



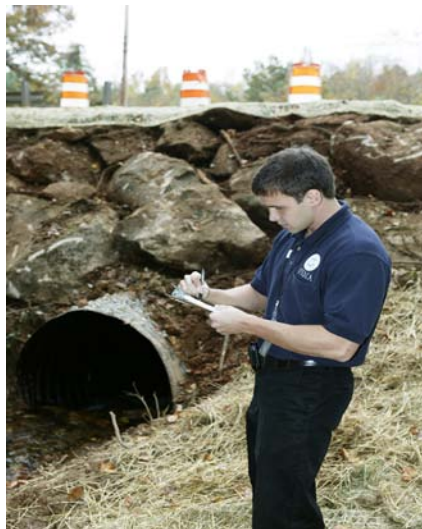
2009 Year in Review: FEMA Responded to 59 Disasters



FEMA Community Relations team members William Lewis (left) and Lynette Kotonski speak with a Red River riverfront homeowner about flooding of his property and the Moorhead, Minn. area.



Michael Englehart, FEMA project specialist, looks at the damage done to a bridge in St. Francis County, Ark., with James Bradford, the county's director of road maintenance.



FEMA Public Assistance Specialist Robby Walker reviews repairs made to corrugated pipe drain system in Gwinnett County, Ga.

FEMA's Newest Cadre: Long-Term Community Recovery

FEMA's 24th and newest cadre — Long-Term Community Recovery (LTCR) — works with federal, state, and local governments, as well as non-profits and the private sector, to help disaster-impacted communities recover long term.

The LTCR cadre began operations in May and operates as part of ESF-14, whose mission is to promote successful long-term recoveries for communities suffering extraordinary damage.

In an interview, Victoria Salinas, Deputy Branch Chief for Long-Term Community Recovery, said, "LTCR gets involved when normal recovery programs are not adequate for their long-term recovery. We attempt to fill the gaps through our coordination and technical assistance roles. There's a growing recognition that long term recovery is complex and is a new frontier for emergency management."

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Produced by the Disaster Reserve Workforce Division

Blair Gately, Editor

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February is Employee Resilience Month

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano says, “because our jobs often can be stressful, and sometimes dangerous, it’s important that we work to build a culture of support and wellness.”

Deputy Secretary Jane Holl Lute has declared February as Employee Resilience Month. During this time, all DHS employees will be introduced to the new employee and organizational resilience program called DHSTogether.

“Safety Stand Downs” will be held so employees can pause to consider the importance of employee and organizational resilience. Staff will be asked to gather in groups to watch a 40-minute video presentation and participate in a follow-up discussion.

FEMA’s campaign will take place from February 2-26.

Deployed Reservists will participate at their workplace.

Non-deployed Reservists may participate voluntarily and view the video and Employee and Organizational Resilience Resource Guide at: http://www.dhs.gov/xother/videos/gc_1262980257152.shtm

Submit news and articles of interest for the next issue of “On Call” to FEMA-DRWD-Program@dhs.gov

2009 Year in Review

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FEMA Mitigation surveyors Andy Pleshko and Miguel Flores review a list of repetitive loss properties they are surveying in the town of Hanover, N.Y.



FEMA Community Relations Specialist Cuong Nguyen (right) translates and assists applicants during an Individual Assistance interview at a Disaster Recovery Center in Bacliff, Texas.



In Moorhead, Minn., FEMA External Affairs Research and Writing Specialist Ernie Martz and Social Media Specialist Steve Crider record a podcast for the www.fema.gov multimedia site.



FEMA Public Assistance Project Officers (from left) Peter Floyd, Joe Serbia, Armand Ruocco, and Terry Willis meet with city officials at the Fulton County, Ga. Emergency Management Agency office.



Sandra Thomas and Charles Kimball, FEMA mitigation specialists, talk with Governor John Hoeven at the Fargo, N.D. Disaster Recovery Center.



At the Madison County, Fla. Disaster Recovery Center, FEMA Individual Assistance Specialist Joanne “Jody” Shaw speaks with a potential applicant affected by flooding in the area.



