



AAEM Today

Official quarterly newsletter of the Alabama Association of Emergency Managers
Second Quarter 2008

EMAs Make a Difference!

How time flies! It has been just over six months since the Annual Conference. Your Board of Directors and Committees have been hard at work carrying on the work of the Association.



Eddie Hicks, CEM
Morgan County EMA
President, AAEM

The Conference Committee, under the leadership of **Co-Chairs Patrice Payne-Posey** and **Linda Egger**, did an outstanding job in providing quality training for you, but they still need your help. They need your ideas for topics. The participation in the pre-conference G-course training was outstanding! We even offered a second class due to the number of students registered.

We had our first visit with our new **AEMA Director Brock Long**, who gave us his vision of where he wants to take the AEMA. Welcome aboard Brock! I was able to share with him how historically AAEM and AEMA have cooperated to make the EMA programs in Alabama better!

An additional 15 managers also received Certification recognition. It is a tribute to your professionalism how this program has taken off. WAY TO GO, FOLKS! If you are not a "Certified" Emergency Professional, then you need to take advantage of this progressive program. The committee will be reviewing certification packages at the end of each quarter. If you get a move on, you can have yours in by the end of the quarter.

The Legislative Committee, led by **Co-Chairs Max Armstrong** and **Heather**

Walton, has been very busy and have some notable accomplishments. One thing they are doing is developing a number of legislative efforts that could be pursued, if needed. While most are in idea form at this time, they will be developing content for each idea, with the goal of having draft legislation available, if needed.

I want to personally thank Heather for an outstanding job of coordinating our Washington, D.C. visit this year. Our delegation met with FEMA Director David Paulison and his key leadership to discuss our issues. We shared our frustrations over the bureaucracy attached to the HMGP application process for small projects like warning sirens and the Safe Room program. We asked him specifically if there could be developed an abbreviated application process for these two programs. Only time will tell if we were successful.

Our group also met with key leaders from headquarters of the National Weather Service. We explained what goes on in our counties during severe weather events, followed by an exchange on how the various weather products are used by local government. We also had productive visits with or Senate and House members and staff.

I'd also like to recognize the Membership Committee, **Co-Chaired by Chuck Murph** and **Deedie Matthews**. Their committee developed a list of potential benefits that will now be reviewed by your Board to see which can be developed and offered to the membership. We have just found out that Chuck is moving on from the local Homeland Security/EMA office. It is

my hope that in his new endeavor he can still work closely with AAEM.

Finally **President Elect Ellen Tanner Haynes**, **Patrice Payne-Posey** and **Donna Key (ACCA)** should be commended for their hard work as the Conference Committee. Their next showing of their hard work will be the 2008 AL/ Miss Hurricane Conference. It is May 21-23, in Mobile. We are working hand-in-hand with AEMA to make it a success. More information about this conference can be found inside, and don't forget to register!

Congrats to our Certified Emergency Managers®!

Congratulations to our 15 newly certified emergency managers: **Larry Davis**, Autauga County; **Wayne Hayes**, Bibb County; **Dan Long**, Calhoun County; **Roy Waite**, Clarke County; **Theresa Daugherty**, Clay County; **Steve Swafford**, Cleburne County; **John Tallas**, Coffee County; **Mike Melton**, Colbert County; **Heather Walton**, Conecuh County; **Phyllis Little**, Cullman County; **Mike Marsh**, Dale County; **Eric Jones**, Elmore County; **Margaret Mixon**, Geneva County; **Victor Manning**, Jackson County; **Johnny Bigham**, Lamar County; **Deedie Matthews**, Lee County; **Anita McBurnett**, Marshall County; **Eddie Hicks**, Morgan County; **DeAndrae Kimbrough**, Perry County; **Ken Gibson**, Pickens County; **Donnie Knight**, Randolph County; **Kathy Russell**, Russell County; **Don Green**, Shelby County; **Ellen Haynes**, St. Clair County; **Joe Paul Boone**, Tallapoosa County; **David Hartin**, Tuscaloosa County; **Johnny Burnette**, Walker County; **James Burnette**, Winston County; and **Billy Green**, AEMA.

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www.aem.us

When you are mailing **anything** to AAEM, especially your membership dues or conference registrations, please make sure that the address your county commission office (particularly your accounts payable office) has on file is **100 N. Jackson Street, Montgomery, Ala. 36104.** Thank you for your help!

AAEM Contingent Travels to Washington, D.C.

A contingent from AAEM visited Washington, D.C. from March 10-13. Topics of discussion throughout the week included Emergency Management Performance Grant Funding, FEMA-Declaration Transparency Issues, Federal Preparedness Grants, and National Weather Service.



