

# REGION 2 BI-WEEKLY

Vol. 3 Issue 9

May 13, 2011

## WHAT WE DO

The deserted hallways and darkened offices of 26 Federal Plaza belie the Region's frantic pace: our IMAT team has been in upstate New York for the past 10 days, surveying flood and tornado damage; a contingent of our Individual Assistance DAEs are supporting two disasters in Tennessee, and a Region II FCO is the Housing Branch Director for the devastation in Alabama. No wonder 26 looks deserted!

While the record number of tornados and historic flooding in the Southeast has rightfully dominated the news, upstate New York has likewise been hit. The storms began on/about April 25<sup>th</sup> with multiple tornadoes and confirmed touched-downs from April 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>.

Led by Tom Fargione, the seven mem-



ber IMAT has been doing PDAs with state and local officials, as well as the SBA, since May 4th, with 25 counties — from the St. Lawrence River in the north, south to the southern tier, and as far west as Niagara County — on their itinerary, according to IMAT Planning Chief Sam Benson. "It's more than half the state," Benson said, "And frankly it is taking a bit longer as we need to wait for the water to recede for safe access."

Thursday, the US Army Corp of Engineers declared a Flood Event for the Lake Champlain Area, and sent 65,000 sandbags to three flooding counties: Clinton, Essex and Washington. (see p.2)

Region II's IMAT recently received its evaluation from the Response Directorate's Training, Exercise and Doctrine (TED) Office: A+. "A lot of the other teams don't go out for PDAs," Sam said. "We do because it provides an excellent opportunity for training, and this far-flung operation has been great for us."

The importance of a well trained (and well managed) cadre is likewise evident in the Region's response to the tornadoes in Tennessee. (Region II provides 'turn-key' support to Region IV.)

Janice Barksdale, a DAE in IA based out of Puerto Rico, got a call from ADD late Sunday and was in the Initial Operating Facility (IOF) by Monday afternoon. As the IA Branch Director for both DR-1974 and DR-1979 she is overseeing the IA response to 10 eastern and five western counties respectively. She has a DRC staff of 42, including 27 from the Region, and at the JFO, 18 of the 23 people running the IHP program are also from Region II.

It's a sizable operation, and RA Lynn Canton cited IA Branch Chief Eileen Feikert for having such a well-trained and managed cadre that it could be stood up so quickly. "The call came in Sunday night, and even though Eileen was flat on her back with flu, she made it happen with her Blackberry," Lynn said.

"None of this could have happened without Leila Babb," Eileen demurred. "She and the cadre members themselves made it happen."

Region II FCO Justo "Tito" Hernandez is also supporting tornado survivors. He is the Housing Branch Director for DR-1971 in Alabama, and is in charge of "anything related to housing except the financial assistance," coordinating housing needs for the more than 50 percent of the state under a disaster declaration.



## Assisting Stakeholders: “FOLLOW THE MONEY”

Sean Waters was a last-minute addition to Senator Robert Menendez’s annual *New Jersey Conference of Mayors’* program last month, but not surprisingly PNP’s Integration Branch Chief was totally prepared.

Joining representatives of the Dept. of Commerce, EPA, HUD, and the NJ Redevelopment Authority, Sean led the Federal Resource Workshop segment of the conference, guiding more than 30 mayors through the various FEMA and other federal programs available to supplement municipal coffers.

He reminded the mayors that state, tribal, and local officials can obtain free-of-charge training at EMI, as well as no-cost training through the National Fire Academy and FEMA’s Independent Study Programs. All of which not only bolsters municipalities’ bottom lines, but also the safety and security of residents. “For every dollar spent on mitigation, \$4.00 is ultimately saved,” Sean pointed out.

Knowing that budget constraints may well reduce grant awards themselves, Sean advised the mayors to cast their nets wider than just FEMA, encouraging them to research and apply for *all* federal and state grants, and directing them to [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov), as well the FEMA website.

After the panel concluded, Sean was sought out by a number of mayors with requests specific to several Region II divisions. Sean took names – and numbers.

By the end of the following week, every one of the mayors’ questions were answered, according to Kellie Drakeford LeDet, Sen. Menendez’s Deputy Chief of Staff. “Sean did a great job in proactively informing the audience about FEMA, and sharing information of federal resources and funding opportunities that may be available to the perspective municipalities,” LeDet said. “We’re so glad he was there.”

Tupper Lake in Franklin County, NY, right, were among the towns toured by FEMA and state officials on their 25 county damage assessment tour (see p.1).



