survey Monkey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2018Summitcallforpresentations>. Questions about the presentation proposal process should be directed to Sarah Plinski at [sarah.plinski@illinois.gov](mailto:sarah.plinski@illinois.gov), Brad Clearwater at [brad.clearwater@illinois.gov](mailto:brad.clearwater@illinois.gov) or Abby Damm at [abby.damm@illinois.gov](mailto:abby.damm@illinois.gov).

## Sponsor, Exhibitor Registration Also Open

The IEMA Training Summit offers many opportunities for businesses and organizations to attain visibility and interact with participants through several sponsorship levels and exhibitor booths. Each year, the summit draws approximately 1,000 participants.

To secure a sponsorship or exhibitor booth, check out the prospectus at [https://www.illinois.gov/iema/Training/Summit/Documents/Summit\\_Vendor\\_Packet.pdf](https://www.illinois.gov/iema/Training/Summit/Documents/Summit_Vendor_Packet.pdf).

Questions about sponsorships and exhibitor booths can be directed to Julie Pfeifer at [julie.pfeifer@illinois.gov](mailto:julie.pfeifer@illinois.gov).





The Chatham Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and WAND-TV in Decatur hosted a weather alert radio event at the Chatham Walgreens on March 8. People could bring in their weather radios to be programmed or buy a new weather alert radio and have it programmed by Chatham EMA staff and volunteers or personnel from WAND-TV, the National Weather Service office in Lincoln and IEMA. Pictured here are Ron Steffen, a volunteer with Chatham EMA, and Chatham EMA Director Matt Bryan, as Bryan programs a weather radio.

## April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

It was just a quick call, a picture, an email or a text. It was a few seconds that you took your eyes and your attention away from the road. And it is just those few seconds that could change your life, a loved one's life, or even a complete stranger's life forever.

The National Safety Council estimates that more than 40,000 deaths were caused by motor vehicle accidents in 2017. More than 4.5 million people required medical attention following crashes. Distracted driving has become a major contributor to these statistics.

April is the National Safety Council's Distracted Driving Awareness Month. Cell phones, dashboard infotainment systems and voice command features all pose a threat to our safety while driving.

Hands-free device usage is not a safe alternative because recent research has shown that the brain cannot process multiple complex tasks at once. Even when we can keep our eyes on the road while talking, most people will not be able to process all the visual information needed for safe driving.

Hands-free cell phone conversations are different from other distractions in your car. Passengers offer a second set of eyes and can actively communicate



traffic hazards. Listening to music does not require as much thought as an active conversation. Reaching for objects or adjusting controls typically takes much less time than a phone conversation, so the exposure to risk is smaller.

During cell phone calls, drivers can develop what researchers call inattentive blindness. Attention to your

surroundings becomes secondary to the phone conversation.

So next time you get in your vehicle, turn off your cell phone. Enter your destination into your GPS before departing. Even hands-free use is not a safe way to make a call. Send and read text messages and emails before you depart.

If your trip will be long, wait to respond to messages until you take a break from driving and have parked safely. Avoid calling or texting friends, family and co-workers when you know they are driving. No phone call or message is worth a life.

*(Information for this article was obtained from the National Safety Council, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, and University of Utah News Center websites)*

Previous issues of Inside IEMA are available at:  
<http://www.illinois.gov/iema/Info/Pages/Newsletters.aspx>.



State of Illinois  
Illinois Emergency Management Agency

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