

NEMA Response and Recovery Committee Meeting
2010 Annual Conference
Tuesday, October 19, 2010

Committee Chair Mike Womack (MS) called the meeting to order at 8 am and roll was taken. As with recent committee meetings, FEMA Associate Administrator for Response and Recovery Bill Carwile and Deputy Associate Administrator Beth Zimmerman joined the group to discuss several pressing issues:

- Disaster Case Management – With the completion of FEMA’s pilot program, FEMA is working on a two-phased approach with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The goal is to have teams on the ground within 72 hours. The agency is now putting together guidance, which is due after the first of the year.
- Preliminary Damage Assessments – FEMA is developing an IA manual, which it expects to put out for public comment within a couple of weeks. The next step would be training, which FEMA is looking to coordinate with the American Red Cross and the Small Business Administration.
- National Disaster Housing Task Force – FEMA is developing a comprehensive concept of operations (CONOPS) and a Practitioners' Guide. They are also creating a database, which will include all pre and post-disaster programs that can provide assistance. There will be a public comment period on the Practitioner’s Guide.
- Rapid Temporary Repair Initiative – program will be piloted as needed
- Management Costs – FEMA is still preparing a notice for public rulemaking; this will be issued
- Snow Policy – NEMA reviewed the persistent problems with the policy. FEMA is working with the National Weather Service to address some of the data-collection problems in the policy. There are other areas that FEMA will continue to review for possible revision.
- Host State Reimbursement Policy – FEMA is forwarding the revised policy to the FEMA regions and then onto the states; as part of the revision, states are no longer required to make at least 10% of identified sheltering capacity within the state available to evacuees of impacted state.
- Mold Policy – some states have raised questions about this policy; FEMA stated that mold remediation is eligible for reimbursement, but it must be done quickly after the disaster and fully documented.

Other discussion items with FEMA:

- Public Assistance Bottom Up Review – FEMA is looking to streamline the entire PA process; hope to have a first draft by the end of the year and the final report in February 2011. FEMA will be reaching out to some states for input.
- FEMA is re-evaluating various internal systems including doing a better job of determining qualifications of FEMA employees and matching these with needs in the field after a disaster; staffing JFOs as necessary as opposed to over-staffing; staffing regional offices with right skill sets, including planners.
- National Disaster Recovery Framework – this initiative was delayed because of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill; FEMA planning to publish revised framework in early 2011
- FEMA Disaster Management and Support – a program to provide situational awareness and assist in getting big operations up and running (part of DHS SAVER – the System Assessment and Validation for Emergency Responders program)
- Eric Smith, assistant administrator for logistics management, reviewed the Logistics Capabilities Assessment Tool – congressionally mandated two-year program; helps states on a voluntary basis identify their strengths and weaknesses.

- FEMA's Whole Community Concept – takes a holistic approach to disaster preparedness, planning and recovery by integrating children and those with functional needs into all steps of the disaster management process. Marcie Roth, director of the FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination, said that FEMA has signed an MOA with the National Council on Independent Living, to addressing some of these issues. In addition, disability integration specialists are being hired for each region and guidance for states will be available.

Mr. Womack also raised the PA Pilot program. There is disagreement between Congress and FEMA, regarding FEMA's authority to fully implement some of the provisions of the program. FEMA believes it needs legislation while Congress believes they already have it. This impasse will have to be resolved before any components of the pilot can be incorporated into the full PA program.

Mr. Carwile brought up a couple of items – 1) Work in the National Hurricane Program Task Force is moving forward. There are several state directors and staff representing states on this initiative and a proposal with short and long term recommendations is being reviewed; 2) there is great concern in the administration that there will be another, more significant anthrax attack on the country. FEMA is working on a plan to lend additional support to states if such an attack occurs; 3) catastrophic planning efforts continue with the National Level Exercise 2011, which was also discussed in more detail later by Mr. Womack.

Like all NEMA committees, the Response and Recovery Committee is focusing on a specific area of the NEMA Strategic Plan. The committee's section deals with long-term recovery issues. Mr. Womack reviewed a list of questions that must be addressed before moving forward. In addition, he referred to the NLE 2011, scheduled for May 2011, which focuses on a New Madrid event. Mr. Womack is a member of the NLE's Recovery Group and believes this process can help validate some of the committee's work in long term recovery. The Recovery Group is holding its workshop in September 2011.

