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**Director-** Major General Robert T. Bray

**Executive Director-** J. David Smith

## Hot!



*By J. David Smith  
Executive Director*

There is an expression that a picture is worth a thousand words. In this case, one word invokes a thousand images. I hope that at

least one of them is you at the beach or at least some place with family staying as cool as possible.

Another type of indelible image is seen on the television screen almost every night in one story or another about soldiers in a foreign theatre or first responders on our soil. Their image is one that may be viewed through a cynical or supportive lens depending on the perspective but one fact is clear; these men and women and those who served before them are protecting us and our freedoms. These are freedoms that were etched on parchment in the form of words. Words subjected to interpretation, extrapolation, and condemnation. Regardless of opinion all Americans are engendered by these protected free rights and we must pause to thank everyone who has supported this mission.

Having marched in many parades as a proud member of a police color guard I am more proud as I watch others from the perspective of the curb. Parades are a celebration and a chance for those who deserve tribute to be recognized by the throngs of people who are sometimes related to the participants and/or the cause. In some cases it is neither but rather a chance to join a community and say thank you.

Last month I had the privilege of watching Lt.

Colonel Denis Riel march in our door after returning from Afghanistan as a soldier. I knew Denis first as a police officer and then a command level officer for the Town of Lincoln Police Department. Lt. Colonel Riel also teaches in the classroom. He teaches men and women who in many cases are learning how to be successful mid-managers, leaders. He speaks words at the head of the class but his example and confidence are what tell the story. When Lt. Colonel Riel walked back in our door after a yearlong absence he was changed in his appearance. He lost many pounds and I could see through facial expressions that his mind's movie was not for everyone to see but I was relieved to see the same sense of humor and confidence; just to know that he was back safely. He is not only back safely but already back in action just in time for the Air Show to work in his professional capacity of public relations and press information. I have the privilege of a personal relationship with Lt. Colonel Riel but I tell his story to say thank you and thank God for a safe return. I tell this story because it projects the image of anyone who has served as he has done regardless of uniform or purpose.

The 4th of July has been a date of significance and consistency of purpose for 234 years. Each of these celebrations does not provide a panoptic view. There are inevitable concurrent events and the 4th of July 2010 was no exception. The Joint Field Office (JFO) is still staffed by both FEMA and RIEMA personnel in support of the Public Assistance, Long-term Recovery, VAL, and Mitigation needs. It is hard to believe that many

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people see the Great Floods of 2010 as an event in the past while others are still sadly stuck in the muck in the literal sense. The project worksheets (PW's) are submitted, reviewed, revised, and in some cases rejected. The teams are working with all due diligence to balance the interest of finding every possible way to support the project. Teams are also mindful of the fact that there are rules, laws, and compliance issues that cannot be compromised and the bottom line must withstand the scrutiny of a comprehensive audit. The business of emergency management also goes on and we asked an awful lot of everyone during June as we prepared for the brunt of hurricane season 2010, reviewed the hurricane annex of the State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP), conducted an extraordinary mitigation workshop with FEMA, URI staff, and the great RIEMA team at the Bay Campus. The flood after action review will be very helpful as we evaluate the lessons learned from the event. As any good business team we worked together to identify and state goals and objectives for 2010. At our last Program Managers meeting and Staff meeting we reviewed the goals set forth in January. At this mid-year point we are both encouraged and challenged by our progress. We are continuing to support NIMS compliance in every community through an aggressive training regimen and grant compliance visits. We are struggling to establish a comprehensive resource management system for all assets to include resource typing but have made some progress on that front. A statewide credentialing system has been funded and Ray Laprad has been participating in the development of this system with national-level involvement. ESF partners have been working with Theresa Murray and planners to align the SEOP and the National Response Framework (NRF). The flood event washed that project aside temporarily but we are still tracking very well. The Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) were approved by the Interoperable

Communications Committee (ICC) and RIPTA was awarded over \$4 million dollars to help build out statewide high performance data on the RISCO network. The flood improved the awareness of WebEOC and the importance of all stakeholders in our quest for situational awareness and the development of technologies necessary for a common operating picture. Progress towards EMAC accreditation is slow but on a projected path. The 2010 class of inductees to the Rhode Island Radio Hall of Fame included our own press information officer (PIO) Mr. Steve Kass. Many of us sat at the RIEMA table as we watched Steve receive his well deserved award of lifetime achievement. With his recognizable mellifluous voice he recalled a career replete with images of humorous events and a walk down the path of Rhode Island known as memory lane. A place that meanders, forks, reverses course, is sometimes strewn with obstacle, always has a sign or billboard depicting where something used to be, but somehow finds its way to success and appreciation. Steve, congratulations for this well-deserved honor and thanks for recognizing our hard working and dedicated family that is RIEMA. One of our RIEMA family members will be taking a leave to support her husband's opportunity to attend a command college in Quantico, VA. Amy Grzybowski has served as our Planning Program Manager and has supported so many of the projects and programs both internally and for all of you. Larry Macedo will be assuming those responsibilities during her absence but we wish the Grzybowski family success in this new endeavor.

