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FEMA
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THE FEMA THINK TANK

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>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Everybody, just before we unmute the phone, I just want to remind people that there's actually one speaker here that's for us to speak into and to listen to, so I'm going to ask to keep your conversations to a minimum, if not none, because that speaker is going to pick up pretty much anything in the room, and it will also be difficult for people on the phone to listen as well.

And when you speak, if you could just identify yourself because the people on the phone won't be able to see who is speaking. So just say who you are and where you're from.

Hello. Operator, are you on the phone?

>> OPERATOR: Yes. This is Kathy.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Hi. This is Rich Serino. How are you?

>> OPERATOR: I'm fine. How are you?

>> RICHARD SERINO: And can you hear me okay?

>> OPERATOR: You sound a little distant. Let me maybe raise the gain on our end.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. How is it now? Can you hear me okay?

>> OPERATOR: Yes -- yeah, you're fine. I can understand --

>> (Speaker is off microphone.)

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Hello?

>> OPERATOR: Okay. Hello. Yes.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Are we ready to start?

>> OPERATOR: Yes, sir. If you're ready to begin, I can give the introduction.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Yes.

>> OPERATOR: Okay. It will be just one moment.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Thank you.

[Music]

>> OPERATOR: Good afternoon and thank you for standing by. All participants will be able to listen only until the question-and-answer session. This conference is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time.

I would now like to turn the call over to Rich Serino, FEMA administrator.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Hello, everyone, and good afternoon, and as stated, my name is Rich Serino. However, I'm not the administrator. I'm the deputy administrator at FEMA.

It's a pleasure to be here in Joplin, Missouri, and I just want to thank everybody for joining us today, actually our fourth FEMA Think Tank conference call.

The purpose of the Think Tank is really to provide a forum for the whole of the community to connect, converse, and share the best practices and stories and find solutions to various emergency management issues. Today, we are holding this call in Joplin, Missouri, from Missouri Southern State University, and the theme of today's call is "Recovery and how we can prepare for a more rapid cost-effective sustainable resilient recovery in our communities."

First let me begin today by thanking Dr. Bruce Speck, the president of Missouri Southern State University, for welcoming us to Joplin and hosting us here on the campus.

As most people know, and certainly the people in this room, but for those of you on the phone, the devastating tornado struck southwest Missouri on May 22nd, almost a year ago today, in the heart of Joplin and all of Duquesne. An EF5 tornado.

It heavily damaged a lot of the residential and commercial areas, and St. John's Mercy Regional Medical Center, which was one of the two hospitals, took a direct hit.

It was reported, and people know here, initially more than 110 fatalities. It's now up to 161. And more than 1300 people were injured, more than 7500 structures were damaged, and an estimated 4,000 were destroyed.

Debris was visible on radar and found as far away as Springfield, Missouri, approximately 70 miles away.

And I have to say I was here on May 23rd, about 14 hours or so after the tornado struck, and to watch the resiliency of the people in Joplin that night and now subsequently, you know, on a couple of visits here in the past and then again today, the resilience of the community here has been nothing short of amazing.

And a lot of that started with the leadership, but also with some of the preplanning that was done, and some of that preplanning was here at Missouri Southern State University. They were very much involved in the recovery and

they supported the City of Joplin and Duquesne, as well as the surrounding areas in countless ways.

After, you know, the tornado struck, MSSU opened its doors as a shelter for survivors, for the volunteers, as a pet shelter.

It also, you know, hosted many community meetings. It had the surgical medical clinic here and many other things that happened here, right here, on this campus. So to be back here is, I think, appropriate for us to come here a year later.

And as we talk about recovery, what has happened in Joplin is why we're doing this Think Tank here from Joplin.

And in being here at Missouri Southern, I just wanted to -- you know, before we go too much further around the table, I want to talk -- turn it over to Dr. Speck, our host, to just see if he'd like to say just a couple of words.

>> BRUCE SPECK: Thank you, Mr. Serino.

On behalf of the Missouri Southern State University community, I welcome you and other FEMA administrators, as well as Joplin city and school district leadership, to the MSSU campus.

We are pleased to be hosting this important conference call from our beautiful Billingsley Student Center, a cutting-edge facility offering amenities to our nearly 6,000 students.

For 75 years, Missouri Southern State University has been an integral part of the Joplin region. With nearly 200 academic programs for both undergraduate and graduate students, MSSU is known for its impressive business, education, and technology programs, as well as its unique degree programs in criminal justice and allied health.

We supply the Joplin metro area with a steady stream of well-educated nurses, radiologists, medical technicians, as well as other health care professionals. That's not to mention our outstanding arts and sciences degree programs. We are a thriving university with faculty who are dedicated to giving students outstanding educations and opportunities.

Our catchphrase is "Join the Pride," and it's a sentiment we feel in the classroom, on the athletics field, and out in our community.

We have always been an integral part of the Joplin region, in part, because our campus is fortunate to have a number of incredible facilities that serve the community, one of which, the Leggett Platt Athletic Center, is regularly used for the commencement ceremonies of several other high schools.

However, before May 22nd of last year, no one could have foreseen how our relationship with the community would grow.

It was shortly after Joplin High School's graduation last year that our lives were turned upside down and we realized the extent to which we would need to pull together as a university, a community, a state, and a nation to help those who lost so much.

After the tornado tore through the city, many MSSU employees -- myself included -- made our way through the unbelievable devastation to the safe

haven of our campus, which is located on the east side of Joplin, about two miles from the tornado's path.

Perhaps it was serendipity, but only three weeks before the tornado hit we finalized an agreement with the American Red Cross to serve as an emergency shelter. At the time, some may have wondered when we would ever be called to serve such a need. Little did we know that need was lying just ahead of us and would test our strength and resilience in a way we'd never imagined.

The tornado hit at 5:41 p.m., and immediately employees got to work setting up an emergency shelter, moving in supplies, organizing donations of water, food, and clothing, and being a source of comfort in a time of chaos and grief.

Victims came here hurt, confused, and in shock, not knowing what their next step would be.

Although we were not directly affected by the tornado's devastation, we lost three members of our MSSU family that evening. In addition, almost 500 students, faculty, and staff members were impacted, including losing homes, cars, jobs, and loved ones. Still, they mobilized here to help others.

What impressed me most was that no one needed to be told what to do. They recognized the needs and answered the call.

In addition to the Red Cross with the shelter at the athletic center, our new health science building was transformed into a hospital. More than 1,000 people were treated using the hospital beds and facilities there.

Our Wilcoxson Student Health Center became a place to register missing persons and learn if a loved one was deceased. Our residence halls housed first responders. Our performing arts center became a place for government offices. And our student center housed AmeriCorps. We dispatched more than 45,000 volunteers. Our food service contractor served an estimated 74,000 meals over the course of three weeks. And the list goes on.

Taylor Auditorium was the site of a massive memorial service that included a visit by the President of the United States.

Needless to say, our facilities became places to heal and places to help.

We wish our community had not suffered this devastating experience, but we have gained strength together as a result of it. We have learned and we continue to learn as we recover.

We hope that our experiences will help you be better prepared, should tragedy strike your community, and we look forward to learning from you as well as throughout this call.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Thank you very much, Dr. Speck.

Next, we also have our regional administrator for Region VII, Beth Freeman.

Beth?

>> BETH FREEMAN: Thank you. On behalf of FEMA Region VII, I would like to welcome everyone who is here in person today and the participants from across the country who are calling in.

If you are not familiar with FEMA Region VII, our offices cover the states of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. Since 2006, there have been 54 federal disaster declarations in our region. Last year alone, there were 11 major disaster declarations among our four states, including the Joplin tornado.

Hosting this monthly Think Tank in Joplin has special significance because it provides an opportunity to recognize the tremendous recovery that has taken place in the year since the devastating EF5 tornado swept through the cities of Joplin and Duquesne.

At some point in our lifetime, each one of us will likely face an emergency situation and need to respond. Hopefully it will never be as great a challenge as the residents in these two communities have had to face.

This forum provides a tremendous opportunity to share knowledge and ideas for improving the nation's ability to recover from the impacts of disasters.

Thank you for your participation, for coming to learn, and for sharing your ideas and best practices about how we can prepare for and recover from the crises and disasters life can bring us. Thank you.

Rich?

>> RICHARD SERINO: Thanks, Beth. At this time what I'd like to do is just to go around the room just quickly, say who you are and what your title is, what you do and we'll just go around and we'll get into a discussion. Mark? Oh, I'm sorry. Purnita.

>> PURNITA HOWLADER: Hi. I'm Purnita Howlader and I am a presidential management fellow at FEMA headquarters.

>> MARK ROHR: Mark Rohr, city manager for the City of Joplin.

>> KEITH STAMMER: Keith Stammer, director of the Jasper County Emergency Management Agency.

>> ANDREA SPILLARS: Andrea Spillars, deputy director for the state department of public safety.

>> DAN PEKAREK: Dan Pekarek, director of the Joplin City Health Department.

>> ROB O'BRIAN: Rob O'Brian, Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce.

>> KIM COX: Kim Cox, housing sector co-chair, Citizens Advisory Recovery Team.

>> SUSAMMA SEELEY: Susamma Seeley, director of disaster response for Catholic Charities of Missouri.

>> RENEE WHITE: Renee White, the Long-Term Recovery Committee chairperson of the Joplin area LTRC.

>> JAKE HEISTEN: Jake Heisten, Joplin area field representative for Congressman Billy Long.

>> DEBBI MEADS: I'm Debbi Meads. I'm the regional CEO for Southern Missouri for the Red Cross.

>> COOKIE ESTRADA: CEO of the YMCA of Southwest Missouri.

>> KIRSTIE SMITH: I'm Kirstie Smith, communications director at the Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce.

>> SHELLY HUNTER: Shelly Hunter, chief financial officer, Mercy.

>> DAN O'CONNER: Dan O'Conner, project manager for Mercy.

>> ANGIE BESENDORFER: Angie Besendorfer, deputy superintendent of Joplin schools.

>> CANDY ADAMS: Candy Adams, area coordinator for southwest Missouri for the State Emergency Management Agency.

>> DAVID HERTZBERG: David Hertzberg, Public Works director, City of Joplin.

