

the PS7 REVIEW

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Federal Emergency Management Agency Region VII

Private Sector

National Business Emergency Operations Center Stands Up During Hurricane Isaac Response

In August, FEMA announced the first ever National Business Emergency Operation Center (NBEOC) in the National Response Coordination Center (NRCC). The NBEOC promotes two-way communication and situational awareness between public and private sector stakeholders in support of Emergency Support Function (ESF) #15, External Affairs. Businesses participate in the NBEOC in virtual capacity, under the direction of an NBEOC Director. By the time Hurricane Isaac made landfall on Aug. 29, more than forty-five businesses were members of the NBEOC, which gathered information and issued a series of critical advisories noting the scope and severity of



FEMA's NRCC houses a Private Sector Representative who coordinates the activities of the NBEOC.

the impact on the private sector. These advisories also kept the business community apprised of road closures and power outages. In coordination with the NBEOC, a private sector strike team deployed to Louisiana to directly and immediately support response and recovery efforts. The Private Sector Strike Team, deployed under FEMA's Community Relations mission, identified and met directly with small business owners impacted by the storm, and provided information to support their recovery. (See also page 2)

Local Chambers Make Great Partners for Business Resiliency

Chambers of Commerce are a natural partner for FEMA to support business preparedness, response and recovery efforts from the grassroots up.

- A preparedness forum, organized by the Cape Girardeau Chamber a few months ago, featured FEMA's Business Emergency Operations Center.
- In the Branson tornado response, the Branson Chamber helped assess business damages.
- In Louisiana, independent chambers are helping FEMA contact small businesses to assist in their recovery.



Chambers of Commerce contribute to resilient communities.

Chambers exist to support strong local economies. In its partnerships with local Chambers, FEMA has been able to support business resiliency.

State-Tribal Preparedness 'Partnership Meeting' Draws Full Participation

By Scott Weinberg, Tribal Liaison, FEMA Region VII

FEMA's 2010 Tribal Policy encourages cooperation and partnership among and between federal, tribal and state entities. From August 21-23, I witnessed just that. I was worried not many members from the nine federally-recognized tribes in Region VII would make the trip to our regional office in Kansas City to participate in a "Tribal Nation, State and FEMA Region VII Preparedness Partnership Meeting." Instead, I was pleasantly surprised when thirty tribal members arrived to participate, including leaders from the Ponca Nation several hundred miles north in the Niobrara Valley. More than fifty attendees, including 10 officials from three states, FEMA and some federal partners, underscored the purposefulness of the meeting. I witnessed candor, free and open communication from tribal leaders, and discussion between state, federal and tribal partners on critical issues facing tribal nations. Tribes called for greater understanding of cultural history, as a way of strengthening local communities and government.



Kansas City, Missouri, Aug. 23, 2012 -- Phil Kirk, left, the federal preparedness coordinator at FEMA Region VII, discusses disaster preparedness capabilities with a tribal leader during the three-day meeting with regional tribal and state officials held at the Region VII office. *FEMA photo by Amanda Bicknell.*

States identified challenges they face when dealing with county governments. FEMA experts provided overviews of major programs and assets, as well as grant opportunities. The event was framed with a welcome from Regional Administrator Beth Freeman and invocations from tribal leaders. Mostly, it was a positive encounter that laid groundwork for future meetings to engage more fully in a variety of issues, including: potential changes to the Stafford Act providing tribes a direct path to request a disaster declaration; processes for tribes wishing to become grantees; strengthening tribal emergency management systems, and local partnerships.

FEMA Launches Pilot Initiative for Small Businesses in Louisiana



A Louisiana small-business owner braces for Hurricane Isaac.

The shutters have come off the windows. The waters have receded and the soggy ground is drying out. Now small-business owners impacted by Hurricane Isaac consider their losses and the costs to recover.

As part of a Private Sector Pilot Project to assist small businesses in their recovery, a FEMA private sector team deployed to Louisiana in support of the Community Relations mission. The team assessed business impacts, informed business owners and workers of eligible services, and established two-way communication between FEMA and business partners. The initiative was designed to reach small businesses which might otherwise have fallen through the cracks of ongoing recovery efforts.