Please take the time to visit our web site at [www.riema.ri.gov](http://www.riema.ri.gov) to learn about precautions that you can take to stay safe, healthy, and cool during this current heat wave. Take solace in checking back through old issues of RIEMA news when we talked about precautions necessary to guard against the bitter cold of winter. It is all relative comfort. As always, see you next month...

# FEMA AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES ASK “ARE YOU PREPARED FOR A DISASTER?”

WARWICK, R.I. – Historically, major disasters have been rare in Rhode Island. But as the recent storms have shown, disasters can happen to anyone, anywhere. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) and Ocean State Libraries (OSL) have teamed up to provide valuable information that can help you and your family prepare for disasters.

The book and video provide ideas on local resources for individuals, families, and businesses during and after a crisis. For example, when there is a federal disaster declaration, disaster aid from FEMA may provide grants to help repair homes and provide rental assistance to eligible applicants. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) may also help homeowners, renters, non profit organizations and businesses of all sizes with low interest disaster loans. The information provided in these FEMA products may reduce disaster-related anxiety by empowering individuals and families with the knowledge they need to develop, practice, and maintain emergency plans. Families that are

Are You Prepared For A Disaster?

Check Out This Video  
"Getting Ready For Disaster- One Family's Experience"

This DVD will guide you through important steps of disaster preparedness

For Additional Information  
Pick Up A Copy Of  
"Are You Ready?"

Also Available Online:  
[www.fema.gov/areyouready/](http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/)

Help Your Community By Preparing Now!

prepared and mitigate risks associated with any possible natural and man-made disaster, help sustain themselves and their community. Don't wait, prepare your family. Start today!

## Goodbye For Now!

*By Amy Grzybowski*

It is with both excitement and sadness that I bid farewell to everyone for the next year. My husband has been accepted to the Command and General Staff College at the Marine Corps College in Quantico, Virginia. We will be making the move mid-July and we anticipate returning to Rhode Island at the end of June 2011. This is an awesome opportunity for our family. Not only will Mike get to further his education, but we will get to spend more time as a family and welcome our second daughter into the world in October. A picture will follow in a future RIEMA News!

I would like to thank everyone for the support and confidence you have bestowed on me and RIEMA over the past four and a half years. The recent flooding disaster has shown us our capabilities as well as our lessons learned, and I look forward to joining in the preparedness effort when I return next year. Until next year...



# Volunteers to Provide Assistance to RI Flooding Victims

The Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency announced that volunteers from the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (Green Shirts) are coming to Rhode Island to help victims of the March 2010 flood disaster. The Green Shirts will be based at United Way 2-1-1 in Rhode Island at United Way of Rhode Island headquarters, 50 Valley Street, Providence, Rhode Island. Their goal is to provide assistance beyond what has already been provided by local, state and federal agencies.

“Over 25,000 people have registered with FEMA in order to get assistance as a result of the unprecedented flooding that occurred in March,” said David Smith, director of the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency. “We’re grateful that the Green Shirts have come to Rhode Island to help. We also want to thank United Way 2-1-1 in Rhode Island for agreeing to host the Green Shirts. Working together, we want to ensure that flood victims receive the assistance they need to fully recover from this disaster.”

The relief volunteers will have bright green shirts and identification with them at all times. They are specially trained to assess damage, assist with federal relief forms and help victims deal with the



specially trained to assess damage, assist with federal relief forms and help victims deal with the psychological effect of the flood disaster.

The Green Shirts plan to go door-to-door in the most heavily affected areas of Rhode Island.

“By hosting the Green Shirts, we will be able to work in close collaboration in order to efficiently and effectively monitor and address the unmet needs of the flood victims,” said Cristina Amedeo, director of United Way 2-1-1 in Rhode Island.



# Federal Disaster Grants, Loans in Rhode Island Top \$76.8 Million

Businesses and households in Rhode Island impacted by the severe storms and floods of 2010 have received \$76,854,104 in approved disaster grants and loans from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). A total of \$32,707,283 was approved to assist with temporary housing, home repairs and other assistance through FEMA disaster programs. A total of \$3,023,422 has been approved for eligible Rhode Islanders through the FEMA/state Other Needs Assistance (ONA) program. Amounts are as of close of business June 22, 2010, and are subject to change as applications for the disaster continue to be processed.

