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Director- Major General Robert T. Bray

Executive Director- J. David Smith

Chiasmus



*By J. David Smith
Executive Director*

Goldsmith once said; “to stop too fearful, and too faint to go.” This chiasmus by definition is “an inverted relationship between syntactic elements of parallel phrases.” The great citizens of our State of Rhode Island have just endured, yes survived the so-called Great Flood of 2010. For many we watched in awe and with some reverence the power of nature and our inability to do much about the confluence of rain, rivers, and obstacles.

While some may have been fearful, we were never too faint to go forward and be counted as survivors. Yes, that is the new term of political correctness instead of the precedent adverbium, called victim. The Incident Command System (ICS) class instructors do an admirable job describing their respective experience and exemplary service in an ICS environment. They could not portend the effort necessary and evolving in support of the mission to safeguard the citizens of our state and mitigate the loss of property, systems and life. President Obama has declared through FEMA that our event is a major disaster forever enumerated as DR-1894-RI. Despite this declaration we take solace in knowing that there was no loss of life attributable to this event. One of the fundamental messages in the process of emergency management is individual preparedness. There are stories of heroic efforts on the part of first responders who gave unselfishly of their time and expertise. There are also

remarkable stories of neighbors helping neighbors; literally wading into the elements of unknown consequence.

Individuals who heeded the requests of Mayor Allen Fung and Town Manager James Thomas as they at different times directed mandatory and voluntary evacuations. It is never an easy decision to grab a few cherished belongings and essential papers, medications, and vital life safety products and lock your door not knowing if you will return. Everyone should be commended for their willingness to make these difficult decisions and execute the plan with little or no resistance. These were challenging times that brought out the best of people. Volunteers from across the United States came to help Rhode Islander’s in our time of need and remain committed to us until the job is done. While we thank the hundreds of workers who represent the many faith-based groups and other volunteer agencies, I would also like to commend with special thanks and respect our Rhode Island services.

During the first hours of response we were uplifted by the immediate partnership with the RI Chapter of the American Red Cross under the leadership of their Executive Director Bruce Rutter. Tony Maione, Executive Director of the Rhode Island United Way supported and coordinated the deployment of a multitude of services despite being evacuated from their headquarters on Valley Street for a period of time. Cristina Amadeo lead the services of 2-1-1 who along with the NCCC volunteers answered thousands of telephone calls for help and guidance for several weeks of 24/7 operations. The Rhode Island

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Broadcaster's Association, and for that matter, all media services provided timely, accurate, and critical messaging in support of the Great Flood of 2010. Their coverage still reports and records a message that manages expectations, lauds the efforts of the legions of people in the field, and calls to the attention of everyone the challenges that remain; But in such a way that does not discourage or negatively impact the success of the overall effort.

The Local Emergency Management Directors Association must also be recognized for their coordinated effort, while most directors had the unenviable task of serving locally as a Fire Chief, Police Chief, EMS provider or other priority within their city or town. They brought forth a heroic effort to continue engaging the Web-EOC process, provide situational awareness to each other and used the interoperable communications network when necessary to support one another. With very few exceptions the systems worked flawlessly and will be the subject of an After Action Report (AAR) in the near future.

For the first time in our state's history we activated the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team under the lawful authority of the Declared State of Emergency by Governor Carcieri. The response team was a synergistic group that was unprecedented in membership at all levels of local, state, and federal capability. Rhode Island National Guard teams worked alongside Rhode Island Department of Transportation teams to sandbag the fog-lines of Interstate 295 in an effort to keep open the only remaining thoroughfare north/south in Rhode Island. This most visible effort was a success and bought some time for those two agencies along with the Rhode Island State Police to keep this major interstate corridor open for business and safe for travel.