>> LESLIE JONES: Leslie Jones, finance director, City of Joplin.

>> MIKE WOOLSTON: Mike Woolston. I was the mayor at the time of the tornado and now continue to serve on the city council for Joplin.

>> STEPHANIE BRADY: Stephanie Brady, director of programs for The Independent Living Center.

>> JANE CAGE: Hi. I'm Jane Cage and I'm the chairman of the Citizens Advisory Recovery Team.

>> DEB INGRAM: I'm Deb Ingram. I'm the assistant administrator for recovery from FEMA headquarters.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Well, great. And thank you, everybody, for joining us today.

On behalf of Craig Fugate, the administrator, I just want to thank you all and especially the people in the room. Thank you for what you've done over the last year. Because the recovery that has happened in Joplin in the initial response and the hope that you have given people in Joplin and really throughout the country is because of you.

And so personally, I want to say thank you. Thank you for what you've done. You have truly made a difference. You have truly embodied the whole community response. And I look forward to sharing that with people on the phone and people online that will be, you know, conversing with us.

And we look at these Think Tanks as an opportunity to share information. The first one that we had in Milwaukee and then San Francisco at the city hall, and Georgia Tech, really we had hundreds of people on the phone and now we have over 340 people and I see an arrow saying it's climbing, so more people are getting on the phone.

So we want to continue to listen to folks and continue to hear what people have to say, and I think that one of the things that -- as we do this, you know, there are certain things that, you know, people weren't sure what actually the Think Tank was and we've received literally hundreds of ideas and comments, you know, that we've responded to online. Thousands of people have responded to that. We've had a -- you know, hundreds of people on these calls.

And really, the Think Tank is really an opportunity for us to share some, you know, exchange of ideas, you know, from really the heart of the whole

community and how we can take it virtually, if you will, and share what we've learned.

And today, we're focusing in on two topics. Obviously the recovery here in Joplin, and the second topic is very related to recovery, but how to rebuild and sustain an effective way for the community to be more resilient for future disasters.

And at the end of the call, we'll have some open time for discussions.

Now I have to turn it over to, you know, Purnita Howlader, who is here with a very important message from our lawyers, because we have to pay attention to what our lawyers tell us and so I don't get in trouble, she has a -- you know, a paid announcement here that -- go ahead, Purnita.

>> PURNITA HOWLADER: We just have a disclaimer from the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

FEMA recognizes that the best solutions to the challenges we face are generated by the people in communities who are closest to these challenges. The goal of these monthly conference calls is to listen to and discuss ideas generated by individual members of the community. FEMA is not looking for and will not accept group or consensus recommendations from FEMA conference call participants.

Also, FEMA will not be making any decisions on agency positions or policy during the call. Instead, what we're seeking is individual viewpoints from a broad and diverse spectrum of stakeholders. Everybody's input is valued and we thank you for participating in this call.

During the call today, Deputy Administrator Serino will introduce our presenters who will then give a brief overview of the topic.

We will then open it up to a conversation from people on the phone, people in the room, and on Twitter and Facebook. So if you're online right now, feel free to add comments and questions at #femathinktank and we are following the Twitter feed and the Facebook wall as well. Thank you.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. So there's a few ways -- for those of you on the call, we'll open it up for questions after each topic and if you're on Twitter, again, that's the #femathinktank. We have that on the wall here and we'll be reading questions as they come in. And on Facebook as well.

And as we -- the first topic today, again, is: What happened here in Joplin?

And to start the conversation, I'm going to have Mark Rohr and Keith Stammer from here in Joplin to tell their story.

Mark?

>> MARK ROHR: Thank you, Rich. First of all, the city would like to thank Missouri Southern and Dr. Speck for hosting this event and also for providing a resource to the community as he alluded to earlier.

Sometimes the distance can create some challenges in our relationship, but in a sense, this really came in handy because it was away and separate from the storm and served as a destination and a location for a lot of different

important events following the storm that enabled our recovery, and we appreciate that.

Our thanks also to Rich and FEMA. FEMA was an excellent partner throughout. We worked our way through the entire process working with our friends from FEMA, and have nothing but good things to say about the City of Joplin's relationship with FEMA and I think we've learned together and grown together as we've gone through the process and we hope to continue that relationship.

Joplin likes to think of itself as a tough and resilient town, and it is. Very much so. And those qualities exhibited themselves in the aftermath of the storm and in the year since then.

We're very pragmatic people, very determined people, very goal-oriented people, and I think those are all things that came in handy based on the challenge that we faced.

But we're also practical enough to know that we wouldn't be at this point without help from a team effort, a group effort, and we got a lot of help from a lot of different people and we're very appreciative of that.

We've had 130,000 registered volunteers that have come to Joplin to assist us in our efforts, and a great amount of people that didn't register that went directly into the field to help out residents of the city of Joplin. We appreciate that.

We got assistance from the state and continue to receive that, and we were appreciative of that assistance.

From the federal government, FEMA and others, from the local school system that did a great job in getting the students back into a routine as quickly as possible, and the chamber of commerce did an excellent job working with the businesses and a lot of different people.

So we know and we take great pride in what we've been able to accomplish, but at the same time we realize we couldn't have gotten it done without assistance and without a team effort and that really came through and enabled us to do what we've been able to do.

I'm asked on numerous occasions about things that we've learned and lessons that we've learned that could help other people in other cities, should they have to go through -- God forbid -- what we went through, and we've taken the time to commit some of the general lessons that we've learned in a list and there are 10 tenets. I'd like to refer to just a couple of them here today to at least convey some of the information that we learned and we gleaned from what we've been through.

And two of the foremost tenets of disaster management that I experienced and I think the city experienced as a whole, as a result of May 22nd, 2011 -- and FEMA will preach this also themselves and I think they're right -- that the key ingredient in dealing with circumstances like we were presented with is local leadership on a business level, on a school level, and certainly on a city level, and an important ingredient is to have strong local

leadership in place.

And FEMA would also tell you that they're here to help you, so you need to be the boss and you need to be in charge of what happens within your city and not do that in an overbearing, overwhelming approach, but realize that you're the one that's going to be here after the storm. You've got to live with the people and your neighbors that are going through what they're going through, but you're in charge and you -- you need to be the one making the decisions on a local level, so local leadership is imperative in dealing with circumstances like we were presented with.

And secondly, another one that I think is extremely important -- and as a matter of fact Missouri Southern enabled us to do this on more than one occasion -- stay connected with those people that are impacted by the storm. The important people and your customers in this instance are the citizens that have been impacted by the storm. And in our situation, we had 7500 homes that were impacted and in excess of 500 businesses, and it was important for us to test the theories and the ideas that we were developing on an ongoing basis with those people that it impacted.

So you need to stay in touch with those people and there's one example where we had a meeting out here at Missouri Southern and afterwards, I had a chance to go out into the crowd and talk to people and I learned a lot of things that I didn't learn in my office at the EOC because I was directly connected with those people that those decisions were impacting and I learned a lot, and from what I learned, I went back and worked with the department heads within the city to adjust what we were doing to have more of an impact on those people that were in need.

So stay connected to those people that are impacted. Go out and test what you're doing in the field in the area that was impacted by the storm to see how the progress is coming, and then come back to your office or the EOC or wherever you're at and utilize that which you've witnessed and heard and modify what you're doing, because this isn't written down anywhere. You make it up as you go. And you have to learn and you have to adjust in midstream, and we would highly recommend that you do that if you ever have to go through an experience like Joplin did.

Stay connected with the people and stay connected with the area that was impacted by the storm.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Thanks, Mark.

We'll just go to Keith.

>> KEITH STAMMER: Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

Deputy Administrator Serino, I appreciate what you're doing here and I thank you very much for coming.

If I have to emphasize one thing, if I may, I need to talk a little bit about the value of preexisting relationships and agreements.

That is here exemplified well in the agreement with Missouri Southern State University and the Red Cross.

Dr. Speck, what did you say? Three weeks prior to that particular situation --

>> BRUCE SPECK: Three weeks.

>> KEITH STAMMER: -- you gladly and unknowingly signed on to help out?
[Laughter]

>> KEITH STAMMER: And we were glad to receive that.

What I was most impressed with was that you stepped up to the bar, accepted that responsibility. The Red Cross worked with you as a partner, and we were glad to have you. It was a great relief to us to know that those areas that you took on as a responsibility were going to be well handled and well managed, and that was one thing that we did not have to worry so much about at the emergency operations center.

Perhaps a hallmark of the fact that we believe strongly in preexisting agreements and relationships is that in the first 72 hours after the disaster, I can say that there was no major player that came to the emergency operations center that we did not already know. They were people that we had worked with on the local, state, and federal level, and that made a big difference.

If I can jump forward 12 months to where we are today, I think those same preexisting relationships and agreements are helping us in our recovery.

City Manager Rohr made some comments about the number of places that have been destroyed, the amount of effort that's being done, and all that's very true. It's not that we invented these relationships after the event. They actually were already there.

Some good examples would be our community organizations acting in disaster, our COAD, our long-term recovery committee, our relationship with the nongovernmental organizations, our strong relationship with the local faith-based organizations, and then of course the relationships that we have with the State of Missouri and with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, all of whom we had worked with before.

So just in summary, I want to say a big thank you to everyone that helped us in that, and if anybody needs some encouragement in terms of how do you manage through one of these, you start several years ago and you start working on people ahead of time, you start exercising, you start planning, so that when it happens people know what to do, they know where to come, they know who to work with.

As Mr. Rohr was talking about in terms of how the management works, those are all worked out pre- and ahead of time.

Thank you very much.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Thank you. And I think that, you know, a couple of things that you both said is, you know, the preexisting relationships really made a difference, and then throughout the event is keeping in touch with the community and getting a sense of what the community really wants.

So at this point, I'd like to open it up to any questions on the phone and then we'll go to some in the room.

And don't forget. If you want to ask a question, we're following you on Twitter at #femathinktank. If you have a question, send it in there as well.

So operator, are there any questions on the phone for Mark or Keith?

>> OPERATOR: Okay. If you'd like to ask a question, please press star 1. You will be announced prior to asking the question. To withdraw your question, you may press star 2.

