

R2 –WEEKLY BULLETIN

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R-2 ON THE ROAD

The first of Region II's 2009 Congressional Outreach visits begins Saturday, as Acting RA Mike Moriarty and division directors Mike Beeman, Dug Salley, Kristina Simpson and Flora Moy travel to New Jersey's District Three to brief first-term U.S. Congressman John Adler on FEMA's programs, Region II's mission, and to hear the concerns of Rep. Adler and local officials.

District Three, which includes parts of Camden, Burlington, and Ocean counties, spans the width of the state in southern New Jersey, from the Pennsylvania border to the beachfront communities on Long Beach Island. The district faced two major declared disasters since 2005, both involving severe storms, high winds, and flooding. In addition to flood mitigation concerns, Adler is interested in FEMA's grant programs, Public and Individual Assistance, and how the federal economic stimulus package may benefit disaster preparedness.

"These face-to-face meetings with our congressional representatives are always a pleasure and a great opportunity for alignment of priorities," Mike said. "Also, getting out of the office and meeting with our state and local partners is the best way to hear their concerns and answer their questions and to introduce our team. We'll be doing more of these outreach efforts this year, and I expect they'll be very fruitful."

Congressional outreach is especially important for newly-elected representatives who, often have little experience in how FEMA works or what the agency can provide in the event of a disaster. Known as "FEMA 101," these outreach visits are invaluable for building partnerships within the region and provide an important opportunity to get to know new representatives personally.

In addition to Adler and his staff, Mike will be meeting with the mayors of Medford Township and Medford Lakes on some longstanding PA issues.

Adler, a long time NJ state senator, has been assigned to the Finance Services and Veteran Affairs committees in his new position.

FLYING THE COOP



Region II personnel at Fort Monmouth during "Rising Storm" COOP exercise last week. Forty-four federal agencies participated, as well as NYC OEM. The United Nations observed.

Last week's "Rising Storm" COOP exercise drew personnel to the Region's Alternate Operations Facility (AOF) at Fort Monmouth to test whether the government could keep running in the face of a hypothetical Category 3 hurricane hitting New York City.

Led by Region II and the New York Federal Executive Board (FEB), 44 federal agencies in the New York area participated, as did NYC OEM and NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Participants were pressed into action very quickly, responding to critical COOP questions and message injects. They also brought along their daily work assignments. This was part of the COOP AOF challenge to clearly identify whether Region II could maintain its mission essential functions in support of Headquarters. For some, just getting to the COOP proved a challenge as military sites, like Fort Monmouth, are not on GIS programs.

"This exercise allowed me to experience some of the issues that would be encountered in simply finding the location during an actual COOP event," one unsigned evaluation noted.

Other *Lessons Learned*: the need for satellite phones for senior management; more operational transparency between divisions to foster an appreciation of the larger, Regional mission; and the need to further exploit the continuity expertise of the Emergency Relocation Group (ERG).

LIFE TRAINING

By Nestor LLamas

Over the years, I've attended innumerable FEMA training classes, primarily in congressional and community relations, but never have I learned as much – both professionally and personally – as during course *L269: Managing FEMA Staff on Disaster Operations*.

The overall goal was "...to provide Disaster Managers and supervisors with the knowledge and skills to perform your responsibilities more effectively and with greater confidence." Simply stated, to be an effective manager it is essential to "Know Thyself."

Prior to the course, students filled out the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality profile, the results from which we received on the first day of class.

Our class of 36 was comprised of many FEMA disciplines: FCOs, Public Assistance staff, Logistics, Mitigation, Administration, Operations, and External Affairs. All of us brought a wealth of pre-FEMA experience to the course, e.g., the military, police officers, social workers, parents, grandparents, etc., and our ages ranged from 20-something to me, the oldest of the bunch.