The group began with a meeting on Monday with FEMA Director R. David Paulison and Chief Operations Officer Vice Admiral Harvey E. Johnson Jr., among many other staff members. Next, the group visited with National Weather Service/NOAA's key players, including Kenneth Graham, about several issues related to lengths of tornado watches, instant messaging, common alerting protocol, state radios, Webinars and weather radios.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, we split into groups and visited all of Alabama's representation in Washington including Congressmen Bonner, Cramer, Aderholt, Bachus, Everett, Rogers and Davis along with Senators Sessions and Shelby. All of the visits were productive and all of the representatives were supportive of AAEM's discussion topics. Also on Wednesday, the group visited with W. Ross Ashley, FEMA's Assistant Administrator of the Grants Programs.

Thanks to all who participated in our successful visit: **Brock Long**, AEMA Director; **John James**, AEMA; **Eddie Hicks**, AAEM President; **Ellen Haynes**, AAEM President-Elect; **Max Armstrong**, AAEM Legislative Chairman; **Heather Walton**, AAEM Legislative Co-Chairman; **Roy Waite**, AAEM Legislative Committee Member; **Kristi Stamnes**, AAEM Area 2 Director; **Phyllis Little**, AAEM Area 6 Director; **Ronnie Adair**, AAEM Area 1 Director; **Johnny Bigam**, AAEM Area 5 Director; and **Dan Long**, AAEM Area 7 Director.

County Day @ the Legislature

Wednesday and Thursday • April 16-17, 2008

This year we have switched to a Wednesday-Thursday schedule. Fewer organizations hold events on these days, and we think it will increase legislator participation and allow you to have greater access to your legislators for meetings and dinner.

A briefing will be held on Wednesday, April 16, at the Alabama Activity Center in downtown Montgomery with registration at 1 p.m. The briefing will begin at 2 p.m. and will outline the status of the ACCA's legislative package and Danger bills.

Dinner is on your own, and we encourage you to make plans to dine with your legislators. Breakfast with Legislators is Thursday, April 17, at the Alabama Activity Center from 8-9:30 a.m. Following breakfast, we will spend the rest of the morning lobbying at the Alabama State House.

Registration is \$25 per person. Registration forms are online at www.acca-online.org. County Day @ the Legislature requires an overnight stay, so we have set up a block of rooms at the Embassy Suites Hotel in downtown Montgomery. **The room rate is \$139.** To reserve a room, call (334) 269-5055 or 1-800-Embassy or log on to www.embassysuitesmontgomery.com, and use group code **CCA**.

Area News Updates

Area 1 News

Jimmy Cowan, the Choctaw County EMS Director, is working dual roles for the time being as both the EMS and the EMA Director while county officials look at how they want the EMA program to continue.

On a sad note, not only for Monroe County, but for Region 1 and the state as a whole, **Chuck Murph** has decided to make a move up to the State Homeland Security Office. Since I have been here, I have witnessed the dynamic change from a one man, part-time EMA Program to a statewide recognized program that is constantly on the move to make itself better for the citizens of Monroe County, Region 1 and our state. Of course, this could not have happened without the dedicated work and loyalty of **Rita Smith** and **Rennie Raines**. Unfortunately for Monroe County and Region 1, Rita has also decided to take her career to the next level and has accepted a position at the Lee County EMA and will be moving her family there soon.

We wish Chuck and Rita the very best in their new challenges!

According to **April Sells**, the new Poarch Creek Casino floor will open in December 2008 and the Convention Center and Hotel in March 2009 if all continues on schedule. We sure look forward to having an AAEM or State Hurricane Conference there in the near future.

Area 4 News

The Russell County Office of Homeland/Emergency Management along with the Russell County Sheriff Department, Phenix City Police Department, Phenix City Fire/Rescue, Alabama Department of Public Health, Lee County EMA, Columbus EMA and Columbus Hazmat participated in the 2008 Dragonslayer Exercise in partnership with the National Guard. The exercise took place at Garrett-Harrison Stadium in Phenix City on March 12. The exercise tested not only the CST, but the local First Responders in dealing with Dirty Bomb situations. While OHSEM and participants hope never to deal with real life situations such as this, it was a success. A lot of information was gathered that was beneficial to make the area better.

The Elmore County EMA/HS Office has been working on the development of a Citizens Corp Program and also updating several plans. The Elmore County EMA/HS Office has been working diligently to close out grants received through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and other sources for emergency warning sirens, communications equipment, safe rooms, and more. The Elmore County EMA/HS Office has also hosted many training courses such as; Hazardous Materials Technician, NWS Storm Spotter, and a basic Preliminary Damage Assessment training class.

We've also had some personnel changes in our district: **Kathy Russell** is now the EMA Director for Russell County; **William Alexander** is now the Homeland Security Director for Russell County; **Deedie Matthews** is now the EMA Director for Lee County; **Judy Kinnebrew** is now the EMA Director for Macon County; **Johnny Langley** is now the Deputy Director for Lee County EMA; and **David Brunson** is now the Deputy Director for Elmore County EMA.