Once again, star 1 if you would like to ask a question.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Does anybody in the room have a question while we're waiting for the first call to come in now?

Oh, come on now. I mean, I have a thousand questions. I don't want to ask them. I will.

Okay. Mark, what was the -- you know, probably the biggest challenge in three different time frames: in the first 72 hours -- and Keith as well -- your first 72 hours, 30 days, and then 12 months?

>> MARK ROHR: Good question.

[Laughter]

>> RICHARD SERINO: And I didn't -- you know, this isn't rehearsed. He has no idea. You can tell.

[Laughter]

>> MARK ROHR: 72 hours is probably just getting organized and getting all your people where you can access them.

For instance, our finance director here who does a lot for the city was out of town and stuck in an airport somewhere, and we were trying to get her to get back as soon as possible because she's got a great mind in terms of detail and we needed her. So just trying to make sure everyone was where we needed to be and that we could have access as we advanced through the process was very important.

And the first month was just trying to advance the plans and move the ball on, to try to continue that organization and to develop a plan and to learn each and every day how things worked and to stay on top of making those decisions on a daily basis. We probably had a hundred decisions a day that we had to make, so we had to make decisions and move forward and not look back, and I think that was important over the year.

We talked about this earlier today. You've got so many people that want to help in a disaster of this magnitude, and we had a challenge of trying to accept that help and we very much appreciated it, but trying to keep that organized so that people who step forward who want to do something are channeled in a way that the city actually needs at that point in time. And some of the challenge we had was that it was not always being run through the city. Not that we have to control everything, but we're the centralized source of information, and I think we had a better idea, as we should, from our vantage point of where those needs are at that point in time and can better direct them.

So you'll have a lot of people that want to do a lot of good and they have

done a lot of good, but not necessarily running it through any centralized control process to direct it in the most constructive way within the community.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Great. Thanks. Keith?

>> KEITH STAMMER: I'd say from an emergency management standpoint, the first 72 hours, three things.

First of all, just trying to understand the scope of what happened to us. We always planned for the EF2 through the EF -- EF0 through EF2, the snowstorm, that type of thing, not an EF5 of this size. So we figured that out, finally.

Secondly, the detail, the needs for all the different resources that we were going to look for.

And then thirdly to try and marshal and manage all those resources.

That was what was going on in the first 72 hours.

30 days down the road, it was debris management. Trying to figure out what we're going to do with 3 million cubic yards of debris. Where it was going to get taken and how it was going to get separated out.

Dealing with the agencies, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Corps of Engineers, the State of Missouri, local contractors, and doing the coordination effort there to get that done, which we did.

We were given a date of August 7 and we had that finished in the expedited debris removal area by August 6th.

Personally, as far as the long-term and 12 months, if I may diverge a little bit from what Mark said, I've been looking over our shoulder a lot, trying to figure out -- review what we've been doing.

We field, I think daily, phone calls from people and organizations saying, "Can you give us some lessons learned? Can you talk to us about your after-action reports and reviews that you've done, what things went well, what things need to be done differently?" And I suspect that's going to be more than just this 12 months. It's probably going to continue for some time to come.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Great. Thank you.

And operator, any questions on the phone?

>> OPERATOR: Yes, we have some questions. Our first question comes from Tracy from Hope County.

>> Hi. I'm -- considering the magnitude of your disaster and in regards to your emergency management preparedness of your city, many of us were truly amazed at the social media saturation that you put out via Twitter, Facebook, and et cetera.

I was wondering, listening to you describe what you were dealing with in just like the first 72 hours and the first 30 days, did you already have that social media saturation preplanned or at what point did that come into your preparedness?

>> MARK ROHR: We were probably just in our infancy trying to understand and experiment with it, and I remember being told by one of my staff

members that I think there were 3 million hits on Facebook in about a five-week time for May through mid-June, mid to late June, and we thought that that was very helpful, although it's a double-edged sword, I can attest to.

We thought that was very helpful to making it a -- and I don't know that we set out trying to do it but to make it a nationwide event, movement. We had people from all over trying to help, and they stayed connected with what was going on in Joplin via Facebook, and the volunteer effort was very informed in terms of helping us recover and get to the point where we're at.

And it also had a very practical impact in that you're allowed to utilize the hours donated by the volunteers to offset some of the costs to the local municipality in the end.

And financially, there was a concern at one stage about the possibility of the city being bankrupt, given the magnitude of what we were dealing with and not knowing how everything worked, and the social media helped energize and mobilize people that helped us very practically with stuff in the field, but also helped us in the end in terms of our financial condition and where the city ended up as a result of our efforts.

>> In terms of recovery, up here in Hope County, we have suffered five disasters since 2007 and we were impressed that through your social media saturation, you were able to cover the areas that the media did not, and as you all know, in disaster recovery, that's extremely vital and I'm very eager to hear more about this, too.

Thank you.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Thank you. A question from Facebook that just came in from Cindy.

Are there after-action reports available from the City of Joplin and Mercy for the public to review? I'm currently interning in a hospital and will help leadership address possible scenarios and exercises.

So Keith?

>> KEITH STAMMER: Yes, we do have some after-action reviews and after-action reports and those would be available to -- for distribution to people that would contact the city and ask about them.

I know Mercy Hospital has done extensive work in terms of after-action. They have done a lot of presentations between their -- their professional staff and other hospitals as well. They'd probably do well to contact Mercy Hospital directly on that.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. And is there anybody -- any way for them to contact people? Does anybody have any -- the best contact?

>> SHELLY HUNTER: You can contact me, shelly.hunter@mercy.net.

And you're right. We have several presentations that would be available.

>> RICHARD SERINO: I haven't seen them in person. I've heard a lot of people referring to the presentations of Mercy and how helpful they were, so thank you.

Another question just came in, I think, from Twitter or Facebook.

How can social media be a tool? Is this a way to ensure coordination among volunteers, et cetera?

All right. Keith, that was --

>> KEITH STAMMER: Yeah. That was a big sigh on my part.

As a means of coordinating work amongst volunteers?

Actually, we saw it more in terms of an informational standpoint. The city was able to distribute information. You need to understand we had an area six miles long and a mile wide. Newspaper distribution was disrupted. Mail distribution was disrupted. Many of the people that were in that area did not have electricity, so we were trying to find ways to communicate as they scattered. And one of the things as we went into these areas that had these means of communication, we could use Facebook, we could use Twitter, as some other means of saying, "Here's the city's story and here's some questions that we have. How are you? Where are you?"

We had 17,000 people in the area, 9200 of them who were displaced. "Where did you go? Are there needs that we're not meeting? It's easy to think, sure, we've got you covered as far as food and water and clothing, but is that really true? Are we missing something here?"

And so we would get a lot of feedback by Twitter and a lot of feedback from the social media from people saying, "I have a need" or "I have an aunt" or "Can you tell me where somebody's located?" That was a great help to us.

As far as coordination of the actual services themselves and the efforts that were there, there's little, if any, real substitute for boots on the ground and having your people work with their people and everybody side by side in those areas that need to be worked on.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Thank you. And I think that also the social media, for people that can help out like that, can help, you know, people far away to actually help remotely the people here, but I think you gathering information, hand-pushing information out, it's a two-way street.

We have over 400 people on the phone and a bunch of questions on the phone, so we'll go to the phones.

>> OPERATOR: Our next call comes from the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

>> Hi. I was just wondering how well (indiscernible) set up and what were the major successes and obstacles along the way.

I also was wondering what the -- (indiscernible) action recovery team was and (indiscernible).

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. I caught the first half of that. Could you repeat the question? It broke up a bit.

>> Sure. For the first question, I was wondering about (indiscernible) recovery committee and how quickly that was set up and what your major obstacles, what your major successes were.

And then the second question, I was wondering about the role of your Citizen Action Recovery Team. I think I have that right. Tell me if I'm wrong.

And what (indiscernible) recovery team work.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. As far as the Citizens Advisory Recovery Team, Jane's going to be talking to us right after we finish this round of questions and we'll answer that.

And as far as the long-term recovery, how quickly that was stood up --

>> KEITH STAMMER: Debbi Meads.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Debbi.

>> DEBBI MEADS: Well, you know, I actually have a slide on this in my presentation if I could remember the dates, but the COAD I believe met with -- we had a multiagency resource center where about 30 agencies met together to provide relief.

When that closed, two weeks -- that same week the COAD met and elected officers for the long-term recovery.

So within the first three weeks, the first long-term recovery committee happened.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Great. Within the first three weeks.

Operator, next question.

>> OPERATOR: The next question comes from Amanda Atkins from Montgomery County.

>> Hi. I was curious and I know that you've touched on this some about the volunteers, and what I'm wondering about is you had an influx, I'm sure, of spontaneous volunteers that were self-dispatched, and I was wondering how you went about managing those volunteers.

I know that the person from MSSU said they had housed them and then also dispatched them from the university, but how were they recorded when they came in, so that you knew where they were going and what they were assigned to.

>> KEITH STAMMER: If I may, we have a very good working relationship with AmeriCorps. We knew them from 2007 and our ice storm and we've worked with them on several different occasions.

On Sunday, Bruce called us from St. Louis and said they were en route. They showed up on Monday morning before the sun came up. Some of them -- most of them immediately went to the disaster scene to help with dividing -- helping with the debris management, our search and recovery efforts that were going on, but some of them are well skilled in volunteer management and they came out to Missouri Southern.

Dr. Speck and company were very nice about help -- giving us some room and we began to push all of our volunteers out to Missouri Southern to act as our volunteer coordination center.

That did two things for us.

Leslie Jones here, city administrator -- or finance administrator, is smiling at me. That gave us a very good handle on the number of labor hours that were being used and the number of people that were there.

The second thing it did for us was it acted as a sieve, in that as we had

people who were spontaneously dispatched, if you will, self-dispatched, we would say, "We need you to go out to Missouri Southern and register," and that was sort of our litmus test for them. If they were willing to stand in line for two hours and give us their name and their history and tell us what equipment they brought, their skill levels, and where they worked -- and as Mr. Rohr was saying, we managed the scene ourselves -- and go to the places that we think we need them to be, then "Welcome, friend. We are glad to have you." If they were people that just wanted to freelance and go out and play, we would invite them to go on down the road, bluntly.