Within hours of the first flooding over the weekend of the March 12th Governor Carcieri had declared a State of Emergency and was personally engaged with the various elements of response. His top level staff, other state agency directors, and the legal team worked closely with RIEMA to support our efforts and the coordinated effort with FEMA. This resulted in a series of announcements and press briefings that spoke clearly and

directly to the public. There is no question that this instilled a public trust and confidence that rippled (probably shouldn't have used that word) across the state that remains today with few exceptions.

During a recent meeting among the New England State Emergency Consortium we were able to share stories, best practices, and lessons from disasters that have been declared across New England with the present day exception of Vermont. I was very proud to represent the Rhode Island story and share some of our best practices.

So what? There has been more than \$56 million dollars of aid made available to all of you. The breakdown is \$32,470,602.31 for Individual Assistance claims and \$24,836,700.00 through the Small Business Association (SBA).

There have been 24,698 total registrations with a deadline of May 28th looming. It is important that everyone who wishes to file a claim or thinks they may be eligible for assistance must register before the deadline. You can register by call 1-800-621-FEMA or by logging onto their website at www.disasterassistance.gov.

Of all the registrations to-date there have been 22,697 personal inspections and eight (8) inspectors remain in the field for your support and assistance.

We have requested the federal cadre of long-term recovery from FEMA and they have arrived to work with our embedded RIEMA team as we evaluate measures to assist individuals as we all strive to eliminate repetitive loss and implement successful mitigation strategies.

I am also grateful for the ongoing and immeasurable support of our Congressional delegation, State legislators, agency directors, and local government officials who along with Governor Carcieri found the way to support the response with personal involvement, financial assistance, legal assistance and at a time when many were dealing with personal family effects from the flood. On behalf of RIEMA I cannot thank everyone enough and this introduction does not permit the appropriate overview of the Great Flood of 2010. We are preparing a special edition of RIEMA News that will be dedicated to everyone involved

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in the response and their story. Please watch for that publication within the next month.

In the meantime life goes on within the agency and I must herald the onset of Hurricane Season 2010. The fishermen out of Point Judith who risk their lives each day must be very astute about conditions in the environment. They foretell a worry about the upcoming hurricane season because of unseasonably warm ocean waters for this time of year. What does that mean? The National Weather Service and other prognosticators suggest a busy season with a forecast including major storms.

RIEMA has followed the Hurricane Annex to the Emergency Operations Plan and is in the process of systematically checking plans, systems, and purpose in advance of the official start of the season which is June 1st. Communities and stakeholders were asked last year to work with us to revise and update the Winter Storm preparedness plan and we will be seeking your advice in the next few weeks once again as we scrub and revise the hurricane plan. The Hurricane Conference is scheduled for June 9th at the Crowne Plaza where the theme will be "Interdependencies." Simply stated, we will be assessing the weather for sure, but reviewing the cascading effect and consequences of a major weather event such as a hurricane. How will you individually and how will society be impacted if all power is knocked down from a major hurricane? Do you have the necessary plan and supplies to endure a break in the supply chain that could last for days or weeks? Something not only to think

about but something that must be planned in advance. This promises to be our biggest and best conference yet

RIEMA staff will be meeting this week to review the EMPG grant applications for this year. As expected, we have more requests than money but appreciate the ranking and details that help us to make the best decisions.

We must also congratulate Ann LeClerc and Ed Scott at RIPTA who coordinated a grant application with RIEMA and have just been rewarded with a successful application in the amount of \$4.2M. This grant will allow for the purchase of 800MHz and 700MHz hardware along with 10 sites for statewide "high performance data" (HPD) transfer. This technology meshes with the ongoing development of RISON and now funded allows for the implementation of this strategic vision. Transit Security is a priority and now easier to accomplish when the buses can communicate with other 800 MHz talk groups and all services can share the HPD technology.

At the end of each message I close with the comment "See you next month." As you know we were otherwise committed to the well-being of everyone across the state. In closing with another chiasmus (I think) "the cost of a water view does not always justify the view from under the water when from there it is more expensive and not as clear." I promise that I will make every effort to see you next month, and in the meantime please know how proud I am of all of you who demonstrated incredible resolve and resiliency in the spirit of true survivors.