A similar pilot was launched last May following the tornado that destroyed a number of businesses in Branson, Missouri. The Louisiana pilot was an offshoot of the Branson pilot. These pilot projects show how model initiatives and best practices in FEMA's Private Sector division can be replicated and utilized across regions.

Business Watch:

AT&T Gives \$25,000 for Isaac Relief Efforts

Following impacts from Hurricane Isaac, AT&T Louisiana worked overtime with first responders to restore services. In addition, the communications firm gave \$25,000 to the United Way for Greater New Orleans to assist survivors of the hurricane throughout the impacted area.

"Readiness, recovery and rapid response have been the goals of our local governments and first responders and I am so grateful to see our communities pull together through this challenge," said Eric Skrmetta, Louisiana Public Service Commissioner.

"In times of disaster, our local residents come together," said Lambert Boissiere, III, Louisiana Public Service Commissioner. "I applaud our first responders, local government officials, and volunteers who worked in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Isaac to ensure the safety of people throughout the area. Now our attention turns to rebuilding a stronger Louisiana."

"Our thoughts are with the families in Louisiana impacted by Hurricane Isaac," said Sonia Perez, president of AT&T Louisiana. "The people of Louisiana are resilient and we are proud to support efforts to assist in the recovery of communities throughout the state.

AT&T is a premier communications holding company. Its subsidiaries and affiliates – AT&T operating companies – are the providers of AT&T services in the United States and around the world.



Cell towers like this one were damaged by Hurricane Isaac. After repairing damage to its systems, AT&T donated funds to assist disaster survivors in the gulf region.

(From AT&T press release and media sources.)

Business Recovery Centers Open in New Orleans

Nine Business Recovery Centers, operated by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), are open in New Orleans to help get businesses up and running in the aftermath of Hurricane Isaac.

FEMA small business recovery strike teams are referring businesses to the centers. Business owners meet one-on-one with specialists who help them assess their losses and start the recovery process.

Many businesses had to temporarily close because of Isaac damage and some are still working to re-open their doors. New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu said the key to recovery is getting businesses back on their feet.

At the centers, owners get help applying for Disaster Recovery Loans through the SBA, which is playing a major role in the recovery effort.

Qualifying businesses of any size and private, non-profits can get up to \$2 million in low-interest loans.

Public Libraries Support National Preparedness Month

By Amanda Bicknell, External Affairs Specialist, FEMA Region VII.

Regional public libraries are stocking their shelves and setting up displays with disaster preparedness materials to disseminate during the month of September, National Preparedness Month (NPM). Library computers are available for those wanting to explore FEMA's kids and adult-friendly disaster readiness website www.Ready.gov. There are coloring books for children who can create their own Flat Stanley and Flat Stella posters, designed to help kids learn more about emergencies and disasters. (You can more about the Flats on FEMA's blog earlier this year, <http://blog.fema.gov/2012/07/flat-stanley-and-flat-stella-join-fema.html>.)

During National Preparedness Month, there is a nationwide emphasis placed on getting ready for emergencies. Individuals, families, communities, businesses, not-for-profit and for-profit organizations, state and local governments and tribal nations are urged to take time to review home and flood insurance policies, make emergency supply kits and communication plans, make home and business repairs and adjustments that mitigate damage, and to generally prepare for the unexpected. Whenever possible, it's best to get ready BEFORE a disaster threatens. Participating libraries include:

Johnson County: Johnson County Public Libraries

Antioch Neighborhood Library, 8700 Shawnee Mission Pkwy., Merriam, KS
Central Resource Library, 9875 W. 87th St., Overland Park, KS
Blue Valley Neighborhood Library, 9000 W. 151st St., Overland Park, KS
Oak Park Neighborhood Library, 9500 Bluejacket, Overland Park, KS
Cedar Roe Neighborhood Library, 5120 Cedar, Roeland Park, KS
Corinth Neighborhood Library, 8100 Mission Rd., Prairie Village, KS
DeSoto Neighborhood Library, 33145 W. 83rd St., DeSoto, KS
Edgerton Neighborhood Library, 319 E. Nelson, Edgerton, KS
Gardner Neighborhood Library, 137 E. Shawnee St., Gardner, KS
Lackman Neighborhood Library, 15345 W. 87th St. Parkway, Lenexa, KS
Leawood Pioneer Neighborhood Library, 4700 Town Center Dr., Leawood, KS
Shawnee Neighborhood Library, 13811 Johnson Dr. Shawnee, KS
Spring Hill Neighborhood Library, 109 S. Webster, Spring Hill, KS
For more specific information, visit www.jocolibrary.org.