And after a little while, it began to be known, well, that if -- signs went up. Missouri Department of Transportation put them up on I-44, as did other media began to put out the notice, that if you want to actually do some work in Joplin, Missouri, you have to go to Missouri Southern and you have to register through the volunteer service. And that was a great, great service to us.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Great. And any other questions on the phone?

>> OPERATOR: The next question comes from Chad from (saying name).

>> Good afternoon. I was curious about the incorporation of mitigation or resiliency activities in the recovery, both short-term and long-term, and specifically wanted to know in terms of -- you know, do you feel locally that it was successful? And if not, what were some of the challenges of incorporating resiliency and mitigation measures into the recovery? Thank you.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Anybody in the room? And, you know, we'll certainly --

Keith, you go ahead and if there's other people in the room, feel free to chime in.

>> KEITH STAMMER: One of the things that we did immediately on the resiliency side was the city council got together, at the recommendation of Former Mayor Mike Woolston at that time, and City Manager Mark Rohr, that we begin to -- we placed a requirement that any new construction would have to have hurricane clips. They also increased the -- or decreased the spacing on the tie-downs for any houses.

There was an absolute and insistent statement that any and all new construction would be according to the current standards that we had within the city. There was no lessening of the standards.

This area that was -- that suffered the greatest amount of destruction, some of those structures there were 75 years old. We had as many as 12 or 14 houses on the same block, very small places, a history of the old mining days. I'm sure they met the standards of the day but certainly not the standards of this day.

And so one of the things that we've done from a mitigation standpoint, in order to make sure that should this happen for -- again, not happen again -- God forbid, as has been said -- that we have houses, structures, businesses that are built better than they ever were before.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Great. Thank you. And just -- just a quick

question off Twitter here from Janine.

Did amateur radio operators assist in any of the communications here?

>> KEITH STAMMER: Yes, they did. They did a fine job. We used them in two different areas.

Joplin extends from Jasper County southward into Newton County and so the emergency management director, Gary Roark, and I, we've known each other for several years, we set up ham radio operators between the two of us so we could communicate back and forth.

The second thing that we did is we brought in CERT teams from all over the areas and used them in our ground search efforts. Our ham radio operators showed up with portables and we embedded one ham radio operator with a portable in each one of those search teams so we could maintain communication.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. And another one from JCN171.

Any liability issues with volunteers? Any issues with liability of volunteers that came in?

And identify yourself.

>> BRIAN HEAD: Brian Head. I'm the city attorney.

There are always liability issues when you're dealing with volunteers.

AmeriCorps, however, has an exceptionally well thought out program as to how to handle this. They -- you come in, you sign up, you sign a waiver, and frankly, when you're in the middle of a disaster of this category, you can't necessarily be an attorney. You sometimes --

>> RICHARD SERINO: Can you hold up and say that one more time?

[Laughter]

>> BRIAN HEAD: I will just say you can't necessarily be an attorney.

There are a lot of times when I would have liked an I dotted or a T crossed and I just shut my mouth and moved on and decided it was good enough because we had to get it done.

And that's one of the categories -- volunteers is certainly one of those categories. Although I will say the AmeriCorps forms are very good. I wasn't particularly concerned about any of the language in them. We used them before, we were familiar with them, so our review was very quick.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. And I think that, you know, we joke about that, but there's a certain time when the attorney has to step back and actually do what's best for the moment at hand.

And just to put it in perspective, you know, I know Mark mentioned it earlier but there was 130,000 -- 130,000! -- volunteers for 755,000 hours of community service, and it was valued at more than \$17 million and represents more than 82 years' worth of community service for the volunteers.

So to put that in perspective of what you managed in a short period of time, and how it was done, I think, is, again -- I used the word earlier, but it's amazing what I've seen here in a year's time from when I was here a year ago.

Operator, next question and then we'll go to Jane after this.

>> OPERATOR: The next question comes from Susan Schottky of the USDA.

>> Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Susan Schottky, as said, and I am very interested in the key ingredients that you mentioned about staying connected with people who have been impacted.

With USDA providing national leadership in the area of family and consumer economics, I work with the land grant universities and the cooperative extension centers, and I'm providing leadership in the area of recovery of individuals and families in the area of their personal finances.

I wondered if you covered anything in that area with Joplin, and then I also wondered if -- if you did, did you use mobile phone apps for individuals for their personal finance records.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. We're searching the room to find the best person to answer that question.

>> Okay. Thank you.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay.

>> DEBBI MEADS: Well, Keith is pointing to me, so I'm looking at Renee.

I do know that we -- I'm not exactly sure if I understand the question about personal finance, but I do know that through long-term recovery, that we are providing classes for people, and in our initial recovery interviews we talked to them about how they can recover things that were lost.

And so we do go through that with them.

And then ongoing, with the many issues that they have to deal with, we have -- university extension is providing a lot of classes, and I know -- Renee, you may know -- I don't know the names of the others, but several -- Consumer Credit Counseling has also been here and working really closely with us.

>> RENEE WHITE: Yes.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Yes. Stephanie. Just say who you are for the people on the phone.

>> STEPHANIE BRADY: Stephanie Brady.

We've also, with the long-term recovery committee, had the department of insurance come in and we did use the mobile apps that they have on homeowner and renter insurance and have encouraged the disaster managers to provide that information and we've also handed out a lot of the renter insurance packets as well.

>> RICHARD SERINO: And now we'll just take a short break from the questions and we're going to ask Jane Cage, who is the chair of the Citizens Advisory Recovery Team, or CART -- you know, CART -- trying to get the "R" in there. I've seen a few Twitter comments on my accent, but I --

[Laughter]

>> RICHARD SERINO: But I think that it's -- when I was here initially, but then when I came back in September with both Secretary Napolitano and Secretary Salazar, secretary of education, and did a quick tour and we had a

luncheon and then really talked with a lot of folks, I was very impressed then with what CART has been doing, and to say "more impressed now" is an understatement.

I think the work you've done has been amazing.

So Jane?

>> JANE CAGE: Thank you very much.

I'm Jane Cage and I chair the Citizens Advisory Recovery Team, and as a regular citizen of Joplin, it's a privilege to sit around the table with everyone who has worked so hard.

I would say that the city was working hard, FEMA was working hard, but citizens were also looking for an opportunity to contribute to recovery. So when FEMA's long-term community recovery team got here and suggested that it would be a good idea for citizens to have a stake and a voice in the recovery, it became the perfect opportunity for many of us.

Our goal became clear early on, and that was to listen to Joplin. You know, it was easy to look around at our situation, but we needed to look beyond our situation at what the future might look like.

So FEMA divided us into four categories and we held a series of public meetings, the first on July the 12th, so not even two months after the tornado.

We had 350 citizens come that day. Citizens who had lost their homes, citizens who had lost people that they loved, and they were encouraged to give us their vision for Joplin.

We ended up that day with 1500 sticky notes posted all around the middle school that were connected --

[Interruption of captioning due to technical difficulties]

>> RICHARD SERINO: Sure. Hold on. I'm trying to figure out who the best one here is to answer that.

>> DAVID HERTZBERG: This is David Hertzberg, public works director, and we reviewed -- you know, as Keith had mentioned, we added the hurricane clips. We reduced the spacing on the -- on the reinforcing and the ties all the way through.

But as far as basic national standards, we didn't change any of those national standards. I know that on the national level, some of these standards will be reviewed with using our tornado as -- as a thought process, but those were the issues that were changed at the local level, and like I say, there will be some -- we'll be discussing some of these other things on a national level.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Thank you. Next question.

>> OPERATOR: The next question is from Shawn Gorman.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Shawn, we have you back.

>> I'll try again. Can you hear me?

>> RICHARD SERINO: Yeah. We can hear you good now.

>> Good afternoon. Thank you.

How did the coordination work as far as identifying and coordinating with

the state and county, perhaps, on addressing the housing needs, the immediate housing needs in Joplin?

Was there a state-led disaster task force already established, or local or county, perhaps, and how did the task force, if it did exist, manage the resources to address the housing needs?

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. I'm sure we have that, and I'm not sure who wants to take that initially.

>> MARK ROHR: I could try.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Mark.

>> MARK ROHR: My recollection -- and I wasn't involved in every meeting -- was that the city stepped in and worked with FEMA to address the housing needs, and the expressed purpose that we conveyed to them was based on some research that we had done directly after the storm about loss of population base. And we had the research available from Greensburg, Kansas, which indicated 40% of their town left.

In addition to that was information that we had gleaned from the Katrina experience that New Orleans had, and we heard anywhere from 25 to 40% of that population base left.

And we set a determined course where we weren't going to let that happen.

And the city worked with FEMA to try and get the MHUs -- manufactured housing units -- on site as soon as possible and I believe we did it in record time.

And I believe that was one of the secrets to our success is that we had a goal early on. We messaged that to the citizens that we wanted them to stay by and that they were important to us and that we would recover from this and be bigger and stronger than we were before the storm.

And then we set about putting that into action by working with the different partners we have at the table here, and that we had available to us from early on.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Anybody else want to follow up with that? Yes.

>> STEPHANIE BRADY: Stephanie Brady. I was on the housing task force from early on, and Troy Boling here with the city requested several members from the community in different realms -- myself being in the disability community -- and really, I think that his and the City of Joplin's leadership on that in saying, you know, "We need to all come together and figure out what's in the best interest for our residents and to keep people in the community and then FEMA working with that as well."

>> ANDREA SPILLARS: And I would just add in -- Andrea Spillars.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Just identify yourself.

>> ANDREA SPILLARS: Yes. Andrea Spillars with the State.

We actually embedded several folks in Joplin for that purpose and for any other recovery purposes.

The governor opened up the Joplin Resource and Recovery Center so that we had a whole cadre of state personnel down here and one of the issues, a very large issue, was housing. Candy Adams was one of our people in housing. Sallie Hemenway was one of our people in housing. So their goal was to work with the city, work with FEMA, to make sure that we had all of the state resources coordinated.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. So that was -- Shawn, did that answer your question?