RING to the Rescue!
Photo courtesy of Tony Beretto



Flood Damage
Photo courtesy of Tony Beretto

Floodplain Management 101

By Michelle Burnett

A Floodplain Management 101 Refresher Course was held on February 24th, 2010. 32 representatives from 24 RI communities attended the course which focused on the many aspects of floodplain management. This course was designed by the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM), and was put on by the RI Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) in coordination with the Rhode Island Flood Mitigation Association (RIFMA) and the RI Flood and Climate Change Taskforce (RIFACCT). Instructors Janet Freedman from RI Coastal Resources Management Council, Pam Pogue from URS Corporation, and Michelle Burnett from RIEMA covered topics including the basics of floodplain management, compliance, flood insurance, the floodplain administrators role, mapping and flood insurance studies



and the future of floodplain management. Since all 39 communities in RI participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), it is essential that the local floodplain administrators stay abreast of the intricacies of the program and recent changes that may have occurred which could affect their respective communities.

Congratulations to David and Michelle Burnett on the birth of their second child, Riley Magnus!



Not So Fond Memories



Rhode Island Receives National Recognition for H1N1 Response

It all started on April 24, 2009 when RI Department of Health (HEALTH) officials began meeting about a few cases of a novel strain of flu. Forty-eight hours later, a national public health emergency was declared and HEALTH stood up the Incident Command System (ICS) and opened its Department Operations Center (DOC) to respond to the H1N1 pandemic.

As we approach the one-year anniversary of activating the H1N1 response, we are now in a position to look back and see all of the state's successes. On a national level, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recognized Rhode Island as a model for school-based vaccination efforts and for high overall vaccination rates in several target populations. At the start of the pandemic, HEALTH also activated the Healthcare Service Region (HSR) model to assist with medical surge and vaccination planning. The HSR model divides the state into 10 healthcare service regions with an acute-care hospital assigned to be the lead healthcare entity for the population within that region. When the federal government released supplies like antivirals, N95s, gloves, and gowns through the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS), RI used its existing emergency response plans to determine if supplies should be stockpiled or distributed. Hospitals received a cache of antivirals for use with inpatients or emergency department patients, and HEALTH and the health centers signed an MOU allowing health centers to distribute antivirals to the uninsured and to the underinsured. A newly-approved antiviral, Peramivir, was made available on a case-by-case basis for hospitalized patients not responding to traditional influenza treatments.

After the first wave of the pandemic had passed in early summer of 2009, HEALTH, in conjunction with its partners, turned its attention to planning for the statewide H1N1 vaccination campaign. The goal was to vaccinate as many Rhode Islanders as possible in an orderly, planned and

prioritized manner. In anticipation of staggered vaccine shipments, HEALTH had to make policy decisions regarding which groups should be vaccinated first and how it would be done.

School-aged children were considered a top priority group because they are known to be a key vector in the spread of influenza. By cutting this transmission vector, the effects of H1N1 in the state could be minimized. HEALTH decided early in planning that pediatricians would focus on vaccinating all children younger than school age (kindergarten) and that school-aged children would be vaccinated in school-based clinics. Medically fragile children were identified as having a higher risk for serious illness or complications from the flu, so HEALTH partnered with schools that serve medically fragile children and with Hasbro Children's Hospital specialty clinics first.

Having enough vaccine administrators in such an aggressive vaccination campaign became an immediate concern. HEALTH also utilized its established relationship with the RI Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) to recruit and train volunteer vaccinators for the school-based clinics. In order to further expand the pool of available vaccinators, on September 17, 2009, Director of Health David Gifford, MD, MPH released a memo pursuant to the State's H1N1 Executive Order allowing licensed Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) to be utilized as a second line of vaccination administrators, in addition to the licensed pharmacists who are already licensed to administer immunizations to persons who are at least 18 years of age.

