

REGION 2 BI-WEEKLY

Volume 1, Issue 29

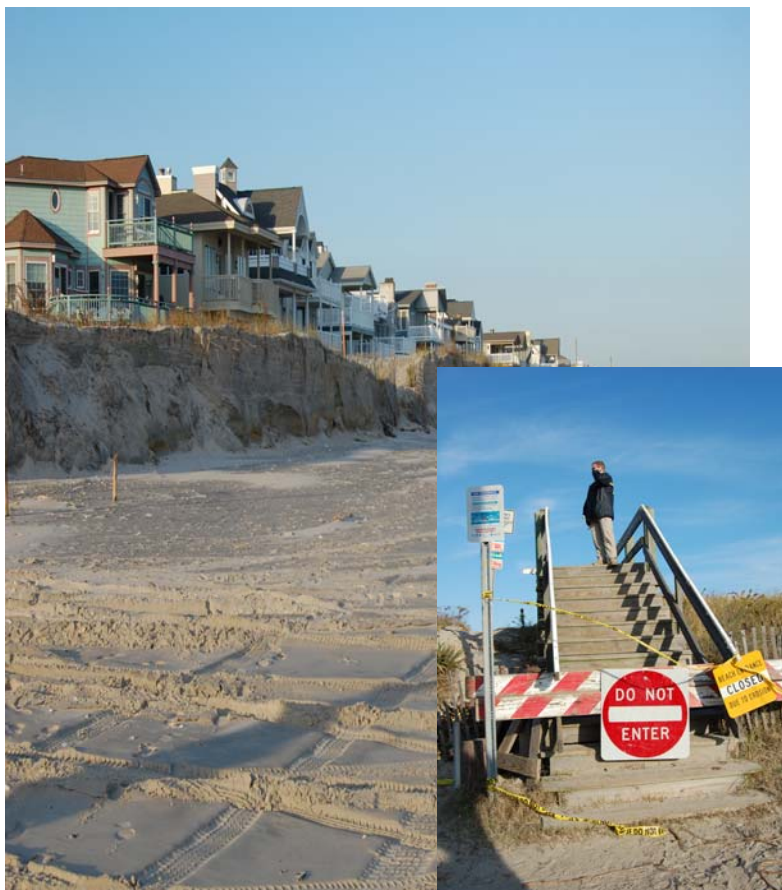
Nov. 20, 2009

PDA TOURS WRAP IN SOUTH JERSEY; *DECLARATION REQUEST EXPECTED*

Region II teams joined local officials, NJ state emergency management colleagues and other federal partners last week to perform Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDAs) on the effects of Tropical Storm Ida in New Jersey.

In addition to R2 personnel, the PDA teams included the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, the NJ Dept. of Community Affairs, the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Small Business Administration.

Together, they did thorough inspections of storm damage and gathered as much hard data as possible across the seven counties designated as part of a State of Emergency by NJ Gov. Jon Corzine last week. The emergency Executive Order allows state agencies to reassign staff and resources to the affected areas and to link with FEMA personnel to determine eligibility for federal assistance. Teams evaluated public infrastructure, beach erosion, and individual property damage.



PDA teams link up in Cape May County, NJ prior to tours of coastal and inland storm damage.

DEPUTY VISITS; *All Hands Assemble To Hear Word From DC*

FEMA's new Deputy Administrator Richard Serino visited 26 Federal Plaza Friday as part of his systematic tour of all Regional offices.

Serino was the Chief of Emergency Medical Services and the Assistant Director for the Boston Public Health Commission prior to his confirmation last month. In Boston he helped bolster the city's response plans for chemical, biological, and radiological attacks and other emergency incidents. He has 35 years of state and local emergency management and emergency medical services experience.

A video conference with the CAD and a telephone bridge with DR-1857's JFO enabled him to thank the entire staff for their hard work and public service. Staff were also encouraged to ask questions about HQ's goals and objectives.



Serino, standing above and right, is a Boston native and avid Red Sox fan. Nevertheless, after his remarks he needed a drink of water.



FACES OF THE REGION



Donna Fisher is the Region's new Deputy Director of the Management Division.

She comes to us from the US Coast Guard, where she had more than 20 years experience in Contingency Preparedness, Emergency Management, Human Resources and Training. As Chief of the Coast Guard's Contingency Preparedness School in Yorktown, Virginia, she was instrumental in developing a training and implementation plan for the Coast Guard's adoption of ICS.