>> Yeah. Thank you very much. Appreciate that.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Great. And operator, I'm assuming you have a lot more questions on the phone.

>> OPERATOR: Yes. The next question comes from Fay Howard.

>> Hi. I'm Fay Howard. I've been in Joplin several times. We educate storm victims on how to protect themselves from contractor scams, and I wanted to find out if there had been any reports, concerns from the community, about not just outright scams but miscommunication with the -- with the contractors that are on site, questions about the rebuild process. Has there been an ongoing issue in that regard there?

>> LESLIE JONES: Leslie Jones.

Yes. We had a lot of contractors come to town immediately following the disaster, and we worked, through my office, with some other agencies, some state agencies, to get some education out to our citizens and we worked through our licensing process to make sure that they were bonded and insured, and we just worked very hard to try to protect our citizens.

And I will say that the attorney general played a key role and helped our staff several times, and citizens could go straight to the attorney general and make any complaints and they were very aggressive in addressing those issues.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Great.

>> Great.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Thank you. And just from the Twitter -- I don't know if it's from Mr. Alaska or whatever. It just disappeared. But what are the top five recovery priorities for Joplin.

>> MARK ROHR: From day one or --

>> RICHARD SERINO: Sure. Anytime you want.

[Laughter]

>> RICHARD SERINO: So pick day one or now.

>> MARK ROHR: Wow. Search and rescue was number one. We wanted to do whatever we could to help as many people as quickly as possible.

And the citizens helped in that respect, the volunteers helped, different people that we had from different cities that came in to volunteer helped. Everyone helped in that regard.

Obviously that was first and foremost.

And then setting about developing a plan to respond to the circumstances

we were faced with.

You can -- I guess I'm not as -- you can do a lot to plan in terms of safety services in different emergencies that you might face, but from an administrative standpoint there's not really a whole lot you can do to plan for the circumstances that you're faced with.

So what I did was resorted to experiences I had with past storms, nothing near this magnitude, and what we immediately set about to do was to develop a list of the extent of the damage and then I had my assistant call about every city that he could, or contact them in some manner, to get help coming.

And then what we simply did, after search and recovery, was marry the one with the other, find out who we've got coming in, figure out what on the list we needed them to do, and making sure that we coordinated that.

And we had maps available, we had different representatives from city crews to meet up with these people to take them in the field because they weren't familiar with the city, and even those that were familiar with the city lost their bearings because everything was gone in the storm area, so we had to make sure that we had some city people with them. I guess that was probably point number two.

And help me out here.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Mark doesn't have to do this alone.

>> JANE CAGE: You know, this is Jane Cage. I would say 12 months later, one of our biggest priorities is not wasting the opportunity we've been given.

You know, it's an opportunity that we never asked for but we can't afford to waste. So I think we want to be careful, with every dollar we receive in the way of federal assistance and state assistance, that we spend it in the wisest way; that when we rebuild, we rebuild the right way for the appearance that we want; that everything we do is a best use and a highest practice of everything that happens, and that's sometimes a big burden.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Good. Anybody else?

>> RENEE WHITE: My name is Renee White, with the long-term recovery committee, and I think one of our priorities is getting people back home.

There's a sense of stability and well-being when you are living in a permanent environment, not in a temporary, waiting for the next step.

So at the LTRC, we are constantly urging ourselves to look at time and efficiency, and as people have reflected previously on this conversation, to not forget who we're working for.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Great. And just -- on business recovery from the chamber's point of view or anybody, but --

>> ROB O'BRIAN: Yes. Rob O'Brian, Joplin chamber.

And I think Mark has done a good job of talking about the partnerships and the roles being played.

I think we felt it was very important, early -- those first priorities, certainly the city was working very hard on behalf of the residents. We had the

housing group. But we felt it was important to make sure that the business side was being addressed, as well as, you know, the schools working very hard on their front, with the idea that if the jobs remained in place and the schools opened on time and there were classrooms for the children and there was -- there were solutions for housing, not long-term but at least short-term solutions, that the population would stay.

And that was a very critical consideration, I think, in our community, because we had, as Mark mentioned, seen a substantial population loss in other communities that had been hit by a major natural disaster, and we did not want to go through the same thing.

So everyone was working initially on -- on really the housing options, getting businesses reopened, and getting the schools opened on time.

And as -- and Jane has done a good job. We've gone forward with the CART group in terms of looking at a much larger vision of how we take this as an opportunity to make the community better and stronger for the future.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Great.

>> MARK ROHR: If I could, on a micro level, one of the things I didn't mention that FEMA keeps bringing up and that other people remark, is one of the basic things you have to do early on, obviously work to rescue people, clear your streets, clear your streets. That's what sets the stage for everything else to happen.

And when we got help from our public works department and MoDOT and other cities that were coming in, that was one of our initial priorities was to clear the streets because that facilitated everything else that we did.

And FEMA -- quite a few FEMA officials have remarked about how quickly that was done.

So you had to be organized, you had to have the equipment, you had to have someone that knew the streets, and you had to get the streets cleared, because that enabled everything else to happen.

>> RICHARD SERINO: And just on that, just a quick comment. I mentioned that again to Mark, and I mentioned it a year ago when we were driving around. At noontime, 1:00 the next day, I could get almost anywhere in the city. Of course I had Mitch Randles, the fire chief driving me around, which made it much easier, but it made a difference, yes.

>> DEBBI MEADS: Well, another thing that we often -- that has been a big priority that we often don't talk about is the spiritual and emotional health of our people, and I know Healing Joplin has been huge with that, with support from the state.

And Renee White actually chaired our emotional and mental health committee, and I'll never forget this. At every long-term recovery committee meeting, she gave us something to hold onto, and it was important for committee members and it was important for our community, and I think keeping that as a priority as we're helping our families has helped us all.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Just to follow up on that, that's -- I think that's

huge and important, and I remember, you know, not so much in the first couple of days -- the first couple of days, it was survival and -- but then when I came back in September, on that visit one thing that struck me was, you know, how important the opening of schools was, and schools opening on time, and I remember what was said when I was here when it happened, that they're going to open on time, and I was -- that's great. And honestly, there was maybe a little bit of skepticism --

[Laughter]

>> RICHARD SERINO: -- but I -- when I came back for the opening and shortly after the opening, I was amazed at where the high school is.

You know, I'll come back to you in one second, but I think one thing that's important is, you know, that hope. Because I remember the next -- one of the other things was the high school football game and having these things to give folks.

So in a minute, if you can just give me a couple of things along the way that you gave people for hope. Just if you can mention a little bit about schools because I think that's a huge part of keeping the citizens in the community and jobs and all that. So introduce yourself.

>> ANGIE BESENDORFER: Angie Besendorfer, assistant superintendent for Joplin schools.

And we think it was important that we set that goal for -- that we're going to have a place for kids to be. We also started summer school and extended summer school.

What we knew was, we know how to take care of kids and we needed to keep kids safe and they needed a place to be so that the adults could take care of the devastation and take care of those kinds of things and the kids didn't need to worry about that, and that keeping them emotionally healthy was going to be getting them out of that, you know, underneath-feet-in-hotel-rooms or whatever that happened to be.

We did maintain 95% of our attendance, which was astonishing and really surprising to us. In fact, our high school enrollment improved and increased, and that was because, I think, we used this opportunity to innovate and to change things. And we've had even a letter to the editor from one of our students just this week that was stating that, you know, he thought his senior year was going to be a waste, why go, and then it turned into something really fantastic.

And so the things that we've done to keep the air light, to keep people focusing on happy things, has been really important.

There needed to be that positive wind underneath their wings just to keep things going from kids and staff, and so it's been critically important the way that people from around the world have helped us with things like David Cook coming to homecoming and, you know, taking over prom and, you know, President Obama coming for graduation next week.

Those things generate excitement and they help people focus on good

things, not bad things, and I think that's important.

We've seen as a community the stress of Christmas coming. We saw the stress then even just in the -- the closer we get to the anniversary, we can see that in people. It's important.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Mark?

>> MARK ROHR: Mark Rohr, city manager.

To the extent that you can, I didn't necessarily realize it when we were going through it, you need to set community goals. Achievable, realizable goals. And looking back on it, the first two that we probably had -- you're doing a sprint early on, trying to rescue people. Then it becomes more of a marathon. It's more trying mentally. And the August 7th EDR deadline was the first one.

>> RICHARD SERINO: What's "EDR," for those --

>> MARK ROHR: Expedited debris removal.

Which was a trial program, courtesy of the federal government. We had to remove 3 million cubic yards of debris, which is indescribable in terms of words -- you had to be here to see it -- in 68 days. And that's what we did and we got it done in time.

The second goal was the schools opening on time. And in looking back on it, where we lapsed into a valley was when I didn't realize the need to continue to add those goals and in September we hit a valley and we had a few problems here and there -- nothing too extensive -- because we didn't have those goals.

So goals and timetables help you get through the marathon portion and help people deal with the psychological aspect of dealing with a tragedy of this manner.

Another one that we had was the six-month memorial that we had.

And there have been other important milestones and dates during the recovery process, but looking back on it, that's one of the 10 tenets. I think you need to have realizable goals to help the people deal with the mental aspects of recovery from something of this magnitude.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Great. And Renee?

>> RENEE WHITE: Renee White with long-term recovery.

And as Debbi Meads, American Red Cross said, my subcommittee is the emotional/spiritual concerns under LTRC, and just briefly as a subcommittee, some of the things we did fairly quickly was mobilize listings of support groups, of free counseling services, spiritual services.

One of the wonderful attributes of southwest Missouri is our faith community, and it's really -- I have worked in social services 30 years, and really our faith and social service communities worked parallel together, and that's evident in our long-term recovery committees. Large membership meetings happen twice a month and we start off with prayer. That's just who we are in southwest Missouri.

And what Debbi I think was alluding to is I am -- just as Mr. Rohr spoke

about ceremony and ritual, at the anniversary of the 22nd of every month, wherever that was around our long-term recovery committee, I brought in a poem or a platitude of some type to, again, remind ourselves why we were doing the work we're doing.

And for me, it's really dichotomous. It's the sadness and the heaviness of a heart to see the devastation, but the energy that has built in the 11 months is just phenomenal as well.

