



## STORMS, FLOODS, TORNADOS. . . and FIRES

How we do what we do . . .



CR in Missouri



DRC in Wisconsin



Congressional in Iowa



APO in Missouri



PA in Missouri



Public Affairs  
in Oklahoma



IA in West Virginia



Mitigation in Mississippi



CR in Iowa



PDA in West Virginia



Operations in Wisconsin



EA in Indiana

Click on Photo to Connect to FEMA Photo Library

A Busy June for the Deployment Branch: 9,168 Callouts

900 to Iowa      29 to Minnesota  
194 to Illinois    254 to Missouri  
351 to Indiana    323 to Wisconsin

2,050 DAEs Deployed:  
1,762 Reservists  
298 Generalists

### It Takes an Act of Congress

How a FEMA Proposal  
Becomes Law

By Pamela Williams, HQ Congressional

Many of you have asked how one of your ideas or an Agency proposal can possibly ever become a law. Well, it can be a complex and lengthy process, but it starts with a proposal.

Each year, usually in the late fall, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) asks all Federal agencies for their high-priority legislative proposals -- their "legislative agenda."

At FEMA, the Office of Chief Counsel (OCC) supports and coordinates the identification, collection and development of proposals and ushers them through the extensive review process prior to presentation and consideration by Congress.

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Volume 1 Issue 2, 2008

Produced by the Disaster Reserve  
Workforce Division (DRWD)

## *The Administrator's Corner*



*Administrator  
R. David Paulison*

### ***FEMA Needs You***

Since September of 2005, FEMA has responded to more than 170 federally declared major disasters. We could not have done this without you.

The men and women of the Disaster Reserve Workforce are a critical part of all that we do. In response to this summer's floods across the Midwest, we opened numerous offices in five states, then moved to support California wildfires, all the while continuing our day-to-day efforts in older disaster sites across the country. Without the ability to add key people to these teams when needed, providing the high level of service that the American people deserve and expect would be impossible.

As we approach the heart of Hurricane season and continue our activities from coast to coast, I would like to thank you for your efforts. To those we have not yet called upon, I ask each of you to make yourself available so that we can use your skills when needed. We have set high standards, and Americans have high expectations. We are counting on you as we respond to those in need of our help. Help us to help others. We can all make a difference.

## *Letter from Donna M. Dannels, DRWD Director*

To our Reservists,

Space prevents me from letting you know all of the steps taken or proposed to strengthen our workforce mission, and your position within this force.

One step we're taking is to ensure that we are able to deliver information to you and that you, in turn, can "talk" to us.

In June I sent you a packet of materials which included a password to DRWD's Web Portal – your passport from outside the firewall to current Agency information. Let us know if you have not received this. You can contact us via the email inbox we activated in April - [FEMA-DRWD-Program@dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-DRWD-Program@dhs.gov).

On June 5, I spoke with many of you during a teleconferenced brown bag lunch hosted by External Affairs at HQ. I spoke to a standing room only crowd, many of which were Reservists. I realize a number of you missed the brown bag, but you can look and listen through links via our Web Portal at <https://portal.fema.gov>.

Because of your phone participation during the brown bag, I plan to have on-going, topic specific teleconferences, specifically with and for Reservists.

I've talked a lot about some of the changes we are pursuing: access to the health care system; access to FERS and TSP; merit status for full-time jobs at FEMA; waiver of annuitant pay limitation for FEMA retirees; pre-disaster

training standards; and, administrative and sick leave.

Your sitting administration here signed off on a legislative package that includes the first five items, and is actively working to move the package through the required process - where it is subject to revisions and restrictions along the way. Our feature article in this issue explains the proposal-to-law process (see "It Takes an Act of Congress").

The last item on our "to do" list requires more than a stroke of the approval pen as well. The process to change the sick and administrative leave policy, involving the Human Capital Division, National Finance Center and Office of Policy and Management, is in motion.