Program Management Branch



Layne Smith,
Branch Chief

Travel / 2010 Pay

We are pleased to announce that, on November 17, Administrator Fugate signed a new Disaster Reservist Travel Pay Directive (FD 253-3) authorizing pay during approved travel arising from deployment orders for disasters, training, and other requirements.

Some important changes include: for travel by common carrier, you will be paid from the time you depart your residence for the terminal or station until you reach your lodging or worksite, whichever is earlier. The same applies to returning home. For travel by auto, you will be paid for travel time beginning when you depart your residence and ending at your lodging or worksite. Use of an auto must be approved in advance.

At all times, travel pay and costs will be limited to the method deemed most advantageous to FEMA.

Overtime pay may be earned if travel time exceeds eight hours per day.

There are additional conditions in the directive. For information, contact your Cadre Manager, JFO Travel Office staff or DRW Regional Liaison.

Also of note, the Administrator authorized a 1.5 % increase in pay for Reservists. The increase takes effect in the first pay period in 2010, which begins January 3. See your timekeeper if you have questions.

LTCR Cadre: FEMA's Newest

(Continued from Page 1)

Salinas says LTCR is involved in the recovery process "from day one" of a disaster.

Chuck Heltsley, LTCR Cadre Coordinator, elaborated. "The first thing LTCR does is determine if there's a long-term mission. Sometimes when we go out the assessment results show Individual Assistance, Public Assistance, Mitigation and the Small Business Administration will be sufficient for recovery and LTCR will not be needed.

Recently, LTCR has been working in Georgia following the floods. Heltsley explained the process. "The staff did an assessment of 23 Georgia counties and, working with the Federal Coordinating Officer and State Coordinating Officer, determined that only three cities needed targeted long-term help. LTCR is coordinating other federal programs and providing targeted assistance to the communities. This is not an open-ended mission."

Before the LTCR cadre was formed, Heltsley said, Reservists with needed skills were drafted from other cadres. The new cadre is being built from scratch. It now has 15-20 Reservists, and "another 18 or so new people with new skill sets are coming on board."

When asked about the future development of the LTCR Cadre, Salinas said the goal of the headquarters-based group is to develop a group of highly trained specialists "that will allow us to have more nimble operations and more regional expertise. Right now, the cadre is very Headquarters dependent because only one FEMA office has an ESF-14 coordinator."

Eventually, the LTCR cadre will have a team of people able to understand the long-term community recovery process and conduct an operation that fully complements and supports the needs of the community, she added.

This means no two LTCR operations will ever be the same, according to Salinas. "It'll be different every time we go out — whether we're in Georgia, New York or Texas. This is one of the reasons the cadre, and the Reservists that serve in it, will be so dynamic."

For more info about LTCR, click here

<http://www.fema.gov/rebuild/ltrc/index.shtm>

Personal E-Mail List

Reservists on DRWD's Personal E-mail Distribution List receive info -- including "On Call" and news bulletins -- when they are not deployed.

To be included, send your personal e-mail address with full name, region and cadre to FEMA-DRWD-Program@dhs.gov

Please put "E-mail Participation" in the subject line.

Job Applicants

Anyone interested in applying for a Reservist position should send a resume to FEMA-Disaster-Reservist-Resume@dhs.gov

Readiness Branch



Paul Geiger,
Branch Chief

Training Begins

Credentialing supported training has commenced! The DRWD Training Team, in cooperation with Region VII Training Manager Tom Akins held the first credentialing funded training in Kansas City, Mo. From December 2-4, 28 Disaster Field Training Office (DFTO) and Logistics Reservists received instruction on “Managing FEMA Staff on Disaster Operations (L269).” The course completed with a 97% attendance rate and a 100% graduation rate.

Many players, starting with Akins, made this first class an enormous success. Others who helped include: Emergency Management Institute’s Course Manager H. Marie Harkenrider; National Cadre Managers Maria

Moore, (DFTO) and Winona Cason (Logistics); the Readiness Training Team (Ronald Wells and Tara Kelly); EMI Admissions Officer Smiley White; Reservist Training Technician Janet Morris; and Automated Deployment Database’s Paul Nichols.