And so some of those sayings were very heartfelt, and some were, "We rock! We really rock!"

And so I think all of those multiple players of that emotional/spiritual health at the macro level, at a community level, but individually every kiddo in the school system has had access to services, every family member has had access, and that's vital to who we are.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. That's great.

Take another question on the phone and then we'll go to Stephanie.

Operator?

>> OPERATOR: Jeff Parsons, your line is open.

>> Thank you. Jeff Parsons, Washington state emergency management.

My question relates to the Dodd-Frank banking and investing reform and how did that or does that affect business recovery and individuals who are not eligible for individual and public assistance through FEMA?

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. I'm looking around the room to try to find the best person to answer that.

I'm getting a perplexed -- maybe could you rephrase the question?

>> Okay. Recently, Dodd-Frank 2010 introduced legislation that was passed that reformed the banking and investment industry, and my question relates to: How did that reform -- did it or did it not affect the ability of private industry and private business and individuals in recovering in Joplin?

And that's primarily for those who are not eligible for individual assistance or public assistance through the FEMA program.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. As far as from a FEMA point of view, I don't believe for the individual assistance, that affected it at all.

And from the business community here in Joplin, I'm looking at the -- you know, the chamber president --

>> ROB O'BRIAN: Rob O'Brian with the chamber.

We've not had any feedback from any of the banking or loan institutions that it had any impact on their ability to service their customers.

One of -- one of the sources that was helpful for some people was the SBA loan program that's available for a small business, but also in case of disaster they also make that available for residents, both on rental replacement and also home replacement.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Jeff, was that helpful?

>> Yes.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Great. Thank you. And next I'd like to go

to Stephanie Brady, the director of programs at the Independent Living Center here in Joplin.

>> STEPHANIE BRADY: Thank you very much. I was asked to speak about how our participation with people with disabilities before the tornado and post-tornado, how that has helped in the recovery and what we would recommend for other disability-related organizations.

Before the tornado, just a few things that helped the process -- you know, what Keith and Mark and others have said -- is those collaborations.

Our center for independent living, as well as other nonprofit organizations and social services were very connected with the COAD. We were members of the health -- health-related services committees and other committees in the area and I think that those relationships really helped in the long term.

Also, the -- shortly before, in January of last year, the National Council on Independent Living had developed a memorandum of understanding with FEMA and that memorandum of understanding allowed our organization, centers for independent living nationwide, to be able to work directly with FEMA without having to develop our own memorandums of understanding.

Also, about a month and a half before the tornado, we were asked by the Red Cross locally to train their volunteers on disability awareness and working with people with disabilities in disasters, and we trained about 75 or 80 people, and a month and a half later they really did need to utilize that.

Some of the things that were beneficial after the tornado, we had near-immediate contact with Gay Jones, who is the FEMA disability integration specialist. This is something I have encouraged every other center for independent living and partner in disability communities post-tornado to seek out their disability integration specialist because they are amazing to be able to help you learn that process.

I'm not a disaster person. I'm not an emergency management person. Like a lot of people in nonprofits, you get set into new jobs, and having somebody who was specializing in that walk along with me and say, "These are the tables that you need to be at," I never realized that I had the opportunity or should even be able to sit at a lot of the tables that I then was able to participate in.

We also were in contact with the Red Cross director within about three hours of the tornado, and our center provided a lot of durable medical equipment at the shelter as well as at the MARC and we were transporting individuals with disabilities shortly after the tornado, getting them to shelters.

We also worked to develop the disability and senior disaster resource committee, and that committee met weekly and it just helped us to remember the different needs of people with disabilities and to bring those needs to the different tables, whether it was the housing task force or whatever.

We worked with FEMA also to develop a housing intake sheet to use with people who were disabled or senior citizens. A lot of them were fearful of the process of applying for FEMA assistance, so we worked with them to help

alleviate some of that fear and ensure that they were going to be considered whenever housing was available.

We also -- out of realizing that a lot of people with cognitive disabilities and seniors were having the fear of applying for FEMA assistance, Gay Jones and FEMA assisted our office in setting up a mobile disaster recovery center at our independent living center, and that allowed the people who might have been fearful of the general process to come into a place where they had that security and they had trust developed, and they -- we had individuals who registered in that manner.

We also invited FEMA staff to come to a lot of our social activities that we had with our consumers, and they reached out to people in more of a social environment rather than in a disability services or disaster services environment, and I think that opened a lot of doors for them.

And lastly, something I think that was really beneficial was Gay worked with our staff to train over 80 FEMA community relations staff members in what disability awareness was all about and what access and functional needs were, and I think that that training helped them understand that from their perspectives.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Great. Thank you very much.

Operator, questions on the phone? And remind callers have to hit star 1 to ask a question.

>> OPERATOR: Press star 1 to ask a question.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Do you have questions, operator?

>> OPERATOR: We have no questions in queue.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Any -- anybody else in the room right now have any questions, topics? I know you had something earlier.

>> KIM COX: I didn't want to forget to mention that although --

>> RICHARD SERINO: Who are you and where are you from?

>> KIM COX: Oh, I'm Kim Cox from the housing section of the CART team and the local realtor association. We used the social media to keep everybody in the loop in our town but internally we had a local radio station that broadcast 24/7 tornado information, advice, updates.

It was a constant feeding and relaying of information that even though it started with "The people on this street are okay" and "Mr. and Mrs. Jones are looking for their daughter," it was very personal information. It soon turned into where people could pick up supplies, seek medical treatment, prescriptions, storage bins, tarps, anything that they needed. And kudos to that local radio station. If I had to give a how-to disaster 101, that would be to find someone local in your city to prearrange that, so that everyone knows where to go in that time of disaster.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Great. Any other questions or comments? Yes.

>> ANDREA SPILLARS: I would just reiterate what I think Debbi and some others have said about the -- the priority of the mental and spiritual health of the community, because if you hear all of the goals that were mentioned -- the

debris removal, the opening of the schools -- all of that directly related to the pulse of the community.

And the fact that all of these folks were working to those very identifiable goals really made a huge difference.

And, you know, the other thing, too, is that everybody knowing, the community knowing, that the state's still here, that a huge amount of resource -- the locals are still, you know, committing huge resources to these events, so that everything continues and it will continue.

So just the idea that everybody understands this is a long-term recovery project, and the LTRCs are here for as long as it takes, the state is here for as long as it takes, the federal government is here as long as it takes, I think that helps the community recover.

>> RICHARD SERINO: And I think that -- I remember the first night, that they said, "Oh, FEMA is going to come and leave." And it's like "No. We're going to be here for the long haul," as everybody in this room has as well.

There are over 460 people still on the phone and do we have questions on the phone, operator?

>> OPERATOR: Alexander Baston, your line is open.

>> Good afternoon. First of all, thank you all so much for hosting today's call and the very beneficial information. I greatly appreciate it.

My question is in regards to the preexisting relationships. A gentleman at the very first of the call had mentioned this, and my question is: Who do you suggest those preexisting relationships need to be with at the various levels?

>> KEITH STAMMER: Well, I guess that depends upon your purpose. We started off by doing disaster exercises. We would put together a disaster exercise committee, come up with a scenario, and say, "Now, who would be involved if this actually happened?"

And from there, we began to of course start with ourselves. We reached out to the -- to the local community, to city government. You go immediately into your community organizations acting in disaster, to the faith-based community.

Next you just -- it's just kind of a snowball-type thing. You invite people in from the State and everyone that you invite seems to have anywhere from 4 to 7 to maybe as many as 10 other contacts of people that you can be involved with.

The whole idea here is to start off with something that is germane to your particular locale and from there you begin to expand it.

The trick is to do a -- one of the things that we have found most effective is to do an after-action review after every actual event that we have.

We have a snowstorm. We have a major fire. We have a tornado. We might have a hazardous material release. And we would invite all of the response and recovery and long-term players into a room some weeks afterwards and sit down and talk about what went well and what needs to be done differently, and then establish an improvement plan, and that went a long

ways toward establishing those relationships, so that the next time you knew who to call.

>> ANGIE BESENDORFER: I think that's one side of it -- Angie Besendorfer with the school system -- is that emergency side of it, and we were a part of that. But then beyond that, there was the way that we worked together as a community.

We have an organization called Bright Futures that had built a network of the business community, faith-based community, and social services, and so that was already there. So that was preestablished, over 3,000 Facebook fans, that we were able to communicate with.

In addition, the chamber of commerce is very strong, and that's -- that's another big player in the relationships and the partners and the way that we were able to work together.

Even as we were trying to find locations, I knew that Rob O'Brian was going to keep this spot for me and not lease it to anybody else until we knew whether we had to have it or not, and those were the kinds of partnerships beyond just that emergency night of the thing.

We knew each other by first name and that's the way that we operated.

>> All right. Thank you.

>> BRUCE SPECK: This is Bruce Speck, Missouri Southern.

One thing that surprised me, when we talked to the Red Cross people, is that universities they had approached were reticent to have this kind of agreement that we have, and I was kind of shocked by that, frankly. And part of my shock was that we are a public institution, we are supported by the state, we serve the people in this community, so that that we would have facilities that would not be available during a disaster seemed to me actually a no-brainer. And I couldn't understand why there would be resistance.

Now, having gone through it, I can tell you you lose control of your campus.

[Laughter]

>> BRUCE SPECK: So, you know, if you have reticence about it, the fact is universities have facilities that are large, many times that are available, and this was all very serendipitous for us. We had graduated our students. They were gone. So we had space for the first responders to come in and to stay. We had -- we didn't have some complications you might have if you had school in session, so that was helpful.

But I would appeal to anybody in a university setting to contact your Red Cross, or whatever those organizations are, and sign those agreements, because the signing of that agreement --

And by the way, after you sign the agreement, you're supposed to go through training and you're supposed to have disaster planning, so I think we're going to do that pretty soon here.

[Laughter]

>> BRUCE SPECK: But to sign that agreement means that there's an

immediate entree, so when something happens, even if you haven't gone through all that, you immediately have access and you get these things going quickly.

And think of it this way: If you had disaster in your community and you had a university there that was not touched by it, in terms of the facilities, and the facilities were available to be used, would you say, "No, I'm sorry, you can't use our facilities"? I mean, I just think that's unthinkable.