Loans to homeowners, renters, nonprofit organizations and businesses of all sizes have been approved by the SBA for a total of \$41,123,400. Of the 24,204 applications SBA issued to people in Rhode Island, 3,721 have been submitted for review and processing. FEMA Community Relations Field Specialists have knocked on a total 19,593 doors in

Rhode Island. As of June 22, 2010, Community Relations Specialists spoke directly with more than 8,901 residents and contacted 2,269 businesses, churches, schools and community organizations.

More than 51,400 Rhode Island residents were greeted by FEMA Mitigation Specialists at local retail stores, and a total of 11,223 individuals received one-on-one counseling. In addition, FEMA Mitigation Specialists provided 144,628 packets, brochures and pamphlets to Rhode Islanders with information on techniques that can be used to repair and rebuild homes stronger and more secure.

Rhode Island residents impacted by the flood who have applied for assistance may call the FEMA Help line at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or TTY 1-800-462-7585 to ask questions, update contact information, learn the status of their application or obtain information on appealing a decision. The FEMA Help line is available each day from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. EDT. Help is available in all languages.

## FEMA Launches New Mobile Website for Smartphones

FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate announced the launch of FEMA's new mobile Web site, [m.fema.gov](http://m.fema.gov). The mobile Web site makes it easier to access critical information regarding emergency preparedness and what to do before and after a disaster right on a smartphone.

"Smartphones are becoming more prevalent, affordable, reliable and more viable to locate and obtain information and assistance," said FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate. "This service will provide yet another avenue for the sharing of important information that is so critical to ensuring the public is prepared for emergencies. As we've seen in recent cases, often times after a disaster, mobile devices become a crucial lifeline to provide information to survivors." The new site is laid out in a user friendly, question and answer format, providing users

with the answers to their top questions, such as:

- What should I do in a disaster?
- Where can I find assistance?
- How can I help others?

FEMA will be making several enhancements to [m.fema.gov](http://m.fema.gov) in the coming months, including the ability to apply for individual assistance when a disaster has been declared by the President, check on the status of an application and update an existing application.

Today's announcement of the launch of [m.fema.gov](http://m.fema.gov) comes just over a month until the start of this year's hurricane season on June 1. The mobile site is just one way that FEMA is reaching out to ensure that the public has the tools they need to be prepared for any emergency. Families are also encouraged to log onto [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

## No. Prov. 4th Grade STEP Class Artwork on Display at FEMA Headquarters in D.C.



*Craig Fugate*

*Richard Serino*

When Deputy Administrator Serino of FEMA visited a STEP class at Marieville Elementary School a few weeks ago, he was so impressed with the artwork the children created he asked to bring it back to Washington to FEMA Headquarters. The children grudgingly agreed to share their outstanding creations. This display now hangs at the main entrance to FEMA. Mr. Serino, during a recent visit with local EMA directors, acknowledged the success of the STEP Program in Rhode Island and stated that he thought this program should go nationwide. RIEMA has now brought STEP to more than 80% of fourth and fifth graders in Rhode Island, the highest percentage in the country.

# Thunderbird F-16 Experience

## June 25th, 2010

By Cristina Amedeo

On Tuesday June 22nd I received a most unusual call at about 4:30 pm. It was Lt. Col. Denis Riel, State Public Affairs Officer, Rhode Island National Guard. He informed me that I was nominated as a Hometown Hero by the Governor's Office and RI Emergency Management for all my community work. I was speechless. I was stunned when he told me that I would have the opportunity to fly with the Thunderbirds. I had heard of the Thunderbirds; I had a small miniature plane of the Thunderbirds at home. Flying is one my favorite things to do, flying with the Thunderbirds was a dream come true for me.

I am so very deeply thankful to those who nominated me. In my mind, this opportunity reminded me that I have so many wonderful people in my life: the RI Emergency Management Agency, the Governor's Office, the RI National Guard, United Way of Rhode Island, Family Service of Rhode Island, our community partners, FEMA, my family, and of course, the staff at 2-1-1 and THE POINT. I tried this adventure carrying everyone in my heart, for all the great work they do every day. I will never forget the experience as long as I live.

After I passed all the pre-tests and responded to all the questions I was asked by Capt. Jason L. McCree, USAF, I was really thrilled to have the opportunity, besides being honored by such an award.

June 25th was the day of my flight. Nervous energy was keeping me going. Was I really going to fly in an F-16 with the Thunderbirds? Well, it all became very real when MMSgt Pamela Anderson, USAFADS Public Affairs Superintendent, came to greet me at Quonset Air Field. I was fitted for my flight suit, the boots, the G Suit, my helmet, and the emblems that go with it. How exciting!

