



# RIEMA NEWS



Volume I, Issue XII

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Director- Major General Robert T. Bray

Executive Director- J. David Smith

## Prepare Yourself and Your Communities



By J. David Smith  
Executive Director

Bertha. This one word, one name, should remind everyone that we are now officially in Hurricane Season 2008.

Statistically, our greatest threat and risk is between the middle of August until the end of September. Bertha reminds us that predictions are as unpredictable as the path of a hurricane itself. Bertha was first named as she grew from a typical tropical depression off the coast of Africa last week. She was an immediate celebrity and while still thousands of miles away she quickly became the lead story on local radio and television. How much are we desensitized by so much attention? How many times can we issue advisories, warnings, and watches only to have the storm veer course with little or no impact to Rhode Island before we are perceived to cry wolf? What is the right message? The right message is PREPAREDNESS!

Preparedness starts with one person and that is you. Now that Bertha is not likely to be a threat, we can appreciate her presence and purpose to serve as a warning. We all must use the resources available including RIEMA News, which is now on our website, to advance our personal preparedness. Go now and look around your house, your business, your yard and assess your preparedness. Personal and family preparedness must be the priority message. It will mean the difference between recovery, resili-

ency, and survival in some cases.

I continue to be impressed by the professionalism and diverse talents of the RIEMA staff, and we strive to plan, train, and generally ensure preparedness for any all-hazard event. I am pleased with the collaboration between so many state agencies and regional states as we meet and write plans together or conduct table top exercises to test our capabilities. These exercises are critical as we test our response to various challenges. We test our latest technologies that provide interoperable communications and allow unprecedented situational awareness. A flaw that I wish to correct as our agency strives to find ways to "just do things better" is a recognition that we are always preaching to the choir. Almost everyone in the room for the annual Hurricane Conference was a professional first responder or appropriate representative of city or town government. The people we are not reaching in these conferences is the general public. That is part of why our staff puts so much energy and expertise into RIEMA NEWS; so that you can share this information and pass it along.

One of my goals is to place more emphasis on our regional partnerships, our corporate relationships, and our intergovernmental relationships so that we can reach a broader audience. RIEMA would like to come to your neighborhood at hours of your convenience so that can help you to be better prepared to protect yourself and family during a severe weather event. We want to show you the tools

and resources that are available as you work as a neighborhood to recover from the inevitable damage from flooding and devastating winds. While the state and federal government and partners will work tirelessly on your behalf: you, the citizens of Rhode Island, are the most critical means of success.

Last week Governor Donald L. Carcieri signed the cover letter and sent his support for a five month long effort which was the development of Pandemic Flu and Continuity of Operation (Panflu/COOP) Plans in response to federal guidance requiring such. I wish to thank everyone who was involved in that monumental effort that was accomplished ahead of schedule. Many workers in all critical state agencies including our Governor made a personal commitment to these plans. I also want to express my gratitude to all departments in the state who tore down silos and recognized the efficacy of this planning effort not just for the submission but for all hazards response and continuity of government.

I encourage all of you to now turn the page and read on. Share in my pride of all the accomplishments highlighted in this month's issue. Use the hyperlinks, call with any questions, pause to look at our new header which serves as a stark reminder of the perils we face and then go; go and prepare yourself, your family and business for the potential of a catastrophic weather event. It is not "if" but "when" it is going to happen. Are you ready?

See you next month...

# RI-DMAT Moves, Federal Cache Regionalizes

By Tom Lawrence

*RI-DMAT Team Leader*

This article is to inform you that the federal government has recently notified us that they are regionalizing the Federal DMAT caches, and that our federal cache has been relocated to Boston. Subsequently, the team has moved its offices and warehouse to a new location at 50 Barnett Lane, just off Exit 5B, in West Greenwich, RI. The new telephone number at this new facility is 401-385-3911, and the fax number is 401-385-3908. The emergency number remains 401-444-7744.

As many of you are aware, the RI Disaster Medical Assistance Team (RI DMAT) was formed in 1990 in order to build the capacity to respond anywhere in the country with a rapidly deployable, flexible medical team. The RI Team has responded to virtually every major disaster in the country over the last ten years. From Ice Storms in upstate New York in 1998, to the response to the crash of EgyptAir Flight 990, to the Station Night Club Fire in Rhode Island, RI

DMAT has been there. We responded to New York City on September 11<sup>th</sup>, to hurricanes all over the Gulf Coast and Florida, and were responsible for all of the medical care for the victims of Hurricane Katrina in the New Orleans Superdome until it was vacant.