Dave Andrews, lead for the NEMA Public Assistance/Individual Assistance Subcommittee gave his report. It included the following:

- After helping originally establish the FEMA IA/ESF-6 Conference, the subcommittee continues to coordinate with FEMA on the development of agendas for each conference. At the last conference in April, two state/territory IA officers meetings were held, one at the beginning, and one at the end of the conference. Potential initiatives identified during the State/Territory IA Officer meetings included: more EMI courses for state IA officers; national PDA and declaration process training with a focus on consistency; finalizing development of case management regulations and funding; and development of a quarterly IA conference call supported by FEMA. There are also talks about combining this conference with the National VOAD Conference in the future.
- IA Mentoring Sub-Group (April 2010) – trying to develop an IA mentoring program. A state representative from each region has been identified and is involved in the process of developing an IA Officers Handbook and Mentoring Strategy. The NEMA Public Information Subcommittee has already developed a mentoring project for state emergency management PIOs and they are lending assistance to this project.
- State Individual Assistance Operations Course E-357 – pilot held in January 2009 at EMI and a second pilot was held in late August 2010. Sixteen individuals from several states with varying

degrees of experience attended this second pilot. Following additional fine-tuning of the course, EMI expects to offer the class to everyone some time in 2011.

- IA Yahoo Group – Commonwealth of Virginia and Larry Braja Human Services Officer Virginia Department of Emergency Management have taken over the responsibility of hosting the Yahoo Group. This group is by invitation only for state and territory IA staff, and is a great way for IA staff to share information. All directors are encouraged to follow up with their IA staff and make sure they are part of this group.
- FEMA PA Steering Committee – met in conjunction with FEMA’s Annual PA Conference on July 27-29, 2010 in Chicago, IL. Discussed the mission and purpose of the steering committee; providing direction and leadership for future development and implementation of the PA program mission; and 5-year vision for program improvements. Committee selected the following priority items for the next fiscal year: Direct Administrative Costs issues; 406 Hazard Mitigation and Repetitive Loss; virtual JFO Concept of Operations; other federal agency coordination; staffing and regional capabilities; and training development for Close-Out and Management
- FEMA/State PA Workshop – will be held at EMI November 2010. States did contribute to the agenda with Arizona coordinating. It’s expected that FEMA will combine their annual PA Conference with the FEMA/State PA Workshop in 2011 because of economic factors.
- Quarterly PA Conference Call – now held on a quarterly basis to augment the PA Workshop.
- PA Yahoo Group – on-going source of communication for the state and territory PA officers; the state of Illinois and Curtis Caldwell continues to host it.
- All other issues/policies were all already discussed during the committee meeting

Next on the agenda was a discussion about the FEMA Arbitration Process, which resulted from rulings involving Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Both Mr. Womack and Mark Cooper, director of Louisiana Governor’s Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness, characterized the process as a success. Most of the cases were found in favor of the states. It’s uncertain whether these rulings are precedent-setting.

The last presentation was by representatives from Mississippi Public Broadcasting and NPR. Jay Woods, chief operating officer from Mississippi Public Broadcasting, said that they have a very good working relationship with Mississippi Emergency Management. This includes MPB being in the Joint Information Center during events and broadcasting information (including in other languages) on watches, warnings, evacuation routes, shelters, etc. One of the reasons why it’s worked so well is because of the networking infrastructure that the broadcasting system has in place throughout the state, reaching in excess of 90% of the citizens. Mike Starling, vice president and executive director of the Technology Research Center & NPR LABS at NPR Distribution, added that NPR is starting to be more proactive in reaching out to the emergency management community nationally. They are also making significant investments in digital capabilities, which will assist in greater information dissemination. Mr. Womack encouraged all states to develop closer relationships with their state public broadcasting entities.

With no other items on the agenda, Brock Long from Alabama mentioned that with the help of DHS Science and Technology, his state has developed a real time evacuation tool. He is happy to provide more information to any other interested state.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Iowa. Florida seconded. The meeting concluded at 9:59 am.