The outcome of this first course includes not only a step towards a credentialed, trained workforce, but also Standard Operating Procedures, Lessons Learned, and a renewed partnership among the players involved in the future credentialing of the FEMA workforce.

Following the training, Akins said, “Together, we are making a difference through credentialing and pre-disaster training. Having now observed the L-269 delivery, I am even more confident that credentialing and pre-disaster training will improve the quality of our workforce and the engagement of trained employees in executing the FEMA mission.”

He added, “Region VII is pleased that they could play a small part in supporting DRWD and EMI in the launch of pre-disaster training.”



Region VII’s four Federal Coordination Officers participate in a panel discussion during the first Credentialing training with L-269 course participants and share their experience in management at the JFO.

2009 W-2 Wage & Tax Statements

If you earned wages as a FEMA employee last year, your 2009 Internal Revenue (IRS) Wage and Tax Statement (Form W-2) will be mailed to your address of record no later than January 31, 2010.

The National Finance Center (NFC) provides FEMA employees with access to an automated personnel-related actions tool, known as the Employee Personal Page (EPP) at: https://www.nfc.usda.gov/personal/ep_warning.asp. The EPP allows employees to view their payroll, taxes, and other personal information. The Self-Service option allows employees to change much of their personal data. They can access their EPP data from any personal computer with Internet access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Plus, “My EPP” also has a helpline at occ.etix@usda.gov or 1-800-767-9641.

FEMA employees can now access their 2009 electronic W-2 using their NFC EPP account. New this year, the IRS will allow employees the option to file their tax return with an electronic version of the W-2 for Tax Year 2009. Employees can print the electronic version for submission with their tax return.

Note: It is important that employees verify that their residence mailing address. Address changes must be made prior to the mailing of the W-2s, by using EPP’s Self-Service Option.

If an employee does not receive a W-2 when they are initially mailed, it may have required an adjustment. The appropriate adjustments will be completed by January 31, 2010, and the corrected W-2 will be mailed to the employee at that time. Initial inquiries should be made using the EPP. After February 3, 2010 contact: FEMA-HC-SystemsAsst@dhs.gov or via telephone on 202-212-2000 or 1-866-572-2593.

Deployment Branch



Tracy Haynes,
Branch Chief

Supporting Reservists

The Deployment Branch (DB) recognizes the long hours, challenging experiences and difficult working conditions many of you experience and considers it a pleasure and duty to support you. We are a small part of a large support team across the country that works on your behalf.

During Fiscal Year 2009, the branch responded to 63 presidentially declared major disasters and 10 emergency declarations nationwide in support of FEMA disaster field office, headquarters and regional requirements. During this same period, staff answered and responded to more than 90,000 incoming calls and processed more than 43,000 deployment requests from reservists and regional, field office, and headquarters leadership around the country.

The DB provides 24/7 ON-CALL disaster field office support and frequently mirrors disaster field office hours nationwide, as was demonstrated during Hurricanes Gustav, Hanna, Ike; the storms in Iowa and North Dakota; and support to American Samoa and other disasters.

Several evaluations were done in 2009 to assess the branch's performance. In one study associated with the Management Directorate's Strategic Plan, the DB exceeded the broad survey goal of 80% -- receiving a customer satisfaction rating of 94%.

We hope to improve our efforts in fiscal year 2010. We look forward to working with you and are proud to be a part of the reservist team.

A Grand Adventure: Tips for Remote Field Work

C. Morgan Hunt, Region X External Affairs

The 2009 spring flooding and ice jam disaster (DR1843-AK) ravaged 24 villages along the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers. Home primarily to Alaskan natives whose tradition is subsistence fishing and hunting, the landscape is green with spruce, aspen, and brush.

Reservists doing field work there may sleep on the floor; live with no hot water; evade bears on the way to the outhouse at night; and, slap mosquitoes so hearty, you can hear them land.

If you're a certain personality type, it's a grand adventure, but this kind of deployment is not for everyone.