Area 6 News

Congratulations to **Mike Leeth**, who has been named Acting EMA Director for DeKalb County.

Our Washington, D.C., legislative visits went very well. The purpose of the trip was to meet with our legislators, NOAA/NWS and FEMA to discuss issues directly affecting emergency management in Alabama. Talking points included:

1. EMPG Funding FY09 in the amount of \$487 million to bring EMPG up to the 50/50 match nationwide. Included was a request to change the name from EMP Grant to something like Emergency Management Performance Funding (or Assistance). Reason being that the "grant" designation causes red flags when legislators look for an area to cut. It also causes confusion when other agencies attempt to apply for funding as if it were the same as other HS grants. The delegation requested that the language in the guidance be clarified to conform to an all-hazards approach. The name change was met with enthusiasm from Congressmen Rogers and Aderholt of the Appropriations/Homeland Security Sub-Committee.

2. FEMA-Declaration Transparency Issues/Individual Assistance (IA) was discussed with Mr. Paulison. Concerns are that once the request leaves the Governor, it can't be easily tracked while in FEMA. With a more open process, if the request bogs down at some point, the state could provide more information to assist the process. This could mean the difference between a declaration and a denial. At least we would have the option to provide information to "argue" our case. Also discussed was the need for more consistent guidelines. We don't want specific thresholds, because all counties and states are different demographically and economically. We ask for more consistency in the process. As for the complicated grant applications for individual shelters and sirens, we asked that the application and process be simplified and the waiting time from application to approval be shortened. Of interest to many will be the change in policy concerning community shelters. Dual use of the facilities has been allowed, and the notification letter went from FEMA national to Region IV on Friday prior to our visits. Phil May was in our meeting and notified of the change at that time.

3. Again this year the delegation approached legislators with issues concerning the NWS, especially the local weather offices. We ask that local offices be operated 24/7, that funding for public outreach programs be increased (Huntsville has dropped from \$40,000 per year to \$17,000 per year for spotter training, travel, replacement of projectors used for programs, etc.), and that Congress fully fund the NWS to provide for personnel shortfalls at the local level.

Our first meeting was at NOAA with Ken Graham and his department heads. There were scientists, engineers and administrators who were very interested in the actions taken at the local level when a watch or warning is issued. Concerns about the long length of watches and the large areas covered were discussed. Most had no idea of the impact watches and warnings have on agencies at the local level, nor had the impact of eight-hour watches on the effectiveness of weather radios been considered.

2008 ANNUAL HURRICANE CONFERENCE

The 2008 Alabama Mississippi Hurricane Conference is scheduled for **May 21-23** at the Riverview Plaza Hotel and Mobile Convention Center in Mobile, Ala. We hope you have already made your plans to attend this most important event of the year for the emergency management communities in both states.

For AAEM members who paid to attend the 2008 Winter Conference in February, you may attend the 2008 Hurricane Conference at no charge. However, you still must complete a registration form and return it in order to confirm your attendance at the conference. Conference registration for AAEM members who did not attend the 2008 Winter Conference or for non-AAEM members is **\$100** each if we receive your registration before **May 9**. Registrations received after May 9 are \$125 each. Log online to www.acca-online.org and click **Conferences and Events** or **Affiliate Groups/AAEM** for a registration packet complete with a conference registration form. Save a little money and register early!

To reserve your room at the **Riverview Plaza Hotel** in Mobile, Ala., by calling **800-922-3298** or log onto www.marriott.com/mobrv. Please use the group code **EMHEMHA** to receive the conference room rate of **\$119**. The deadline to receive this rate is **Sunday, April 20**.

If you have problems or questions regarding the conference or making your hotel reservations, please call Donna Key at (334) 263-7594, or send an email to dkey@acca-online.org. We look forward to seeing you in Mobile!

AAEM CONFERENCE AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21

- 10:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. Conference Registration
- 10:30 a.m. - 7 p.m. Exhibit Hall Open
- 12 - 1:15 p.m. Strolling Lunch inside the Exhibit Hall
- 1:30 - 4:15 p.m. Opening General Session in the Mobile Convention Center
- 5 - 7 p.m. Opening Reception inside the Exhibit Hall

THURSDAY, MAY 21

- 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. Breakfast with Exhibitors
- 8:30 - 11:45 a.m. Morning Breakout Sessions
- 12 - 1:30 p.m. Conference Luncheon
- 1:30 - 4:45 p.m. Afternoon Breakout Sessions

FRIDAY, MAY 23

- 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast
- 8:30 - 11:30 a.m. Closing General Session

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED...

- 2008 Hurricane Season Forecast
- Debris Management
- Special Needs Evacuation
- COOP
- Emergency Management in the Private Sector
- Emergency Communications
- Unified Command / IAP
- Mitigation
- FEMA/DHS Update
- Public Awareness
- Logistics
- Animal Evacuation and Sheltering
- Incident Management Teams

*Sound interesting?
Then, register today!*