School-based clinics started on November 2, 2009. In 28 school days, MRC volunteers vaccinated 120,742 students, or 73% of Rhode Island's students, at 420 schools. A second round of clinics for students who needed a second dose of H1N1 vaccine were held at 273 schools in January and February 2010. Students who are RI residents and attend out-of-state schools were also vaccinated at a one-time,

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weekend clinic at HEALTH.

The other major group identified as being extremely high-risk was pregnant women. Beginning in mid-October, H1N1 vaccine was distributed to birthing hospitals, individual practices and health centers for pregnant and post-partum women. As vaccine supply increased, women up to six months postpartum could be vaccinated. On-call, expert physician consultation and guidance pertaining to the care, treatment, and testing of pregnant women with H1N1 flu virus was made available to community physicians and hospitals by Maternal Fetal Medicine doctors at Women & Infants Hospital. In December 2009, HEALTH, in partnership with The Wellness Company, reached out to in-state colleges and universities to conduct H1N1 vaccination clinics on campus in two phases. Phase 1 focused on nine residential colleges over a span of three weeks and was followed by Phase 2, which targeted four non-residential colleges over a one-week period. At the end of these clinics, 10,307 RI college students were vaccinated. At the end of January 2010, HEALTH allocated additional vaccine to colleges and universities to conduct ongoing H1N1 clinics for their campus communities. Two H1N1 vaccination clinics for RI residents who go to a college out of state were scheduled during the semester break.

As vaccine became more available, HEALTH continued to expand the priority groups that were eligible to receive vaccine. HEALTH worked with the primary care workforce to increase access to H1N1 vaccination for high-risk adults. Healthcare workers and first responders, considered a priority group because of their role in healthcare delivery, were provided vaccine through the HSRs using a modified Point of Dispensing (POD) model to trickle out what was initially a limited supply of vaccine.

Large-scale PODs were conducted in all HSRs on January 9, 2010, to ensure that all healthcare workers and first responders had access to the vaccine. It is estimated that 32,725 individuals were vaccinated through the HSRs. As more priority populations for pandemic influenza vaccination were reached, HEALTH encouraged 92 nursing homes to participate in the H1N1 vaccination effort. Nursing homes could vaccinate residents and any staff member who had missed the healthcare worker clinic. To implement the final element of HEALTH's vaccination campaign, the state's Medical Emergency Distribution System (MEDS) was activated in January 2010 so that all municipalities that had approved MEDS Point of Dispensing (POD) plans could open a POD during a six-week timeframe in January and February 2010. These PODs offered vaccinations at no charge to any adult (age 18 or older) who wanted it. Municipalities immediately began activating their plans, which had already been written, trained on, and exercised. Thirty-three municipalities hosted 34 PODs, vaccinating 18,928 people. At the time of printing, HEALTH is still operating under an ICS structure in the DOC and maintaining situational awareness, surveillance, and testing. However, they are heavily involved in the evaluation and demobilization process to accurately record this historic endeavor and extensive response. All numbers reported here should be considered approximate as a thorough and comprehensive evaluation is currently underway. HEALTH would like to extend its thanks and appreciation to the thousands of workers and volunteers across the state who helped protect our state and minimize the effects of H1N1. The overall response, which is getting national recognition, is something everyone involved on every level should be extremely proud of.

Grant Application Success

By Ricky Jones

We were notified last week our partners were very successful in several grant applications submitted to DHS;

Providence EMA (PEMA) received \$900,000 to upgrade and renovate their Emergency Operations Center. The EOC grant is one of the few grants offered by the Department of Homeland Security that allows for construction to facilities. PEMA has been developing their EOC over the past several years and has leveraged grant money to make the facility state of the art. Congratulations on a successful grant application.

Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) received over \$4 Million dollars for upgrades in interoperable communications.