Over the years the teams of the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), including RI DMAT, were supplied with a cache of logistics and medical equipment termed by NDMS as the "Basic Load". By 2000, this standardized cache had grown and developed to the point that warehouse space was finally authorized and paid for by the federal government to house the cache. The team has occupied warehouse and office at 599 Arnold Road in Coventry since then. Since that time we have expanded our use of the building and occupied most of the building. With the movement of our federal cache to Boston, the federal government does not need the RI facility, and we've had to move.

Our team has simultaneously acquired an additional and very substantial medical and logistics cache

and retains the capability to respond to in-state medical needs. This team-owned cache and its administration had been co-located in the Coventry location, but as noted above, have been moved to West Greenwich. The team also manages the RI Medical Reserve Corps and through a contract with the RI Department of Health developed and manages the Emergency System for the Advanced Registration of Volunteer Healthcare Providers (ESAR-VHP) program in RI.

The team is still a Level One response team of the National Disaster Medical System. Members of the RI DMAT team and the RI Medical Reserve Corps are still active and available to respond in exactly the same way you have become used to. We remain a vital part of the medical capability of RI.

The team has a busy summer schedule ahead, and no reduction in our mission is going to occur. Watch these pages for updated information, and call us if you think we can be helpful to your mission.

## Citizens Urged to Get Red Cross Ready

In the midst of record severe weather across the nation and the arrival of hurricane season, the American Red Cross Rhode Island Chapter wants to remind all citizens that disasters can occur anywhere at anytime. In particular, we want to ensure that Rhode Islanders know what to do in the event of a hurricane.

Homeowners and renters alike should take the necessary precautions to protect their loved ones before a disaster strikes by making sure that they are Red Cross Ready. The steps are simple:

- Get a Kit
- Make a Plan
- Be Informed

Be Red Cross Ready information is readily available on the Chapter's

website, [www.riredcross.org](http://www.riredcross.org). EMA directors may link their websites directly to the Chapter's site or can place a Red Cross Ready banner directly on their sites. In addition, the Chapter has a large stock of *3 Actions* brochures, printed in both English and Spanish; the brochures describe what residents should do in advance

of an emergency.

The RI Chapter will continue to work with local media outlets to make sure that information is readily available to the public. For more information, please contact Marisa Albanese, Interim CEO & Director of Community Relations, via e-mail at [albanesem@riredcross.org](mailto:albanesem@riredcross.org).

### NIMS Training Available Bi-Monthly

In an ongoing effort to provide updated NIMS required training and ICS training, RIEMA will be conducting Technical Assistance training for the On-line courses (IS-100 and IS-700). Also an overview brief will be provided for ICS 100. The training will be scheduled the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>

Thursday of the month from 9 a.m. through 12 p.m. and will be located in the State EOC at 645 New London Ave. Cranston, R.I. 02920. Seats will be limited due to computer resources.

Please contact Ken Baker to reserve your seat at: [Kenneth.l.baker1@us.army.mil](mailto:Kenneth.l.baker1@us.army.mil).

# RI Works to Build Private Sector Integration

At the 2008 RIEMA Hurricane Conference, Brian Koon Senior Manager of Operations with Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. summarized it best when he said that the three important priorities to their continuity of operations after a disaster are:

- Taking care of their associates and their families,
- Taking care of their operations, and
- Taking care of their community

This statement reminds us that the private sector shares many of the same goals towards ensuring community resiliency and should continue to be sought out for all phases of state-wide and community disaster planning.

According to the National Infrastructure Protection Plan the private sector is responsible for 80-85% of the infrastructure within the United States. With that being the case, continuity of operations within the private sector has become a critical aspect of community resiliency. Recognizing the importance of this issue Rhode Island has identified several mechanisms to support public-private partnerships.

