

National Homeland Security Consortium
January 16-17, 2014
Washington, DC

Meeting Summary

FEMA Recommendations for Reducing Future Disaster Costs

Group Discussion to Solicit Input from NHSC; Facilitator: Glen Woodbury, Center for Homeland Defense and Security

Comments from NHSC Members:

- Relate recommendations to existing strategies and frameworks. Consider operationalizing strategies for different audiences in order for them to take action, particularly at the local government level.
- Look at recommendations as standalone actions rather than relying on Congress to provide direction.
- Public health is examining how the Affordable Health Care Act will impact them. In theory, more people with insurance means a healthier population. How will that affect demands on public health?
- Public health and EMS are hesitant to develop MOUs to share resources due to liability issues. Public works said the same in addition to the fact that they are lacking in personnel to be able to share resources during disasters. For public works, emergency management is only one aspect of their job.
- In catastrophic disasters, government needs help from the private sector. Government must also include the private sector in preparedness activities so they can help educate their employees and customers.
- We build capacities between levels of government that duplicate each other. Developing capacity is driven by money. As a nation, we haven't determined what risk we're willing to accept as we build capacity. Analytics can help determine better application of limited resources. There's no accurate assessment of current capacity nationwide. We don't know what resources exist in each state. Leaders need to make decisions judiciously.
- Education is lacking among local elected officials who do not understand how the response and recovery system works. Presents challenges for public safety.
- Consideration of changing demographics and analysis of them is needed to inform planning efforts. Different sectors have this type of data and understand it much better than government. Insurance sector is a good example.
- Emergency management is becoming more professional over time but still lacks the capacity for analytics.
- How do we translate data into practice and vice versa?
- Lessons learned from previous disasters are not being implemented.
- We don't give enough praise when local or state officials handle disasters on their own without federal assistance. Oftentimes, they're criticized for not requesting or providing financial assistance.

DHS/FEMA Update – Tim Manning, Deputy Administrator, Protection and National Preparedness, FEMA

Manning gave an update on various issues of interest to the NHSC members.

- FEMA's grant reform proposal submitted with the FY14 budget request was rejected by the Senate. FEMA has no plans to make major changes to FY14 grant guidance. There will not be increased reporting requirements and in fact, FEMA is looking to streamline or eliminate some requirements. The conversation in DC centers around who has responsibility for sustaining capabilities built through federal homeland security grant funds. Some believe that the homeland security threat has been adequately addressed but others feel strongly that we must now address emerging threats.
- EMPG grant guidance should be out much sooner this year – in March or April timeframe. There will be a stable approach to PPD-8 in guidance.
- The National Preparedness Goal may be updated within the next two years. The Recovery Framework will need to be updated due to changes through the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act as well as lessons being learned through the planning and implementation of Capstone 2014.
- DHS QHSR - DHS Secretary Johnson is reviewing the work done to date and will give guidance for the path forward.
- Threat Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) results are maturing. The next iteration is due to be submitted by the states at the end of the year.
- New DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson is focusing his attention initially on improving internal efficiency and employee morale. He's been reaching out to governors and mayors. Many of the national associations have their meetings in a January – March timeframe and the Secretary hopes to address as many as possible.

Lessons Learned from the Boston Marathon Bombing – Kurt Schwartz, Director, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

- The marathon is 26 miles long and stretches through 8 different cities. For that reason, there is no single incident commander and no single entity or jurisdiction responsible. The Mass. Emergency Management Agency took the lead in planning with partners, including the Boston Athletic Association.
- Planning efforts in the previous two years addressed Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). In past races they had deployed lots of resources. The Civil Support Team, CBRNE units provided monitoring. There were hazmat teams, helicopters, SWAT teams and snipers placed along the route from start to finish. Partners participated in a full scale exercise based on the Mumbai attacks.
- The state had not deployed a Prevent and Protect Plan in the past but the 2014 race will have it in place.
- There was a medical tent serving as a full service field hospital in place near the finish line that had 40 doctors and nurses in place with a 300 patient bed capacity. There were 11 medical tents along the course that could handle all specialties. 86 ambulances were available within 20 minutes. Because these resources were in place many lives were saved.
- Tourniquets were widely used to stop bleeding successfully. Boston has since equipped all their officers with tourniquet packs.
- Crisis counseling with the first request for federal assistance. HHS provided at no charge.

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- 10,000 people witnessed the bombing.

Changing Weather Patterns and Impact on Emergency Preparedness

Chris Maier, National Warning Coordination Meteorologist, National Weather Service

- Regardless of the cause, trends show an increasing number of extreme weather events at increasing cost to the Nation.
- Developing an adequate system for monitoring the conditions that can link (extreme weather) events to national security concerns will...lead to better understanding of the linkages over time and to improved indicators...
- Becoming a Weather-Ready Nation is about building community resilience in the face of increasing vulnerability to extreme weather.

Business Session

- The group discussed ways to enhance the monthly conference calls to make as productive as possible including use of GotoMeeting, providing review documents in advance of calls, and having associations brief on their priority issues on calls. They also suggested that more frequent information sharing on common issues is an effective means of communication and perhaps a monthly call isn't always necessary.
- Future meetings will reflect again on current priorities as compared to those identified in the 2012 white paper. Track trends and get ahead of emerging issues.
- There are many groups that meet regularly and the Consortium needs to focus on its uniqueness which is a multi-discipline approach to issues. That's the value of participation in the NHSC.
- The group decided to have each national association identify their top three emerging trends, policy priorities and/or hot topics and present those to the NHSC as a whole. That will help determine the focus of the Consortium where there is commonality.
- There was discussion about whether each national association would be willing to pay travel costs for their representatives to participate in the NHSC if at any time federal funds were not available. The Tri-Chairs asked the representatives to have this conversation and provide feedback to NEMA.
- NEMA Tri-Chair Nancy Dragani announced that Gil Orrantia (GHSAC) and Christine Walsh (APWA) would continue as the other two chairs through 2014 given the Consortium's activities were very limited over the past year due to the lapse in Congressional appropriations which delayed funding for the NHSC.
- The Tri-Chairs acknowledged outgoing Senator Tom Wyss (IN) and thanked him for his service.

NGA Cyber Security Initiative - Thomas MacLellan, NGA Center for Best Practices

- National Governors Association has developed a series of recommendations for governors to adopt related to cyber security. They're also developing a cyber agreement that will define the roles and responsibilities between the federal government and states.
- There will be a national cyber security summit in early May 2014 and will include homeland security advisors, emergency managers, CIOs, National Guard and others. NGA is also planning for a future policy academy and strategic plan.
- The Governors Homeland Security Advisors Council (GHSAC) will identify 4-5 priorities and ask associations and other groups to adopt and see how they work. NGA would like to utilize the NHSC to promote the concepts.

Updated Terrorist Threat Briefing - Mike Walker, Center for Homeland Defense and Security

- Being globally interconnected means the supply chain is highly vulnerable.
- Utilities and under daily attack as are banks. Critical infrastructure cyber attacks are increasing and insider threat is a concern. The power grid is vulnerable to many different types of attacks.
- Solar storms are a growing concern as are asteroids.
- Al Qaeda has called for an electronic jihad. China is the biggest cyber threat for the U.S.
- Cyber is an all hazards war. Government has a limited role in what it can do. Citizens and businesses are the first line of defense.