Wichita libraries: Wichita Public Libraries

Central Library, 223 S. Main, Wichita, KS
Alford Regional Branch Library, 3447 S. Meridian, Wichita, KS
Angelou Northeast Branch Library, 3051 E. 21st St., Wichita, KS
Comotara Branch Library, 2244 N. Rock Rd., Wichita, KS
Evergreen Branch Library, 2601 N. Arkansas, Wichita, KS
Linwood Park Branch Library, 1901 S. Kansas, Wichita, KS
Orchard Park Branch Library, 4808 W. 9th, Wichita, KS
Rockwell Branch Library, 5939 E. 9th, Wichita, KS
Westlink Branch Library, 8515 Bekemeyer, Wichita, KS
For more specific information, visit <http://www.wichita.lib.ks.us>.

Cedar Rapids: Cedar Rapids Public libraries

Cedar Rapids Public Library, 2600 Edgewood Rd. SW, Cedar Rapids, IA
For more information, visit www.crlibrary.org/.

Des Moines: Des Moines Public Library

Central Library, 1000 Grand Ave., Des Moines, IA
East Side Library, 2559 Hubbell Ave., Des Moines, IA
Forest Avenue Library, 1326 Forest Ave., Des Moines, IA
Franklin Avenue Library, 5000 Franklin Ave., Des Moines, IA
North Side Library, 3516-5th Ave., Des Moines, IA
South Side Library, 1111 Porter Ave., Des Moines, IA
For more specific information, visit <http://www.pldminfo.org>.



Cedar Rapids Public Library, in Iowa, has this display of FEMA disaster preparedness materials at its library through National Preparedness Month 2012. The display also features Flat Stanley and Flat Stella posters. Kids are encouraged to color coloring pages of Flat Stanley and Stella that will be displayed in the library during September.



Overland Park, KS, September 1, 2012--Gracia O'Brien, 4, of Shawnee, left, and Diego Juarez, 5, of Overland Park, color Flat Stanley and Flat Stella coloring pages and learn about disaster preparedness during the Hispanic Festival at Johnson County's Public Library on the first day of National Preparedness Month. *FEMA photos by Amanda Bicknell.*

Three Big Things Small Businesses Can Do To Prepare

If you own a small business and you think you can afford downtime, you may think twice after hearing what small business owners who faced Hurricane Isaac went through. Many of them had to close their doors as the Category 1 hurricane left more than 900,000 people and businesses without power for more than a week across Alabama, Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi. Last year, natural disasters caused millions in damages to small businesses throughout the U.S.

The SBA reports that there are more than 27 small businesses in the United States. Only half of them have a disaster business continuity plan. This makes it easy to see why so many businesses never come back after a disaster. Business resiliency is so critical for community recovery. Resilient businesses embolden communities to get back on their feet. Resilient businesses mean steady paychecks for employees and their families. Here are three tips that support resilient businesses:

- 1) Ensure data backups are complete: Each day, make sure your data files and those of your clients whom you serve are backed up, and ensure that your protection systems are in good health.
- 2) Check your offsites: Verify that all your backups are uploaded to the cloud, and make sure you use the most reliable and secure datacenters.
- 3) Review and exercise your business continuity plan: Exercise for the worst case scenario, and learn ways to recover data quickly. Ensure your staff and clients know how to function efficiently should a disaster require you to retrieve critical data from the cloud. More tips are available at Ready.gov/business.

BUSINESSES, START YOUR RECOVERY...



The time to plan your recovery is *before* disaster strikes.