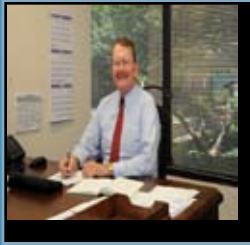
The future we seek for our Reserve Program is going to be a very long-term transformation! It takes people resources, money resources, changes in laws, policies, and even IT systems. If this was easy to do the Agency would have done it a very long time ago.

That said, we have much in motion and lots of steam for the long haul. I ask that you be proactive in helping us stay in touch with you, and in working together to consistently meet our workforce mission.



*Donna M. Dannels,  
DRWD Director*

## *DRWD Welcomes!*



*Paul Geiger  
D R W D  
Readiness  
Branch Chief*

Paul Geiger was born in Waco, Texas into an Air Force family and has been on the move since he was eight months of age. He states he has been in every state of the union, and has travelled as far west as Bangkok and as far east as Afghanistan. He has always had a love for scuba diving, has dived in locations around the world, and was a scuba instructor for a number of years.

He comes to FEMA from the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), where he was Chief of Current Operations, responsible for readiness and deployment of DIA personnel worldwide for intelligence operations. His stated mission for the Readiness Branch: "To have an effective disaster workforce, we have to be able to set requirements and meet standards for all positions that are deployed. That is my goal."

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DRWD continues to expand. On July 21, Selven "Layne" Smith joins our office as Program Management Branch Chief. More about Layne in the September issue of "On Call."

## *How a Proposal Becomes Law*

*(Continued from Page 1)*

Usually this is an annual process, but often, throughout the year opportunities present themselves to the Agency where we can pursue legislative changes outside of the usual process. In this first article of a two article series, we will explore the process by which a FEMA proposal can become law. In our next installment we will take a look at the history of disaster legislation and how the laws that govern FEMA's disaster operations have evolved over the decades.

Typically FEMA program staffs prepare legislative proposals for Agency leadership during the annual call for legislation or at any time during the year. The leadership of each office or directorate must approve every proposal before it is submitted to OCC, which then works directly with the originating office to develop the background and justification, as well as the actual language for the legislative proposal.

Once formalized, all proposals are discussed with the Policy Working Group (PWG), which includes representatives from all FEMA offices, including Regions. The PWG makes recommendations to FEMA Leadership as to which proposals are the highest priority. Ultimately, the Administrator makes the final determination of which proposals will be submitted to DHS for further consideration.

DHS receives proposals from all of its component agencies

and weighs their merits against overall department goals and objectives. DHS-approved proposals are then submitted to OMB.

FEMA may be given the opportunity to brief OMB on the importance and impact of its proposals, along with other agencies in the federal family. Upon OMB's approval of the proposals, FEMA can pursue its Legislative Agenda with Congress. FEMA's Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA) facilitates this.

After a proposal is approved by OMB, it still has a long journey through Congress before it can become law. A U.S. Senator or Representative must sponsor FEMA's proposal in order for it to become a bill, which will be introduced on the floor of the Senate or House of Representatives for consideration. Each bill is given a number, and the names of any and all sponsoring Congresspersons are placed on the bill. Then, the presiding officer in the Senate or the Speaker of the House refers the bill to the appropriate committee.

The bill is placed on the calendar of the committee. The committee has several choices for what to do in its review of the bill. A bill dies in committee if the committee chooses not to act on it. The bill can be referred to a subcommittee. The committee or subcommittee can hold hearings on the bill and/or request further input and briefings from FEMA or other agencies affected by the bill.

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## How a Proposal Becomes Law

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After the committee has amassed all of this information, it will review and “markup” the bill. This can include adding, deleting or changing provisions. The committee must then vote on the bill. Once this process is complete, the bill is presented to the entire Senate or House. All members of the Senate or House may debate the bill on the floor of the Senate or House. At the end of debate, the Senate or House votes on the bill. If the bill passing one chamber of Congress, the committee and floor debate process for the bill starts all over again in the other chamber.