## ALERTS GO MOBILE

Tuesday, Administrator Craig Fugate joined New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, right, and top executives of cell phone carriers, AT&T, Sprint, T-



Mobile and Verizon’s CEO Ivan Seidenberg, above, to announce the next generation of emergency notification alerts. Called “PLAN” for Personal Localized Alerting Network, the new system will use a special chip in “enabled” mobile devices to alert users in real time what to do in case they are in the vicinity of an emergency.

Called a “quantum leap forward” in emergency notification, PLAN leverages GIS data to track users’ proximity to the event. “If there’s a terrorist bomb set to off in Times Square, you’d be able to tell everyone in the vicinity to get out of there,” one official said. The service will be available in New York City and Washington, D.C. by the end of the year and in the rest of the country by mid-2012, when cell phone companies have agreed to add the chip to all their wireless devices. The law mandating this initiative was passed by Congress five years ago.

“Given the kinds of threats made against New York City at the World Trade Center, Times Square and other places popular with visitors and tourists, we’ll be even safer when authorities can broadcast warnings to everyone in a geographic area regardless of where they came from or bought their phones,” Bloomberg said.

Tuesday’s press conference was held at the World Trade Center construction site, and was also attended by Region II Administrator Lynn Canton.



Fugate, above, meets with NYC CERT team members following the press conference.

# CAD TESTS COMMODITY PLAN



The Commodity Distribution Plan for Puerto Rico was tested in a full scale exercise held by the Caribbean Area Division (CAD) and the Puerto Rico Emergency Management Agency (PREMA) Thursday. The drill was designed to delineate the acquisition, procurement, storage and distribution procedures of emergency commodities immediately after an emergency or disaster.

PREMA's Logistics Chief, Oscar Sotomayor, standing, center left, instructed drill participants on the exercise scenario as FEMA staff distributed booklets with the exercise injects. CAD Director Alejandro De La Campa is at the extreme right.

"With this exercise we evaluate the functioning and the operation of the distribution of supplies in case of a major scale emergency that requires the activation of the distribution plan," said PREMA Executive Director Heriberto Saurí. "Also, we evaluate the procedures in case we have to improve the distribution plan."

Also participating in the drill were the PR National Guard, Port Authority, PR Aqueduct and Sewer Authority, GSA, Department of Transportation and Public Works, Public Service Commission, American Red Cross (ARC), PR Police Department, the Department of Treasury, and the PR Telecommunications Regulatory Board which tested their operational plans in support of the distribution process.

Hurricane Season begins June 1st.

## A TIMELY MITIGATION SUCCESS STORY



A home in Smithtown, Long Island, left, habitually flooded multiple times a year, due to being built in a high water table area with poor drainage.

For about \$40K, a 10x12 addition, show top right, was added to this older, bungalow-type structure to house the utilities, which were moved from the basement to the new, first floor utility room, lower right. The basement was then filled to grade to prevent the continuous flooding. Typically, health hazards — such as mold or mosquitoes — result from continuously wet basements.

"Mitigation doesn't need to be huge to be effective," says Hazard Mitigation Assistance Branch Chief Rob Tranter. "And it can be accomplished quickly. Sure, the home loses a basement, but a wet, flooded basement is not of much use."

Many upstate structures affected by the recent flooding (see p. 1) are similar in design, particularly in Warren County along the Schroon River, Tranter says.



# Late Breaking Announcements:

## A GOOD FRIEND PASSES

DEA John Dinan, who served in the Community Relations and, more recently, Logistics cadres passed away Sunday. John was a retired NYPD officer, who worked with FEMA since 9/11. Jason Wind remembers John as a great worker, a super intelligent guy and on a personal level, a really good guy.

A wake is being held today, Friday, May 13 at Nolan & Taylor-Howe Funeral Home  
5 Laurel Ave., Northport, NY 11768-3166  
Hours: 7pm-9pm

The funeral will be held Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup> 10:15AM at St. Patrick's Church , 400  
W Main St., Huntington, NY 11743

The Newsletter would welcome pictures of John and remembrances from friends  
and co-workers for the next issue.

## A GATHERING OF THE CLAN

Region II personnel and alumni will be featured at a conference on Emergency Management hosted by St. John's University this month.

Commissioner Joseph Bruno of NYC's Office of Emergency Management will kick off the conference on May 31, with a presentation on "OEM Ten Years Later."

This will be followed by a presentation by Larry Sommers, a former Region II DEA and FCO. Currently, Larry is Acting Director of the Recovery Division for Region V. His presentation will deal with "The Federal Response to 9/11 and the Role of the Federal Coordinating Officer." (He was in charge of our Region II Operations during the 9/11 response.)

Region II's Defense Coordinating Officer Robert Freehill will discuss "The Role of the Defense Coordinating Officer form 9/11 to the Present."

Lunch will be served during the full day conference, which begins at 9AM