I then met with the Flight Surgeon Capt. Thomas Bowden, the experience was becoming scary. He talked to me about flying 25,000 feet in the air,



the F-16 going from horizontal to vertical when taking off, the G force, the breathing exercises, getting sick, passing out, cracking bones. By that time I was thinking: "What in the world did I get myself into?" but I decided that I would go forward with the experience.

My next meeting was with the pilot, Capt. Kristin Hubbard, one of three pilots with the Thunderbirds, eight years experience, one of the kindest people I ever met. We met for about two hours, where she spoke about everything, ranging from the acrobatics the F-16 was going to do, to being with her in the plane; she also described past experiences with Hometown Heroes. She was very positive and confident that I could handle the experience. Capt. Hubbard was a true narrator, she showcased the Air Force as if it was part of her very being. I have never been prouder at the moment she told me that she was honored to teach me all about the Thunderbirds, the Air Force and the devotion that every man and woman has for the job. The best part of the experience was walking to the airfield with the pilots, saying goodbye to family, getting to the place and seeing my name written on the plane. I was ready to go even without the G suit! After taking a few pictures, it was time to go. I was ready; I knew where everything was in the cockpit, thanks to a lot of help.

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It felt like the F-16 airlifted faster than the speed of light. It was amazing! We flew for a few minutes, while Capt. Hubbard kept narrating the flight. Everything was ok, until we began some acrobats. Going side-to-side and upside down was thrilling, but not for my stomach. I was breathing really fast; I could not slow down, so Captain Hubbard opted to bring the plane down after 25 minutes, she was afraid I had cracked a rib. Luckily I was fine, according to the flight surgeon Capt. Bowden. My only problem was an inner ear problem. Still, the wonderful team that worked so hard to prepare me for such an experience, provided me with a certificate signed by everyone on the team.

Overall, the feeling of being a part of something bigger than myself will never leave my heart. I have a different level of respect for the 700,000 men and women in our military. The whole experience, of walking to the airfield with the pilots, leaving in formation, having my name on the plane was unforgettable.

Looking at the pictures brings all the good moments back. I am a woman who has always been on a mission; I love to try new experiences, and this was one I am glad I attempted. I came from a very small village in Portugal. I was the very first woman to attend high school and college (in my family?), then came to the US on



my own to attend college and build a career. Women in my hometown in Portugal were not even allowed to ride bikes, never mind an F-16!!! My take away from my experience, was that although it was not for me, it certainly changed my outlook on life. I will never forget what it felt like to take off at such speed; I felt like I was on top of the world,. The view was incredible, and yes, every day afterwards, when my mind became clear, I remember the view, it will be engraved on my brain forever.

Thank you for this incredible honor.

## RIDLTRG Meets to Vote

The Rhode Island Disaster Long Term Recovery Group (RIDLTRG) met on Wednesday, July 7, 2010 at 2:00 pm at RIEMA. Elections for leadership positions are being held at that time. The RIDLTRG has established sub-committees for case management, volunteer management, donations/financial management, crisis counseling and flood disaster recovery construction. The RIDLTRG will work to assist Rhode Island residents who would otherwise be unable to recover from this event. Coordinated efforts of the various committees will work to meet the disaster caused unmet needs of disaster survivors.

Church World Service (CWS) sponsored a "Recovery Tools and Training Workshop" for

anyone dedicated to rebuilding homes and lives following the historical flood disaster in Rhode Island. More than 60 representatives from faith based organizations, community groups, social service organizations, disaster case workers, emergency management officials and long term recovery leadership participated in the workshop on June 8, 2010 at the Gloria Dei Lutheran Church.

Volunteer Coordination in the state is transitioning from clean up operations to long term rebuilding. Serve Rhode Island has been involved in volunteer coordination throughout the clean up process.

The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC), also known as the "green shirts",

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completed a community assessment during late June. Ten CRWRC volunteers from Michigan completed approximately 100 surveys during their stay in Rhode Island. Community Action Program (CAP) agencies continue to staff walk in centers for the community assessment process. CAP agencies have taken the lead in Long Term Recovery case management. United Methodists Committee on Relief (UMCOR) trained 40 CAP case managers who are currently handling flood disaster related cases. There are an additional 17 volunteer case managers from Faith Based organizations.

Please contact State Voluntary Agency Liaison Theresa Murray at 401-641-8022 for additional details regarding the RIDLTRG.



Army dogs really are cool.

# RIEMA is now on Twitter: RhodelslandEMA

Find us on  
**Facebook**

**Facebook.com**  
**RI EMA**

**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**

## Questions?

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

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