The class was run very efficiently and each day we were required to offer a "pearl" of wisdom, something we'd learned as a manager the previous day. As difficult as it was to come up with a find a 'pearl' every day, we all tried, and some proved quite enlightening. For example, after the section on '*People Management Skills: Effective communication*' I offered my 'pearl': "If you

REGIONAL FACES



Kirk Henderson, a Reservist with IT, on his first deploy-

"From one keyboard to another" is how Kirk Henderson, a Reservist in IT, describes his path to Region II.

Kirk, a musician and recording engineer, spent five years (2003-2007) touring as bassist and keyboardist for the rock group *Marah*. Their 2005 release, "*If You Don't Laugh, You'd Cry*," was cited as 'Album of the Year' by best-selling author Stephen King in *Entertainment Weekly*.

In 2007, *Marah* performed at the Tribute to Bruce Springsteen at Carnegie Hall, and Kirk later got to jam with The Boss. However, soon after an appearance on NBC's *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, Kirk and two other members left the group. "That's show business," he says.

Kirk joined Region II in February, and his gig with IT in the Regional Offices is his first deployment. After work, he continues making music. He recently engineered an album for Philadelphia-based group *Adam and Dave's Bloodline* on which he also plays bass and keyboards. The result, "*Boycott Classics*," will be available online May 12.

Four months in, Kirk is looking forward to his first disaster deployment. "I'm used to being on the road and working long hours. I think I'm ready for a JFO," he says.

Fun links: <http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,1136236,00.html> and <http://www.cnn.com/2006/SHOWBIZ/Music/01/03/marah/index.html>

can't listen, YOU will never be heard.'

These exercises began to build a palpable bond among the students, as each day we expressed views and feelings we had previously avoided, or hesitated to reveal. We acknowledged and addressed issues of prejudging, lack of empathy, and character flaws. This was both profound and moving.

One morning we were asked to assess our views on conflict situations and how we needed to be both fair-minded and caring. One person began expressing his views and how much the class had changed him, and he began sobbing uncontrollably. The room became silent and you could see and hear others also crying. It was a profound and cathartic moment that I shall never forget. As had been the custom throughout the course, everyday a person who had offered a worthy "pearl" was given a string of pearls to wear as a badge of honor. That day, I had the pearls. I then arose, while everyone wept or bowed their heads, and tearfully carried the pearls across the room, and I placed them around his neck and hugged him. WOW!

Another highlight of the week was the FCO panel, made up of Marianne Jackson, Mike Landry, Steve DeBlasio and Lee Anne Davidson. We all learned more about a FCO's duties during a disaster, but most impressive was their willingness to be questioned on any topic and their openness.

In all, it was a wonderful class — and life — experience. Special and heartfelt thanks to instructors Peter K. Vaslow, ACSW and Joyce A. Griffiths LLC. This was one FEMA training that could change a life.

REGIONAL NOTES

- **Calling all Reservists** (formerly known as DAEs)

The Disaster Reserve Workforce Division (DRWD) is creating an e-mail distribution list to disseminate information to Reservists when they aren't deployed. This info will include news flashes, newsletters, agency surveys, policy, program and cadre updates.

If you would like to be added to this list, send your personal e-mail address with your full name, cadre and region to:

FEMA-DRWD-Program@dhs.gov

Please put "Email Participation" in the subject line.



- **Reservists' Pay for Travel**

Just FYI: Disaster Reservist's pay is based upon travel by either automobile or common carrier. Reservists are not limited to eight hours of pay for their travel but may receive the amount of hourly pay they accrue, including overtime if their travel is over eight hours if they are enroute to either a disaster site or EMI.

In all cases, Reservists receive eight hours of pay upon release and return home, whether from a disaster site or training location.



- **US VI Preparedness Training**

The Region II Preparedness team offered the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Management and Operations Training and Exercise in the US Virgin Islands last month. Attendees included VI Territory Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA), Office of the VI Governor's Authorized Representative (VI GAR), Department of Health, Fire Department, VI Police Department, Department of Public Works and Utilities, and Department of Education. The two day course covered EOC management, staffing, equipment needs, and basic required operations for various hazards and disaster scenarios.