The grant award provides for RIPTA to integrate the public transit system into the Rhode Island Statewide Communications Network (RISCON) system. The grant involves the upgrading of RIPTA's current system to take advantage of advanced data capabilities and integrating public transit into a seamless digital, IP-enabled emergency communications system.

RI Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) received a Port Security Grant award in the amount of \$50,000 that was submitted by our partners at the Economic Development Corporation. The grant will provide for a better common operating with regards to Maritime Domain Awareness on Narragansett Bay.

Faith-based groups reach out to R.I. flood victims in need

By Richard C. Dujardin

Roger Ayotte and his wife, Karen, thought they had escaped the brunt of the storm that brought so much flooding to so many other Warwick homeowners. Very little water, it seemed, had gotten into the basement of their one-story ranch house on Lufkin Court.

But two days later, as she stepped onto the rug of their newly finished room that they had built for her 83-year-old father-in-law, Karen Ayotte noticed something disturbing. Her shoes sank into a wet and soggy carpet that had gone unnoticed because it took a while for the water to ease its way through the concrete slabs underneath.

Fine, a little water in the basement. We can take care of that, the couple told themselves. But as days went on they smelled mold, and Roger Ayotte was beginning to feel sick.

The couple went to the Federal Emergency Assistance Agency and the Small Business Administration to apply for help, only to be told they would have been "covered completely" had Ayotte's father already started living in the downstairs apartment before the flood. Since he had not, they were on their own.



All of that may help to explain why the Ayottes felt so grateful when two people from the faith-based group Samaritan's Purse — one of a number of Christian and Jewish groups that have brought hundreds of volunteers to Rhode Island since the flooding — turned up at their doorstep one Friday afternoon and asked if they could take a look at the basement. That Sunday a bevy of volunteers arrived at the Ayotte home, moved all the furniture from the basement to the garage,

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then stripped the carpeting from the spacious basement. On Tuesday, eight more Samaritans arrived to take out all the sheetrock contaminated by mold.

“If it wasn’t for these people we would still be living in this stuff,” the 56-year-old Ayotte, who is partly disabled, said as he watched the volunteers do their work, the smell of sawdust in the air. “They came and saved us. They’ve been a godsend.”

In fact, during the last six weeks, all sorts of faith-based groups — ranging from the Jewish disaster relief agency Nechama to such others as the Southern Baptist Convention Disaster Relief; Christian Disaster Relief, Mennonite Disaster Service out of Akron, Pa.; the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee out of Minneapolis; the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and Christian Disaster Relief — have sent or are still sending volunteers to help Rhode Islanders afflicted by the early-spring floods.

Among the Christian groups, many said their motivation sprung from their belief that as followers of Jesus Christ they were called to help others.

“We believe in Jesus, and so we do for others out of respect for him,” said 62-year-old Melvin Roes, a member of a Mennonite Church in Naumburg, N.Y. After making a number of weekend visits to the Ocean State to assess the situation, Roes settled in with other volunteers into a convent formerly used by nuns who taught at Our Lady of Consolation School in Pawtucket. With the blessing of the Rev. Robert Perron, pastor of the newly named Holy Family Catholic parish, the teams used the convent as their base as they set out to help Rhode Islanders in need.

“Just today we went to the home of an elderly lady in North Kingstown who had blue mold,” said Peter Denney, a 37-year-old father of two from Lowville, N.Y. “We got rid of it with bleach.”

Although the volunteers said they would pray with someone if asked, Roes said he never felt it necessary to preach, figuring that simply showing up and showing people their care was enough. A similar philosophy also prevailed among six men from Michigan who traveled to Rhode Island with a bulldozer in tow as volunteers from the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee. Accepting the hospitality of three Barrington churches — St. John’s Episcopal, Barrington United Methodist Church and Barrington Congregational Church — and finally St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Riverside, the group included an automobile

repairman, a retired chemist, a chemical engineer, a retired deputy sheriff, a seventh grade teacher and a college psychology professor.

