

Speaker Biographies



Eric B. Kretz
Director
Continuity of Operations Division
National Continuity Programs, FEMA

Mr. Kretz has served as the Director for FEMA's National Continuity Programs Directorate, Continuity of Operations Division since November 2010, where he is responsible for lead agency integrated Continuity of Operations for U.S. Federal, State, local and Tribal Governments. Mr. Kretz manages integrated planning guidance, training, exercises, assessments and operational support to help ensure that Federal, State, Territorial, Tribal, and local governments can continue their essential functions, under all conditions. Prior to assuming responsibility as the Division Director, Mr. Kretz served in various management positions within the National Continuity Programs Directorate since 2002.

Mr. Kretz served in FEMA's recovery operations from 1998 to 2002. He held various management positions in providing federal individual disaster assistance, individual family grant disaster relief in coordination with State governments, cooperative disaster relief with the American Red Cross, and cooperative relief with international organizations for Kosovo operations in 1999.



Mr. Kretz began his government service in the U.S. Coast Guard. He is a graduate of the United States Coast Guard Academy and also studied as an exchange student at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Mr. Kretz's active duty service included six years aboard Coast Guard Cutters and three years on the staff of the First Coast Guard District Commander. Mr. Kretz served as the Commanding Officer of the Coast Guard Cutter Red Oak from 1991 to 1993. Mr. Kretz also served as an Aide to the First Coast Guard District Commander as well as on his operations staff.

Mr. Kretz left active duty Coast Guard service in 1993 and entered the manufacturing industry. From 1993 to 1998 he held several management positions in plastic container manufacturing including responsibility for the production of over \$60 million in annual sales.

Mr. Kretz holds a Masters of Business Administration Degree from James Madison University. He is a Master Continuity Practitioner, Continuity Excellence Series Level 2. He remains active in the Coast Guard Reserve. He and his family currently reside in central Maryland where he is active in several volunteer organizations in his community.

Thomas J. Hardin
Exercise and Training Manager
Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
Cook County, Illinois

Mr. Hardin has served as the Exercise & Training Manager in the Cook County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management since March of 2010 where he has diverse responsibilities spanning all phases of the county program in Operations, Planning, Logistics and Administration. He created and manages a comprehensive, multi-tiered, multi-phased training program for the professional development in the department and associated departments within Cook County. As with all the operations staff, Mr. Hardin is responsible for participation planning, training and exercises for the local, county and regional jurisdictions. As such, he was assigned to the Continuity of Operations Planning team lead by the Technology Department which is creating a COOP template for the many dozens of departments and agencies in Cook County.



Mr. Hardin has a distinguished and broad-based career of local governmental service. He held various management positions as Director of Cook County Department of Public Health Community Preparedness and Coordination Unit during the first 2009 H1N1 Pandemic and from 2001 to 2005 he was a Fire Lieutenant in the Village of Forest Park heading the Fire Prevention Bureau. Mr. Hardin is on staff with Southern Illinois University as a Visiting Associate Professor as part of the development team creating a new graduate degree program in Homeland Security and teaches

upper division Master Planning and Management in the Fire Service Management Program.

Mr. Hardin began his government service as a police officer in the Village of Forest Park while simultaneously joined the volunteer fire department. After six years of patrol he took a position as a full time firefighter in Forest Park and then volunteered as an auxiliary police officer.

Mr. Hardin holds a Masters of Public Administration Degree from Governors State University. He is a certified in the Professional Development Series by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, and holds many FEMA, fire service, and law enforcement certifications. He and his family reside in Forest Park where he is still active in volunteer organizations.



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