One mechanism is the Rhode Island NEDRIX Public/Private Sector Partnership. NEDRIX (which stands

for North East Disaster Recovery Information X-Change) is a multi-state network of business and industry partners with the overall purpose of encouraging the sharing of information pertaining to disaster recovery and business continuity while also working to further the relationships between the public and private sectors. A Rhode Island chapter started in 2005 and has continued to be engaged by RIEMA as a partner in spreading the word about business continuity and working to establish private sector communication, coordination, as well as representation at the State EOC in times of activation. Leadership with the Rhode Island Chapter has come from such diverse partners as WJAR NBC-10 TV, Code Red Business Solutions, Textron, and has included through the years many other private sector partners. Visit [http://www.nedrix.com/sector\\_state/ri.html](http://www.nedrix.com/sector_state/ri.html) for more information.

The newest method of encouraging partnership is the recently established Rhode Island Partnership for Community Resiliency. This is the states' answer to fully utilizing the partnerships with businesses and corporations, private sector critical infrastructure partners, and networks such as the RI NEDRIX. The partnership work plan created earlier this year is based on framework pro-

vided by the US Department of Homeland Security. It is overseen by a full-time Private Sector Liaison with supervision from a RIEMA planner and support part-time through an intern from Northeastern University. Together they are working to coordinate a Private Sector Coordinating Council that will be co-chaired by representatives from the public and private sectors. The team is also working to assist in sector-specific planning (such as post-disaster access for insurance catastrophe adjusters). In addition the partnership is planning to sponsor business readiness events and education campaigns that would include ICS trainings for the private sector.

On the whole, the mission of the Rhode Island Partnership for Community Resiliency is to serve as the intersection between strategic partners from the public and private sectors (such as RI NEDRIX) and encourage all-hazards disaster planning through information sharing, sharing of resources and best practices, and exercising and training with the overall goal of strengthening community resiliency.

For questions please contact Joshua Hussey, Private Sector Liaison at [josh.hussey@gmail.com](mailto:josh.hussey@gmail.com) or Joe Cournoyer, RIEMA Planner, at [ioseph.p.cournoyer@us.army.mil](mailto:ioseph.p.cournoyer@us.army.mil)

## Rumblings from a RIEMA PIO

*By Steve Kass, RIEMA PIO*

I would like to share a story with all of you that occurred last week. I received an email from Mark Bosma, PIO (Public Information Officer) from Vermont EMA. Vermont suffered some extreme flooding damage several weeks ago from some severe storms. The tiny town of Ripton had a particularly bad situation. The worst damage occurred to private roads. As you know FEMA aid would not be available. The SBA could offer loans to repair them but the folks who live there could not afford to pay them

back. One dead end road had a bridge washout and early estimates put the cost at \$300,000.00. Simply not affordable for these people. Mark asked if any of the Region I PIO's had any ideas or knew about any non-profit resources to help out.

Within minutes Dennis Michalski, N.Y. State EMA Information Officer replied. He referred Mark to Chris Holmes, the State's Public Assistance Officer, who was very knowledgeable in this area. Chris had run into a similar situation in the past in NY.

He thought if the dead end road

was sole access, FEMA could repair the bridge as a category B emergency protective measure.

In addition, the homeowners could form a homeowners association and share the cost of repairs between all of them for the life of the loan.

Three hours later Mark sent this email. "The project does qualify under Category B. Thanks! Thank Chris for me as well."

Watching this play out, thinking about those poor people who were in such a desperate situation, made me feel very good about the work we do.

# Flooding: Protecting Ourselves & Our Communities

“It could never happen here;” this is the common thought most Rhode Islanders have when they see the flood devastation across the Mid-West. Not only do we as individuals disregard the notion that flooding could happen to us, but states and communities sometimes fail to recognize that flooding can occur without warning and can quickly overwhelm an

unprepared public. Take a look at the current situation in the Mid-West; even areas prone to flooding and models of preparedness can be besieged by

water, causing unbelievable damage. Flooding occurs in all 50 states, and we as Rhode Islanders could do more, and should do more to help protect our families, homes, pets and possessions in case a flooding event should occur.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has designated all 39 communities in Rhode Island as flood prone for both inland and coastal flooding. There are currently 14,970 flood insurance policies active in Rhode Island; 13,924 of which cover residential properties and the remaining 1,046 insure commercial properties. According to the 2006 RI Census Data there are 449,582 housing units in Rhode Island; 3.1% of which have flood insurance. Considering the proximity of most homes to either inland water bodies, such as rivers, lakes and streams, and coastal waters including Narragansett Bay, Block Island Sound, Rhode Island Sound and coastal ponds, the vast majority of Rhode Islanders are at risk for flooding, but would have no coverage or economic redress should the inevitable happen.