DR1843 External Affairs asked several field Reservists to share advice with others who might some day deploy to rural Alaska. Mike Price and Vern Jenkins (both R10, IA) worked in Stevens Village. Leslie Burgin (R4, Logistics) and Grant Walker (R10, IA) worked in Tanana. Here's what they recommend:

- * Be ultra-'FEMA Flexible.' Established routines and fixed expectations don't work. Plans are often made according to weather, not a calendar or clock.

- * Transportation is usually by plane or water. If you can't travel in a single-engine plane that's ducking between thunderclouds, this isn't for you.

- * Bring medicines (no pharmacy in most villages), bug juice, high-top shoes, kerchief (doubles as dust mask and mosquito screen), GPS, water, quarters (for pay showers), and a sweater, but few personal items. There's not much storage space.

- * No TV or newspapers, and limited phone access, mean less stimulation and noise than you're used to.

- * 'Lone wolf' types need not apply. In Stevens Village, four FEMA personnel, 15 volunteers, and two cooks shared two showers, three toilets, and open sleeping quarters in a school gymnasium.



The Stevens Village school gym served as a "hotel" for some members of the Alaska team.

**Remember to
call ADD every
30 days to
update your
status.**

1-888-853-9648

Life in the Reservist Lane

Paula Furey, Headquarters Reservist

Traveling with “Man’s Best Friend”

My travel story is just funny or stupid, depending on how you view life. More than two years ago, I was deployed to New Orleans. I checked in at my hotel and was delighted to get a small apartment. I found out that I had joined a community of FEMA folks. It was the first time I had seen people travel with their pets. I really missed my dog at home and my normal routine of walking in the morning and evening.

While reading the local newspaper, I checked the classified ads. Well, there it was -- the dog of my dreams. The dog I have wanted all my life. Long story short, I got the pup, a miniature American Eskimo. I had many FEMA friends who encouraged this purchase, mostly a 12-year-old son of a FEMA co-worker who was staying there with his mother. He was delighted to care for my new pup while I was at work all day. When I went on rotation, little Louie (named after Louis Armstrong of N.O.) traveled home with me, and I wasn't about to leave him behind when I returned.

Louie is a wonderful traveler. When we got off the plane, the flight attendant told me she never knew a dog was aboard. On the return flight, things went a little differently, starting at check in. Louie was in his doggie tote and put through the luggage x-ray machine. First, he had to be inside the tote... then I had to take him out of the carrying case so he could be FRISKED! Yes, you read that right. He

was patted down and searched!

But that wasn't the end of it. I guess little Louie looked suspicious. We were asked to step into the booth that blasts high-powered air at you so it can dust off any loose materials to be analyzed for explosive substances. Clutching Louie tightly in my arms and holding him as close to me as possible, I took a deep breath and looked into his eyes to reassure him. Louie handled that blast of air like a champ and we were



finally on our way to board.

As we were getting settled in, I was talking to the flight attendant and told our security story. The attendant moved us to an empty seat in First Class so we would have more room. Finally, Louie's cuteness paid off.

Today, Louie loves everyone he comes in contact with, and we both have all of our FEMA friends to thank for helping to raise Louie to be a well socialized and a very loving dog.

If you have a deployment experience you'd like to share in "On Call," write to FEMA-DRWD-Program@dhs.gov. Please put "newsletter submission" in the subject line.



Richard Bento and his namesake.

GA Reservists Give Dog “Leash” on Life

Stuart George, Region VI
External Affairs

A Labrador retriever has a new “leash” on life because of decisive action by a FEMA mitigation engineer working on Georgia flood recovery.

Richard Bento was inspecting a closed and damaged bridge in Newton County when he heard a whimpering sound coming from a muddy embankment 30 feet below the bridge. He scrambled part way down the treacherous bank in a heavy rain and spotted a large black Lab stuck in mud up to its chest.

Bento said the rising Yellow River threatened to claim the helpless canine, so he called county animal control officials for help. Rescuers maneuvered down the embankment and wrapped a pair of nooses around the retriever, carried him in their arms up the slippery bank, and took him to the local animal shelter to recuperate. The dog is blind in one eye, has a cataract in the other and did not have an I.D. chip or collar.

Bento's co-worker, Bruce Buckerfield, heard about the rescue, adopted the dog and named him “Bento.”