Once the bill is agreed upon and approved by both chambers of Congress, it is sent to the President for approval and signature. If the President vetoes the bill, Congress has one chance to override the veto by a two-thirds majority vote in both the Senate and the House. If the vote fails, the veto stands and the bill does not become a law. However, if the President signs the bill, you have a law!

FEMA is pursuing ways to strengthen its Reserve Program through Congress. The next issue of “On Call” will feature an article on the Evolution of laws that govern FEMA.

Did you know: In the 107th Congress (2001-2002, the latest date for which we could find the data), Congress considered 9,130 bills and joint resolutions. Only 383 became law!

## Recovery Times Newsletter: Back in JFOs

By Blair Gately, HQ External Affairs Research/Writer

*Recovery Times* Newsletter is making a reappearance at JFOs! Many of you may be unaware that FEMA Public Affairs and JFO External Affairs staff can produce a printed newsletter that provides basic information for disaster victims about Individual Assistance programs, the response and recovery process, and mitigation and preparedness activities.

*Recovery Times* has three objectives: 1) To provide official, timely and accurate information to disaster victims in printed form; 2) To promote an understanding of disaster assistance programs and to inform victims how they can apply for disaster assistance and what they can expect after they apply; and 3) To instill confidence that FEMA, the state and other government and voluntary agencies are working in partnership to help disaster victims and communities begin the recovery process.

*Recovery Times* is produced by an editor at HQ and External Affairs staff in the field – with input from state, local and federal agencies and voluntary organizations. The lead Exter-

nal Affairs Officer at a disaster assigns staff, usually within the Planning and Products function, to gather key information such as disaster-specific phone numbers and photographs. JFO staff then coordinates and works with the HQ editor to provide the necessary information specific to the disaster area.

The format for the first issue is somewhat standardized so that it can be distributed quickly by External Affairs to local officials and stakeholders, legislative staffers and through the private sectors at community stores and businesses. When a follow-up issue

is needed, a little more time may be taken on information specific to that disaster.

To ensure that all audiences within the disaster area have access to vital recovery information, all issues produced are translated into whatever languages have been identified within that disaster area.

If you’d like more information about *Recovery Times*, contact HQ’s Internal Communications staff: [FEMA-Employee-Communications@dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-Employee-Communications@dhs.gov)



## Higher Ed Promotes Disaster Training

By Muriel Barclay, DRWD

In the early '90s, there were few courses or degrees in emergency management offered at colleges or universities. In 1994, FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) developed the Emergency Management Higher Education Program to promote college-based emergency management education for future emergency managers. Today, there are more than 150 programs in emergency management, approximately 10,000 students enrolled, and another 20,000 annually taking courses.

On June 2-5, 2008, EMI hosted faculty and students from colleges and universities around the country at its 11th Annual All-Hazards Emergency Management Higher Education conference - providing a forum for educators to discuss issues related to emergency management education.

This year's theme was "Framing the Future." According to Dr. B. Wayne Blanchard, the Program's Manager, the '08 conference had the highest attendance, ever. Speakers included: Dr. Leonard L. Haynes, III, Executive Director, White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities; P.J. Crowley, Senior Fellow and Director of Homeland Security Center for American Progress; and Dr. Dennis Milet, Professor Emeritus, University of Colorado, and author

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## External Affairs

### PODCASTS PROVIDE DAILY UPDATES

By Dianna Gee, R4 DAE and Steve Crider, R5 DAE

They say change is the only thing that is constant and that's why it's so important to keep up with the fast-paced changes in today's news world.

We have to make it easy for reporters if we want our message delivered. Previous experience with pre-recorded Public Service Announcements (PSAs) proved that the media likes to get "plug and play" information from FEMA. The daily podcast takes this to another level.

The Joint Field Office in Indianapolis is producing a daily podcast which provides an update to the media on the real time progress of the recovery effort.

"The value is the information is timely, easily available and provides positive information on our programs," says Leo Skinner, External Affairs Officer for DR-1766-IN.