As is the case with most attempts to prepare people for disaster, education is critical. Residents who reside

near a waterway should know their flood risk and purchase flood insurance accordingly. Anyone can buy flood insurance as long as their community has joined and complies with the minimum requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Since all 39 cities and towns in Rhode Island participate in the program, every Rhode Islander is

able to purchase flood insurance through this federal program. In addition to individual protection, community efforts also play a crucial role in

mitigating flooding events. The Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary program for NFIP-participating communities. The goals of the CRS are to reduce flood losses, to facilitate accurate insurance ratings, and to promote the awareness of flood insurance. Joining the CRS is an excellent way for communities to take preparedness to the next level. Current participation in Rhode Island is low; only 3 out of 39 communities are members of this program. The CRS not only encourages communities to require new construction exceed standards outlined by the NFIP, but also lowers insurance premiums for all policy holders within the participating communities.

Another important way to protect against flooding is to avoid the unnecessary building in floodplains. As development alters watershed dynamics by converting undeveloped land to homes, apartment buildings, and parking lots, less water permeates the ground increasing stormwa-

ter runoff into rivers and streams. This increases the risk of elevated water levels following subsequent rain events. Creating and maintaining open space in floodplains is one of the best steps a community can take to help protect against flooding. Undeveloped land allows for unimpeded movement of water through a floodplain, but it also allows for more impervious surfaces, increasing absorption and lowering water levels. Understanding that development is necessary, care should be taken to build in a way that does not risk the integrity of the structure or those in the surrounding area. For extremely high risk areas, elevating structures above expected and future flood levels not only protects the structure, but reduces the cost of flood insurance premiums.

To ensure wise development, using the best available data for floodplain management is essential. As new floodplain maps become available, there are likely to be increases in base flood elevations and some re-delineations of floodplains. These changes will provide for greater protection for homes and property. This will enable communities to administer the most accurate and appropriate regulations for development in

their respective floodplains.

Each piece of property is unique and is subject to a variable risk of flooding. Flooding is not always limited to the scope of the 100-year-flood scenario, so it is important that Rhode Islanders be proactive

in protecting themselves for more significant storms, such as a 500-year-flood. Rhode Islanders can better prepare themselves for a flood through education: the more we know, the better prepared we'll be.

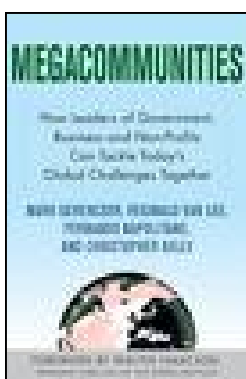
For more information on the NFIP Program or flooding in RI, please contact Michelle Burnett at 401-462-7048.



## RISC Meeting Held in Rhode Island

The most recent quarterly Regional Interagency Steering Committee (RISC) Meeting was held at the Marriott Hotel in Newport, RI on June 19, 2008.

Approximately 120 people gathered together for the day to discuss the New England region's comprehensive readiness and capabilities. Each state was invited to send their Adjutant General, Emergency management Agency Director, senior Homeland Security and Health personnel.



Chris Kelly, author of Mega-communities spoke about a new approach for facilitating collaboration and empowerment to tackle today's toughest challenges. Additionally, Dr. James Smith

from the Los Alamos National Laboratory spoke on modeling efforts related the Pandemic Flu.

States shared their organizations structures and responsibilities and how they communicate with local directors relative to the individual state's State Preparedness Reports. They articulated challenges and lessons learned relative to threats, hazards, target capabilities, and public information. In addition, they reviewed investment strategies and future plans relative to planning, training, exercises and EMPG-HSPG grant processes.

In the afternoon, breakout sessions were held surrounding the following topics: common operating picture/situational awareness; public information; lines of communication; preparedness vs. response; state strategy; catastrophic response; evacuation; sheltering; and pandemic influenza.

Rhode Island was represented by Major General Robert T. Bray, Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) Executive Director J. David Smith, RIEMA Deputy Director Diana Arcand, RIEMA Larry Macedo, RIEMA Brittan Bates, Cen-

ter for Emergency Preparedness and Response (CEPR) Interim Director Ed D'Arezzo, CEPR Deputy Director Alysia Mihalokos, Providence Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) Director Peter Gaynor and PEMA Deputy Director Peter Marinucci.