Donna also served as the Operations and/or Planning Section Chief for several major Coast Guard operations, including Hurricane Andrew, the aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Centers, the 2004 Republican National Convention and the crash of American Airlines Flight 587 off the coast of Queens. Barge explosions, oil facility tank fires, and hazardous materials releases were likewise part of her portfolio at the Coast Guard.

Donna earned her Bachelor's degree in Education from the University of Georgia. She is currently a student at Capella University pursuing a Master's Degree in Public Safety Leadership and Emergency Management.

In her free time, Donna enjoys reading, spending time at the shore, and baking. She is an avid New Jersey Devils fan, living in the Garden State with her husband (also retired from the Coast Guard), her son, and two dogs. Her daughter is married to a Marine, and is currently living in North Carolina with Donna's first grandchild.



HELPING THE HEMISPHERE PREPARE



A conference on “Security, Science and the Americas” was held in Costa Rica earlier this month. It focused on basic, high-tech and innovative science to address public safety and national security issues. Representing FEMA was Region II’s Caribbean Area Division Director, Alejandro De La Campa, seen at the podium above.

Three key areas of security science were discussed:

Innovation and the importance of investing in research and development (R&D), and focusing on how innovations enhance a nation’s domestic security and preparedness;

Protection of critical infrastructure and how improved technical solutions make possible the understanding of threats, vulnerability assessments, mitigation treatments, and the analysis of consequences; and

Mitigation of natural disasters through the use of technologies to improve emergency preparedness and response.

Representatives from U.S. bilateral partners in science and technology – including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Uruguay, and the host-country, Costa

Rica – shared their regional perspectives. Attendees represented academic and government experts in science and policy, allowing for a broad exchange of ideas, networking, and new partnerships.

De La Campa spoke of the National Response Framework (NRF) and FEMA’s roles and responsibilities during the four phases of emergency management: preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. He also chaired a panel on “Mitigating Natural Disasters.”

This conference was sponsored by DHS S&T International Cooperative Programs, which provides the strategic framework to establish, facilitate, and sustain effective international partnerships that support homeland security research, development, test and evaluation. The International Cooperative Programs Office works to match U.S. entities engaged in homeland security research with their foreign counterparts so that they may partner in cooperative research activities.



Region II’s Julia Roberts, foreground left, and Leah Lubin, standing, registered stakeholders at the **Long Term Disaster Recovery Working Group**. The national series of forums and listening sessions sought local, state and non-profit input to improve disaster recovery efforts.

AN END TO AN ERA



“For me, it’s always been about people.” That’s how Arnold Davis describes his 34 years of public service – four with the US Air Force stationed in Taiwan, and more than 30 years with FEMA, Region II.

Arnold was among FEMA’s original hires when the agency was founded in 1979. He started as a Support Coordination Specialist, responsible for setting up the Region’s physical infrastructure – including its first phone and computer systems -- here at 26 Federal Plaza.

He retires as an IT specialist, the President of Local 2203 of the American Federation of Government Employees, the Region’s longtime EEO counselor, its’ institutional memory and a friend to all.

Arnold has seen a lot of changes. Initially, Disaster Assistance and Disaster Operations were one division; Mitigation didn’t exist and Title 5 hadn’t been passed. Back in the day, the Regional Offices were split between three floors: the second, the 13th and 19th. Following Hurricane David in 1979, Arnold spent more than a year in the US Virgin Islands. Today, PFTs can only be deployed 30 days at a time.





"In the beginning, we were just feeling our day. In those early days, we had a series of multiple disasters, one right after the other," Arnold says. "Today it's a lot easier, with the automated systems to set up and design a JFO, and the better coordination with the other federal agencies."

"It's been a great learning curve for me. I've had the opportunity to meet some very talented, interesting and team-spirited people. I've enjoyed the chance to solve problems, but I've loved the camaraderie."



At his retirement luncheon, Arnold shared his future plans. After getting on a kidney transplant list (and getting a transplant), he says he will either finally open a restaurant or continue his personal outreach work among dialysis patients. "I'm one of 20 patients at a time. We're all there four hours a day, three days a week. But before I got there, no one was talking to each other...But you got to keep positive, and I got them talking...."

We know you did. Thank you Arnold, and great good luck!

26 Fed. Plaza security guard and well-known country & western singer Joe Lance William, back to camera right, sang "Don't Let the Job Get You Down."

