

## Strategic Foresight Initiative | Case Studies

### Sean Johnson, Plans Officer North Dakota Department of Emergency Services Division of Homeland Security

In an effort to learn how emergency management practitioners around the country are using foresight, the FEMA Strategic Foresight Initiative (SFI) Team sat down with **Sean Johnson, Plans Officer in the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services**, to get a sense of how he is using SFI ideas and materials. We also asked him for some recommendations on how to make foresight useful to emergency management (EM) practitioners.

**What is the mission of your organization?** Our mission is to conduct planning, coordination, communications, and operations for the safety and security of all North Dakota citizens. We coordinate emergency management activities across the five National Preparedness System mission areas for the state's 53 counties and two tribal nations.

**What is your role or area of specialization?** I am the Plans Chief in the Operations and Planning Section. We develop the State Emergency Management Plan and supporting documents, conduct the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment process, and manage EM information and intelligence, including state warnings, the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS), and Amber alerts.

**How did you learn of SFI?** I first learned of SFI through a public/private partnership conference in Colorado Springs in 2012 and then again at the National Preparedness Conference in 2012.

**How do you use SFI in your work?** One part of my role is instructing emergency management officials from across the state on emergency operations and tactical level planning. This used to be a two-day course, but I've expanded it to three days to use one full day to cover SFI since it provides a useful overview of strategic challenges the EM profession will face over the next 15-20 years. It also lays out a strong framework for how I want my students to think for the rest of the class. While the course doesn't focus on the strategic level, the SFI piece gives them "the road ahead" and an idea of strategic planning and thinking.

**Walk us through what we would experience if we took one of your courses.** We start with an SFI presentation. I used the presentation from the National Preparedness Conference in 2012 but I've added information specific to our state. We spend the morning talking through SFI concepts around drivers of change and strategic needs. In the afternoon we break into groups to conduct a Strengths Weakness Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. I ask participants to think about what they need to account for in their plans, which sets the stage for the next two days. The same themes keep playing out for the duration of the course.

**Are you familiar with the resources available on the SFI website? Do you use them? If so, which ones?** I use the driver papers to spur thought during my classes. In one discussion of the driver paper on demographic shifts, we realized that North Dakota aligns with the nation on some trends, but bucks others. For example, our infrastructure is wearing out in North Dakota due to industry truck traffic but we also have a \$3 billion budget surplus and a labor shortage. National trends point to people moving to the coast, but North Dakota's population is growing due to the energy industry.

**How would you recommend others get involved or use SFI?** The SFI drivers impact the whole community – they are a catalyst to bring everyone together. SFI is the flag that everyone can rally around. Even just including the drivers in planning discussions or sharing the SFI reports could be a good way to get people to think strategically and then apply that forward thinking in their emergency and operations planning.

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### **Calvin Bowman, Senior Policy Advisor Chairman, Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) City of Baltimore Mayor's Office of Emergency Management**

In an effort to learn how emergency management practitioners around the country are using foresight, FEMA's Strategic Foresight Initiative (SFI) Team recently approached **Calvin Bowman, Senior Policy Advisor and Chairman of the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI)** for the **City of Baltimore Mayor's Office of Emergency Management (MOEM)**, regarding the Baltimore UASI's application of SFI concepts in developing its 2013 Homeland Security Strategy.

**What is the mission of MOEM?** MOEM implements programs that prepare the City for major emergencies, and is responsible for citywide, interagency preparedness, ensuring that the City's overall emergency plans integrate the procedures and resources of all City agencies and outside organizations. MOEM serves as the link between the City and other entities – regional, state, federal, non-profit, and private sector partners – for emergency planning and operations. MOEM also manages the Homeland Security and Preparedness Coordinating Committee, which develops multi-agency homeland security initiatives; conducts training and exercises; implements the National Incident Management System (NIMS); and develops plans for evacuation, sheltering, continuity of operations, and other emergency support functions.

**What is the mission of the Baltimore UASI?** To increase core prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery capabilities within the region for all hazards.

**What is your role or area of specialization?** I am a Senior Policy Advisor and the Chairman of the Baltimore UASI, a framework for robust regional planning through the leadership of the Baltimore Urban Area Homeland Security Work Group (UAWG).

**How does SFI inform the work of MOEM and Baltimore UASI?** The long-term perspective SFI provides on homeland security and emergency management is helpful as the Baltimore UASI develops capabilities, tools, and partnerships to solve problems—today, and in the future. Specifically, foresight challenges the UASI to think in longer terms about the evolving challenges the Baltimore region faces and how these changes and their effects will impact UASI and related programs. Putting the long-term thinking behind the SFI into practice will require a better understanding of the factors driving these changes and an understanding as to how those factors will impact emergency and disaster management over a 20-year time horizon.

**How will the Baltimore UASI apply the 15 SFI strategic needs?** These strategic needs will serve as guideposts to inform the UASI's future planning, investments, and actions so that they address the changing demands of the future operating environment.

**What role will foresight play in the Baltimore UASI's future efforts?** The Baltimore UASI will work to establish a common understanding and commitment within the emergency management community to address new issues before they impact the region. To do this the UASI will need to collectively prepare for the near-term future across multiple mission areas and sectors by planning for and taking action to meet the evolving needs of the community.