RISC meetings were started as a response to requirements that come out of the National Response Plan (NRP). The committee's purpose is to bring together the response assets of the region to communicate and this enhance awareness of everyone's capabilities and a common operating picture for the region. The NRP has since become the National Response Framework ((NRF) and the RISC meetings continue to assist the region in meeting new requirements laid out by that document.

For more information about the RISC meetings and this conference please contact George (Fred) Vanderschmidt from the Department of Homeland Security at [george.vanderschmidt@dhs.gov](mailto:george.vanderschmidt@dhs.gov).

## RIEMA Grants Over \$6 Million for Interoperable Communications

On May 27, 2008, RIEMA hosted the Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Workshop. With over 125 participants, RIEMA was able to distribute over 6 million dollars to local and state agencies to enhance statewide interoperability.

This grant funding was designated under a grant where Rhode Island was allocated 7.3 million dollars to support a statewide interoperable system. RIEMA in collaboration with the Communications Working Group and other local and State partners wrote the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan and a grant application in order to obtain this funding. Recently, all projects were approved.

The major initiative was to purchase a portable radio and car charger for every front-line fire apparatus and police vehicle to create interoperability. This investment also allowed for radios for EMS units, colleges and universities, and some State agencies. The second project was for a Strategic Technology Reserve. This will allow RIEMA to purchase a cache of radios, a handful of portable repeater towers, and other equipment necessary to deploy during an emergency or planned event. The next investment is for two additional tower sites – one in the northern portion of the State



and one in the south. The final project was to increase the channels for the Providence tower sites from 8 to 12 channels. Other funding will be utilized for planning and management and administration of the grant funding. Unfortunately, the dollars are not limitless, but it is important to remember that this is just the first phase of grant funding. RIEMA is hopeful that additional federal funding will become available that we will be able to continue assisting communities in achieving interoperability. We would like to thank everyone who attended the workshop.

# RIEMA and RI DMV Partner For REAL ID Grant Proposal

On June 20, 2008, the Department of Homeland Security announced the REAL ID Demonstration Grant awards through a press release. The press release stated, "Each of the 48 states and territories who applied for Fiscal Year 2008 REAL ID Demonstration Grants will be awarded a portion of the available funding. Awards are based on an application's overall effectiveness in meeting criteria identified in the grants application kit, and the number of DLs [Driver's Licences] and IDs issued. Projects will focus on achieving material compliance, such as collecting applicants' photos at the start of the application process and incorporating additional physical security features into DLs and IDs. Other funded projects that advance REAL ID implementation include transitioning to centralized DL and ID production, improving data records for driver's licenses, and upgrading source document imaging and storage."

RIEMA partnered with the RI Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to write a grant proposal for the REAL ID implementation. Title II of the REAL ID Act of 2005 "establishes certain minimum standards for State-issued drivers licenses and ID cards, and the Act prohibits Federal agencies from accepting State-issued driver's licenses or ID cards for official purposes" (FY 2008 REAL ID Demonstration Grant Program Guidance 2). There are several requirements that the State's must follow to

that certain data must be on the ID. Lastly, there must be electronic access to motor vehicle databases. RI DMV has already begun working to implement this program. RIEMA and RI DMV have composed a successful grant application in an effort to gain more funding for this initiative and the RI DMV has been awarded \$500,000 to further their initiative.

## Thank You

RIEMA would like to express our thanks to Jan Fusco, one of Rhode Island's top graphic Artists, for donating her time to design the new header gracing this newsletter's front page.

**NATIONAL THREAT ADVISORY**

**ELEVATED**



Significant Risk of Terrorist Attacks

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**NATIONAL AIR TRAVEL ADVISORY**

**HIGH**



High Threat of Terrorist Attacks



**MARSEC LEVEL**

**1 2 3**

**SIGNIFICANT RISK**

## Upcoming RIEMA Courses & Training

**July 11**  
Incident Response to Terrorist Bombing/Prevention and Response to Suicide Bombing

**July 16-17**  
ICS 300

**July 24**  
Dam Site and Dam Infrastructure Security Inspections Training

**August 5-6**  
ICS 400

**August 25-26**  
ICS 300

\*\*Signifies that the class is full



implement this Act. One requirement is that only certain information can be accepted by the DMV before a REAL ID driver's license or ID can be issued. The second requirement is



## Questions?

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

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