So if you are going to use those facilities and they're going to be available, why don't you have an agreement beforehand. Why don't universities have agreements beforehand, so that that's all set up and those questions are taken out of the way and immediately you can get that done.

If you do it today --

I want to make sure that people realize there's not a causal relationship between signing an agreement and having a tornado. That's not what precipitated this.

[Laughter]

>> BRUCE SPECK: But if you do it, then you will be able to get the training, you will be able to get the plan, how it works.

So again, I was shocked, quite frankly, to think that universities would not sign agreements with the Red Cross if there were facilities to be used during a disaster, and I would encourage those at universities who have authority to clearly look at that and make sure that you have -- that your facilities are available during that time, and formally.

>> ROB O'BRIAN: If I can give another example, picking up on Bruce's comment -- Rob O'Brian, Joplin chamber -- on the Monday following the tornado, one of the things we felt was going to be important was, to the greatest extent possible, to consolidate business recovery resources. And one of those we felt would be very important were the staff from the Small Business and Technology Development Center at Southern.

Most universities through the SBA system, have an SBTDC presence, and we asked the SBTDC folks if actually they would be at the chamber. We're fortunate, we have both a chamber and next door an innovation center, so we had space at the innovation center and we asked if they would come, and also SBA business recovery, so they could be there together to counsel businesses, not only starting through the SBA process for loan financing, but also just have the counseling, which turned out to be extremely important, and continues to this day, a year afterwards. They're still there counseling with businesses, and it's turned out to be a strengthened relationship. It's always been a good relationship, but again, that's one of those sources that the university was willing to provide and say, "Yes, we can do it this way because we're here to serve the community."

>> RICHARD SERINO: Great. Thank you very much. And just a couple of quick questions that came in. One from Twitter.

It says, "Does Joplin have a local emergency planning council?"

>> KEITH STAMMER: Yes, Joplin does have a local emergency planning committee. It has been in existence for a number of years and it's made up of representatives all throughout the county. We meet on an every-other-monthly basis to talk about matters by statute from the State of Missouri having to do with hazardous materials, hazardous materials response and training, and any information -- publishing information to the citizens of the county about where those materials are located, keeping them on file, and any other activities that we find that comes to the forefront. We have an Annex H, which is a hazardous materials response plan to our local emergency operations plan which is updated on a yearly basis.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Great. Thank you.

Next I'm going to slide into the second part of this, which is about pre-disaster planning for recovery, something that we've touched on a bit here today, and I'm going to first go to Deb Ingram, and Deb?

>> DEB INGRAM: Thanks, Rich. I'm just going to speak very briefly about the National Disaster Recovery Framework, because today we have been hearing all of the concepts already discussed.

And Mark, you said early on, nobody gives you a plan, nobody tells you how to do it.

The framework isn't a plan, but it does lay out the steps, and we really appreciate the lessons that we've heard from you today. This will help us to continue to build our documentation and the tools we can provide your facilities.

The framework really is a focus on recovery. It gives us an opportunity to bring the energy and effort that we have brought to response efforts and really bring that to recovery and really help communities to rethink, redefine, you know, reestablish their communities afterwards.

Jane, you mentioned the opportunity. You know, a disaster like this is tragic, it's devastating, but it does bring opportunities to the community.

There's really -- I just want to hit on three key concepts that are part of the National Disaster Recovery Framework, and again, we've heard them all, so I don't need to elaborate.

So first is leadership. Mark, you talked about that. Several others did as well.

It's leadership at every level. It's got to be at the local level because it does have to be the community that defines the priorities, sets the goals, and says where they want to go, and they're leading the way. The state and the federal government support that. Of course state leadership or tribal leadership, whichever it might be, is also incredibly important in bringing all of those resources together at the state level to support that.

This is far beyond emergency management. It really is the whole community. It's the whole community as we've discussed here today. People with disabilities, elderly, schools, bringing everybody together.

But state government, community government, and the federal

government is also the whole community. It's all of the federal, state, and local resources, as well as the private nonprofits or private sector that can be brought to bear, so it's really looking at that.

It's looking at pre- and post-disaster recovery planning.

Boy, if there's one thing that we've heard today it's that networking pre-event, and even though you hadn't done the pre-disaster recovery planning, you'd done the networking and that really enabled Joplin, I think, as a community to move ahead much more quickly.

And I know that I heard you -- you all say the next step, Keith, is really doing that pre-disaster recovery planning that you wanted to do years before, and so we're really encouraging others to do that and to start to think now about those steps. And that's looking at your community, inventorying your assets, what's important to you in your community, what do you really want to protect, what do you want to bring back, what do you want to change, and really having thought that through in advance.

That's pre-disaster. It's certainly one way to do that.

Post-disaster, as many of you have discussed, is setting those goals, marking your progress, celebrating your successes, bringing hope, but also making those course adjustments as you need to.

And the third concept I just want to mention are the recovery support functions, so this is incredibly important, because it organizes a way to think about recovery. You're going to hear the themes you've already heard, but really this is an opportunity for me to just mention only FEMA of the federal family is sitting at the table today, but there are a number of other federal agencies, a multitude of family agencies, involved in this who bring their resources, their expertise, their technical assistance, and in some cases their grant dollars to the table to assist.

So community planning and capacity-building, incredibly important. FEMA has the lead for this. We've heard a lot about that today, bringing the community -- and it is the whole community. Everybody has a seat, should have a seat, at the table.

Economic. Bringing the businesses back together. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration has the lead for us on that. And I say "us," the nation, as we work on this national recovery. Incredibly important to get your businesses back up and get that tax base back, or continue it.

Health and social services. The issues we've talked about with kids and schools and mental health and spiritual health, how we deal with all of those as well as physical and medical issues, and Health and Human Services has the lead on this function.

Housing. We talked about housing. We heard a lot about that. HUD has the lead on the housing support function.

And this is a good time to just mention these are all interrelated, as I know everybody around this table knows. These are not independent stovepipe

recovery support functions. They have to work together. You have to have housing where you've got your schools, and housing and the schools where you've got your businesses.

The next one is infrastructure systems. The Corps of Engineers has the lead on this one. And again, it's critically important how you get -- get your roads and bridges and access to your jobs, to your schools, to where your house is going to be, and rethinking that critical infrastructure.

And then finally, natural and cultural resources and this is one maybe that doesn't always get as much attention as it should but thinking about the things in your community that are important to you. It could be a park, it could be a lake, your rivers. Those types of things that maybe sometimes aren't thought of early on but really can have a significant impact frequently are things that define -- define your community.

So Rich, I know we've got some folks on the phone who are going to talk with us about the planning -- the pre-disaster planning they've undertaken and I think I'll just stop there.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Well, before we get a couple more people on the phone, so right now the queue got cleared again, so for the callers on the phone, you have to hit star 1 again to ask questions because it got cleared.

So again, if you have questions on the phone, hit star 1, even if you were in line, in queue. You have to do it again because it got cleared. So hit star 1 if you have some questions.

We have a question off of Twitter from fire tracker 2.

In much of the country, community revolves around larger employers. What's being done for the corporate community outreach?

>> ROB O'BRIAN: Rob O'Brian, Joplin chamber.

We had obviously -- and it was already mentioned -- several large employers that were directly impacted by the storm. We were fortunate that a large portion of our employment base remained intact post-storm, but the -- we really started with everybody. We had our team out on Tuesday, after the Sunday tornado, because communication was difficult, so they were in the field visiting every business location they could find and they repeated sweeps through the area in the first few weeks to find those business owners, to talk with them about their needs, to connect them to the business recovery center, with SBA and the SBTDC and others who were there.

We continue to do that every month, getting back with every single one of those businesses that was impacted, and it continues to change.

What we heard from some other communities and we're seeing here is that there are businesses that have an immediate rebound and then a year down the road begin struggling because the market hasn't come back or they had a great deluge of business initially and they overexpanded and now they're struggling with the fact that they overexpanded and the demand is starting to get back to that normal state, whatever that might be. So we continue to work with every single one of those businesses.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Great.

And we're going to be going to Amanda Vann from Fairfax County in Virginia, and then Anne Kronenberg from San Francisco.

And Amanda, we're going to take one quick question on the phone. Next? Operator?

>> OPERATOR: Howard Watson, your line is open.

>> Yes. My name is Howard Watson. I'm in Miami, Florida but I'm asking about tornados.

Ms. Cox was saying a bit ago about radios that she was using for people to announce their missed ones or loved ones or trying to find people and such.

I was wondering: What do you all do for deaf people that can't hear the radio and things like that, to try to get in touch with them?

>> STEPHANIE BRADY: This is Stephanie Brady with the independent living center and what we did is we used actually Facebook quite a lot. We developed a -- we worked with Paraquad, the center for independent living out of St. Louis, and they did some volunteering for us right after the tornado and developed a Joplin area deaf page and basically put a lot of information out on that.

They also developed a sign language YouTube video on how to access FEMA assistance using -- it was -- the YouTube video was both in sign language as well as captioned, and we also -- our center for independent living also, post-tornado, realized the access difficulties for people who can't hear the tornado sirens, and we purchased weather radios with bed shaker alarms as well as strobe light alarms for all of our consumers and anybody who requested those who were deaf or hard of hearing.

>> So you did the NOAA system?

>> STEPHANIE BRADY: And we also provided a lot of sign language interpretation during the different CART meetings and allowed for input for people who were deaf and hard of hearing.

>> Yeah. What about during the electricity, when it was not working or anything like that, where they can't use the assistive devices and things like that? Do you have a power recharging station where they can go repower up or something of that nature?

>> STEPHANIE BRADY: The community did right after, and the cell phone companies all brought in trucks to do that.

All of the weather radios that we provided --

[Microphone feedback squeal]

>> STEPHANIE BRADY: -- were also all battery operated, so as long as they maintain batteries in them, they're just fine.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Great. Thank you.

>> Okay. Thank you.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Thank you, Howard.

We also have Amanda Vann from Fairfax County, Virginia Office of Emergency Management on the phone to talk about integrating recovery into

local and federal partnerships.

Amanda, can you quickly tell us about your story?