While in the Ocean State, they completed “nine work orders,” primarily helping people from Charlestown to Woonsocket empty their flooded basements.

“Generally we’ve been well received,” said Wayne Van Zomeren, the college professor. “If a person has lost everything, we’ll ask if we can pray with him.” “Personally I feel very blessed,” said Terry Relnick, the auto repairman from Holland, Mich. “I’ve been saved by the Lord and I do this in gratitude.”

With some groups, the call to share the Gospel has been a little more direct. Tom Mobray, who coordinated the Samaritan’s Purse effort in Rhode Island and is now back in Boone, N.C., says the non-denominational agency led by the Rev. Franklin Graham tries to pray with homeowners at the start of a project and again at the end, when volunteers give the owner a Bible signed by all those who worked on the house. According to Mobray, 278 Samaritan’s Purse volunteers from 20 states were part of the Rhode Island cleanup, putting in 5,960 hours and handing out 96 Bibles. Southern Baptist Convention Disaster Relief jumped into the effort here soon after Governor Carcieri declared a state of emergency and, according to Tim Buehner, the assistant director of the convention’s disaster relief efforts in New England, has not yet left. Buehner, of Putnam, Conn., says that during the last seven weeks, the convention has had between 20 to 30 crews of 4 to 12 people each come in from Mississippi, Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, South Carolina, New Mexico, Utah and Ohio. And beginning this weekend, he said, the Southern Baptists were also expecting more waves of volunteers with teams from Maryland, South Carolina, Texas and the Midwest.

They’ll help homeowners who thought they had taken care of their problems, but have discovered they didn’t completely sanitize their homes properly, and are now seeing mold. “We expect to stay at least into the first week of June, and we’re still trying to assess the number of tear-outs we have to do.”

Buehner said the Baptist volunteers are “pretty open and clear” that they do the work because they feel “compelled by the love of Jesus Christ. . . . We pray for people because they have been hit hard, and they need hope and to know that someone cares.

“We won’t do that if it’s not welcome, but for as long

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as I've been involved I haven't heard anyone say, no, they didn't want to be prayed for." Another group with a presence in Rhode Island at least until late last week was the Jewish disaster relief agency Nechama.

Chad Ostlund, a Nechama project manager, had been into sales and marketing for 12 years before discovering that working to relieve people's suffering doesn't pay as much, but is far more satisfying.

Many of the Jewish volunteers are motivated by the concept of Tikkun Olam, a belief that they have an obligation to "repair the world."

Ostlund says the group — from Minnesota, Pennsylvania and New York — slept on air mattresses at the Jewish Community Center in Providence for most of their stay, expanding their outreach by training local volunteers from the community, including Mormons. Over the last several weeks, he says, the group worked on 41 homes, primarily in Warwick and Cranston, and spent a day cleaning out a synagogue in Salem, Mass.

Ostlund said this is the first time he has worked as a project manager for the Minneapolis-based group. "The biggest thing I learned," he said, "is that there are so many people who have come out with us who have never done anything like this before. They've taken time out of their busy schedules just to help people in need."

*Courtesy of the Providence Journal
www.projo.com*



RIEMA is now on Twitter: RhodelslandEMA

Upcoming RIEMA Courses & Training

ICS 300
June 3-4th
Sheraton Airport Hotel

Hurricane Conference
June 9th
Crowne Plaza Hotel

Basic Search & Rescue
June 9-10th
Camp Fogarty

ICS 400
June 17-18th
Radisson Airport Hotel

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NATIONAL THREAT ADVISORY
ELEVATED

Significant Risk of Terrorist Attacks

NATIONAL AIR TRAVEL ADVISORY
HIGH

High Threat of Terrorist Attacks

MARSEC LEVEL

1

2

3

SIGNIFICANT RISK



Questions?

If you have any questions regarding this newsletter or any articles that have appeared in it, please contact:

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