

# R2 –WEEKLY BULLETIN

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## THE CARIBBEAN: Check It Out

Coordination is the key to a successful emergency response; if you have to plan when an event happens, you are already too late to be effective.

This fundamental of emergency management (and a cold spell in NY) prompted members of the Region II's Disaster Operations Division and IMAT team to tour the Caribbean this week. It was the IMAT team's first look at island topography, giving them an appreciation of the challenges of responding to any event there.

Puerto Rico Emergency Management Agency (PREMA) briefed the group on its current response plans at the Caribbean Area Division (CAD) offices. In addition to receiving this hard data, the group, guided by longtime CAD Director Alex deLaCampa, forged, or advanced, personal relationships with key territorial partners, an intangible but vital asset in any disaster response operation.

The group also met with the director of the Virgin Island Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA), afterwards touring the FEMA command bunker in the Virgin Islands.

Phil Parr, Region II's IMAT team leader and Dug Salley, Acting Director of the Disaster Operations Division finalized the regional organization chart for any response in the Islands to include key stakeholders, such as the Defense Coordinator Element, United States Coast Guard and all local emergency support functions in Puerto Rico.

*Michael Moriarty, Acting Regional Administrator*



## 'Check the Alignment, Please'

I'm sure you've said this to your mechanic or your chiropractor because you know the importance of alignment in anything with many moving parts. But how about to your boss?

Work organizations are dynamic contraptions with many moving, often complicated parts operating at several different levels simultaneously. FEMA typically operates on three levels: Strategic, Operational and Tactical. Notwithstanding some natural overlap, Headquarters (HQ) units should be operating at the Strategic level, meaning mission execution six months to a year out. At the Region, we more comfortably operate at Operational (six months to a year) and Tactical (immediate execution, e.g., the RRCC or JFO) levels. As we work to integrate our Regional operations, I thought it prudent to 'check alignment' with HQ, to ensure our organizational development is in line with the long-term direction of the agency. What I heard at HQ was very re-assuring, and more details will be coming in the weeks ahead (*watch this space*), but the bottom line is we are aligned, balanced and ready to go.

From Acting Administrator Nancy Ward to every Assistant Administrator in the various Directorates that I spoke with, all said they are poised and ready to support Region II as it executes its strategic plan. Regional readiness to ensure full mission capability was mandated by Congress – the Post Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA), and over the past year Region II has beefed up its staff to build this capacity. Congress and HQ are empowering us to better serve our partners and clients. We are in alignment and the way forward is straight ahead.

## IT TIP of the Week:

### Memory Problems?

#### By Yen Pan

IT Services Branch

Your FEMA Microsoft Outlook mailbox policy is set by Mount Weather and it cannot exceed 100 MB.

At 80 MB you will receive a warning that your mailbox is nearly full. At 90 MB you will not be able to send messages, and at 100 MB you will not be able to send or receive mail. Please review your mailbox periodically and delete any unnecessary emails to avoid a locked-up mailbox. **Don't forget to include your sent and deleted items folders.**

## PUBLIC ASSISTANCE 101

The Public Assistance program's focus is public entities, aiding in funding the repair, restoration, reconstruction, or replacement of a public facility or infrastructure damaged or destroyed by a disaster.

Once a declaration is signed by the president, the state begins the process of identifying eligible applicants. These applicants include state governments, local governments and any other political subdivision of the state, Native American tribes and Alaska Native Villages. Certain private nonprofit (PNP) organizations may also receive assistance.

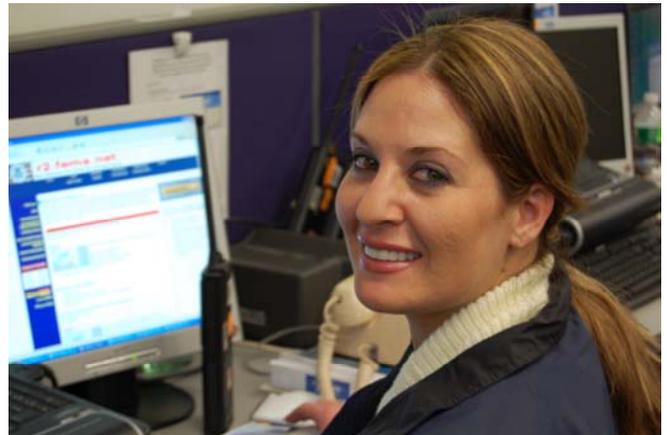
As soon as practicable after the declaration, the state, assisted by FEMA representatives from the Joint Field Office, conducts an Applicant Briefing for state, local and PNP officials to inform them of the assistance available and how to apply for it. A *Request for Public Assistance* must be filed with the state within 30 days after the area is designated eligible for assistance.

Following the Applicant's Briefing, a Kickoff Meeting is conducted where damages are discussed, needs assessed and a plan of action put in place. A combined federal/state/local team proceeds with Project Formulation, which is the process of documenting the eligible facility, the eligible work, and the eligible cost for fixing the damages to every public or PNP facility identified by state or local representatives. A Project Worksheet for each project is then prepared. Projects fall into the following categories:

- Category A: Debris removal
- Category B: Emergency protective measures
- Category C: Road systems and bridges
- Category D: Water control facilities
- Category E: Public buildings and contents
- Category F: Public utilities
- Category G: Parks, recreational, and other

**NEXT WEEK:** What happens after the money is obligated?

## Faces of Region II



### THE EYES AND EARS OF THE REGION By Michele Esteves, Watch Officer

The Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) Watch Operation – augmented by the Mobile Emergency Response System (MERS) Operations Center (MOC) – is the eyes and ears of Region II. We provides senior leadership and the Regional Administrator with 24/7 situational awareness and operational support.

We maintain daily coordination and contact with State and Local Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs), State Fusion Centers, Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs) and DHS components. We also work closely with our law enforcement and Intelligence partners to identify threats and their regional.

The creation of the Watch Section in each of the 10 FEMA Regions has been an important step in FEMA's movement towards being a proactive agency, enabling the agency to conduct preliminary planning, and to lean forward to meet expected or impending events.

During a RRCC activation, the Watch Section conducts notifications and performs Planning Section functions, until relieved by the RRCC Director. Then Watch Officers return to their regular duties of maintaining situational awareness and coordinating with critical partners.

In addition to disseminating information throughout the Region, we reach out to our back-up Regions and to the NRCC through twice daily Situational Awareness Reports, which gives a snapshot of the current situation, and the SPOTREPs, a real-time flash of breaking news. Currently, Watch Operations are staffed by four Watch Officers and is manned from 0700 to 1900 hours, seven days a week. After duty hours, the MERS MOC in Maynard, MA monitors the Region.