>> Sure. We just finished the comprehensive pre-disaster recovery plan, which was the first in the National Capital Region. It was a USC funded project which began in the end of 2009 and we just finished in March of this year.

We did a lot of work up front doing the preplanning, which a large part of that was bringing in the stakeholders.

We had over 300 stakeholders involved throughout the project and by the end of the project.

We did a number of different focus groups, interviews, public workshops. We had electronic surveys, automatic e-mails, a web page, did press releases, newsletters, to try and get the word out and get as many different groups involved as we could.

But because of the size of the county, we really tried to reach out to the larger umbrella organizations and reach out to our stakeholders through them.

So we brought in a number of county agency representatives and we also engaged the nonprofit community through our Volunteers Organizations Active In Disaster. There's a northern Virginia chapter that was heavily involved.

We also had a volunteer Fairfax Citizen Corps, faith communities in action, different civic organizations, and on the private side, we tried to engage our local chambers of commerce.

In our county, we have over six different chambers, so we tried to reach out through them and through our economic development authority.

We also brought in different stakeholders from the state and the federal government as well.

And the final workshop that we held was a summit, a pre-disaster recovery summit, and that was basically an effort to invite all of our stakeholders to come and learn about the final draft plan before it went out for approval and review, and that went very well. There were about 120 people involved in that one.

Our steering committee that was involved in the review of the content throughout the project was made up of a core group of people, a number of people from county agencies, as well as a few chamber representatives. We had the chair of the northern Virginia VOAD, a citizen corps representative, we had somebody from our community services board who was representing the mental health issues as well as someone representing the access and functional needs issues.

Basically the plan follows the National Disaster Recovery Framework. We have outlined the six recovery support functions and we actually added one additional. Because of the terrorist threat in our region, we were really focusing on the public safety issue from the chemical, biological, radiological aspect, so we added that one recovery function.

But our organizational management structure is based on the incident

command system, and at this point the plan is really just a high-level strategic plan. It outlines the way that we'll organize. It describes the roles and responsibilities of those who would play a role in the recovery, and it -- so we still have a lot of work to do as far as building out the operational components under the recovery support function.

So we have a maintenance piece that's built into that which requires that an annual review be done, asking the leads from the recovery support functions to submit reports stating what progress they've made over the year. And then every four years we'll be doing a comprehensive review to completely update the plan and incorporate those new operational components.

And then I just wanted to leave you with a few things that I've found to be successful in our planning process, and that was that I think what made us successful was the fact that we, very early on, enlisted the support of our senior and elected officials and had them involved throughout.

And also, one of the things that was helpful in reaching out to the different stakeholder groups was using the WITFM, and that's "what's in it for me," and that's just making sure you tailor your message to the audience, because they all have different reasons for getting involved and we all know it can be difficult, if you haven't had a disaster recently, to get people interested in the issue and get engaged. So, you know, we find out what their interest is and try to reach out to them that way. It's a little bit easier to get them to participate.

And one of the last things that was successful was when the plan was completed, we held a tabletop exercise that allowed all of our stakeholders to come together and really dig into the plan and bump it up against a scenario and kind of discuss through the issues and try to figure out how we would actually come up with the long-term post-disaster recovery plan after the disaster.

And if anyone wants to look at the Web page, there's meeting minutes and a lot of information from the project. It's www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oaem/pdrp, pre-disaster recovery plan.

Thank you.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Thank you, Amanda.

That was good information. Appreciate it.

We're going to go to questions in a minute but next on the phone we have Anne Kronenberg. Anne's the executive director of emergency management in San Francisco, and some of the pre-recovery planning you've been doing, Anne, and sort of tie it to what's been happening here in Joplin, what you've been listening to.

Anne.

>> ANNE KRONENBERG: Thank you very much, Rich. I appreciate the opportunity to be on the call today and also thank you for your vision and your leadership at FEMA. Truly things do feel like they're changing now for the better.

So just hearing this discussion today has been so inspirational to me. What has happened in Joplin, and one of my favorite definitions of "resilience," is bouncing back beyond the original, and it sounds like that's what you're doing in Joplin.

I think we can learn a lot of lessons from you, and hearing about your Citizens Advisory Recovery Team, I mean, that's basically what we're trying to do right now in advance of a disaster is put together the key stakeholders in the room now, to develop priorities.

As Deb was saying about the core values of NDRF and talking about the whole community, San Francisco has been talking to the whole community for many, many years. I think longer than FEMA's been talking about it.

In the aftermath of our Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989, we pulled together our public safety leaders, our community leaders, and came up with our Neighborhood Emergency Response Team, the NERT, training community members on how to respond.

I think that what Amanda was talking about really fascinates me, but what we've done in San Francisco has been more organic. It was not a process that was as well planned, certainly, as it sounds like what you did in Fairfax County.

In 2008, we had the opportunity to have some folks from Harvard Kennedy School and Public -- School of Public Health come to San Francisco and begin to talk to us about resilience. We had been talking a lot before that about trying to create a culture of preparedness in San Francisco, and in working with the Kennedy School we really saw the connections between preparedness and resilience, and that many of the very innovative and effective initiatives already that were going on in the city were looking at things that would help us bounce back after the event more quickly.

So some of the things that we've done, we -- we know for a fact government can't do this on its own. Local government can't, even with states and Feds. We need to rely on our partners.

So we have a resilient community initiative. We have built a program called the Neighborhood Empowerment Network, and this is a group of -- it's -- the NEN is all over San Francisco. Each neighborhood has their own participants.

Stakeholders from all different walks of life participate in that, and we do things on an ongoing basis that are not necessarily disaster-related but are community capacity-building-related because we believe that getting to know your neighbors now, having those relationships in advance, are what's going to help us bounce back quickly after the event.

So for instance, you know, we encourage the NEN communities to have little block parties or to go clean up your local park or to plant trees, things like that.

We have a resilient technology initiative which is looking at innovative technologies, leveraging web and mobile communications, et cetera. We launched a program last year for iPhone and just recently for Androids called

SF Heroes.

We've put together, in 2009, something called the Lifelines Council, and that's -- we have over 20 local and regional infrastructure agencies working together on a quarterly basis now, focusing on understanding the interdependencies from each of the Lifeline sectors. From very basic things like where fiber and cable lines run to how we can bounce back if there's a -- our water system has been tampered with or whatever.

But we're looking at post-disaster reconstruction and recovery and collaborating throughout not just the city but the whole region, so that, again, we could restore services very quickly after an event.

Early on, we here in -- in our emergency operations center felt that we needed to work beyond our state and local partners and include the community when we activate our EOCs, so we have faith-based community with a seat in our EOC, the councillor corps has a seat, local business, we work very closely with our chamber of commerce and with our BOMA association. The councillor corps has a seat.

So right now, we're exercising and training. We're getting those people in the room who we will need after the event to make sure, again, we bounce back quickly.

We've had a private sector liaison here for two years and our business community loves that relationship.

And then finally, I'm -- we all are so happy with the NDRF rollout, because we really feel that planning around those six recovery support functions is the next step in getting us prepared to be resilient, if you will.

And we have been working -- and in fact, I had the opportunity to go to the Harvard program, MPLI program, which is terrific, and my cohort has been working on putting together a framework to go -- or to -- a template, rather, to go with the NDRF, which we're hoping FEMA will take on and embrace, that spells out more details of what you need to do now to plan for after a disaster.

And so we have been San Franciscoizing, if you will, the NDRF and really coming up with those -- packaging it to see what we can do in advance of the disaster.

>> RICHARD SERINO: Okay. Thank you, Anne. Appreciate that, and some very good information and I think we'll look forward to seeing what that cohort at MPLI comes up with.

And, you know, I was hoping to get to a few more questions, but looks like we're starting to run out of time. Well, we are running out of time.

But, you know, just as we go through today, I just wanted to -- as we wrap it up, I just want to thank everybody that presented, everybody that talked, everybody that answered questions.

I'd also like to thank, you know, Dr. Speck for joining us and hosting us here. And not so much for hosting us, but for what you did a year ago and continue to do throughout the year.

Really appreciate it.

I know there are a lot of -- a lot more questions and I wish we could get to them but the conversation doesn't have to end here. We want to continue it, and you can go to www.fema.gov/thinktank and I'd encourage you to keep posting the questions, the comments, the suggestions.

We have our next call that would be in June. It's going to be -- this one will be cohosted between FEMA and the assistant secretary of preparedness and response, Dr. Laurie, with the Department of Health and Human Services, and the theme of the call will be "Emergency Management, Health Care and Public Health, Increasing Coordination and Collaboration." We'll post more details on that call for June coming up.

And just to summarize a bit of today, I was taking notes throughout this conversation, and some of the things that I leave with today is, you know, make sure that you communicate with the community. More importantly, you listen to the citizens of Joplin and all 1500 sticky notes.

[Laughter]

>> RICHARD SERINO: I think that is important.

The preexisting relationships, whether you form them outside of a disaster realm or emergency management realm, but really having those.

How important having plans in place for the housing and businesses and making sure that the schools open on time, and set achievable goals.

And one image that will stick with me for a while -- actually, a couple.

One was the first day, the afternoon after the tornado. I was driving around, and then again today, seeing the cross of the church that was in the middle of the debris that was still standing and it's still standing today.

And then a bit of graffiti at Joplin High that when the sign fell off and it was just the two letters left and it turned to "Hope." And what you have done is give people hope. A lot of hope.

I started with this, but I think that the hope that you have given to this community and, yes, to this country, is nothing short of amazing.

From what I saw that night to what I saw on my other two visits and what I saw today, it is really amazing the work that's been done in less than a year by everybody.

It wouldn't have been able to be done without a team, and it has been an amazing team.

And one tweet I'm just going to read that was up there a little while ago was from Amy KU fan party two: "As a new person, this has been very informative."

Well, for an old person, this has been really informative.

So again, thank you very much. I appreciate you taking the time and I appreciate everything you've done. Thank you.

[Applause]

>> RICHARD SERINO: And Renee?

>> RENEE WHITE: Yes.

>> RICHARD SERINO: We rock! You rock!

>> RENEE WHITE: Yes. Thank you.
[Laughter]