The podcasts are played in whole or in segments on many radio stations giving FEMA a daily media presence in many areas.

"Even if the media doesn't run the report, they are presented with a daily "snapshot" of the recovery, our message of the day, and any other important facts we want to get out that day," adds Skinner.

From a technical standpoint, it is easily produced in the JFO with a laptop, some inexpensive recording/editing software and a

microphone. This can be easily replicated on other disasters.

Many DAEs have broadcasting backgrounds and the necessary experience to produce the report. Podcasts are posted on [fema.gov](http://fema.gov) and also sent out via email to radio stations in the declared disaster area.

For more information on recent External Affairs initiatives and activities in the field, please see the latest External Affairs supplemental edition of "On Call," as well as archived issues. at: [www.fema.gov/pao/daeinfo.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/pao/daeinfo.shtm)



INDIANAPOLIS) Using a laptop and a microphone, FEMA DAE Steve Crider records a daily podcast from his desk at the Joint Field Office in Indiana. These two-minute or less audio files are then emailed to media outlets within the declared disaster area. *Photo by Dianna Gee*

Call ADD every 30 days to update your availability!  
1-888-853-9648

## Higher Ed

(Continued from Page 5)

of “Disasters By Design...” Preparedness and readiness were the recurring themes throughout each presentation.

It was inspiring to be in the midst of those who teach and mentor the emergency management professionals of today and tomorrow.

Some of the sobering issues discussed relating to our changing world of natural and man-made disasters:

- 7 out of 10 of the most costly storms in the U.S. occurred within the last 4 years, attributed, perhaps, to a shift in weather patterns from global warming;
- There are more people living in coastal areas today than ever before, which puts more homes at greater risk for damages due to flooding, hurricanes, etc.

For more information on this year’s Annual All-Hazards Emergency Management Higher Education Conference, go to <http://training.fema.gov/EMI-Web/edu/educonference08.asp>.

### You May Have Heard

FEMA “NEAT” Web Site Launched! Want to know how best to report SPAM or how to manage your mailbox size with your BlackBerry? The National E-Mail Administration Team (NEAT) has the answers to these and many more.

Isn’t this neat?

Visit their homepage at <http://online.fema.net/neat>

## DRWD: What’s Behind the Curtain

As you know, DRWD is busy on many fronts with its effort to strengthen workforce capability and pursue, with Agency leadership support, expanded benefits for Reservists.

At the same time, following historic flooding events, early wildfire activity, and active preparation for hurricane season, we’re also working to strengthen the number of available Reservists.

These exceptional circumstances prompted us recently to engage with the Regional Cadres in a call-out campaign to encourage Reservists who are in a non-available status

in ADD to become available.

As many as half of our workforce did deploy in response to the unusual series of disaster events, but the other half has remained unavailable for a variety of reasons - including a surprisingly high number who showed as “available” within ADD, but declined to deploy when called.

We are reaching out to let you know that while we are working toward strengthening your position as a Reservist, we also need you to support Agency readiness. Therefore, we ask that you call ADD at 1-888-853-9648, and select the option that reflects your willingness to deploy.



Phillip A. Nowak,  
Deputy Director DRWD

### Disaster Reserve Workforce Division Missions

1) Develop, deploy and support a professional disaster reserve workforce ready for the national all-hazards response needs of FEMA program managers and regional leadership.

2) Assist in the credentialing and deployment of responders from FEMA’s full-time workforce and the Surge Capacity Force.

### Your Travel Matters

Check on the status of your travel voucher by calling FEMA’s Travel Helpline: 800-310-3169. *Happy trails!*

Government per diem rates are available at <http://www.gsa.gov>. Find your location on the map. *Carpe per diem!*

### Useful Sites

DRWD latest news, FAQs, and more: Enter your user name and password at <https://portal.fema.gov>

EMI Online Independent Study Courses: <http://training.fema.gov/IS/>

Disaster Workforce task books & online assessment guides: <http://www.learningservices.us/FEMA/TaskBooks/>