

# REGION 2 BI-WEEKLY

Vol. 3 Issue 10

May 27, 2011

## LABOR-MANAGEMENT GAME CHANGER *Leadership Trained on Executive Order Mandate;*

The Federal Government's labor-management world changed last week, although it's unclear how many people noticed...

In December 2009, President Obama issued Executive Order #13522, formally changing the relationship between government workers and management. Last week the first training to implement that change in Region II took place. Attendees included Regional Administrator Lynn Canton; Deputy RA Mike Moriarty, and Mitigation Director Tim Crowley, as well as, the entire senior leadership of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), Local 2203. The four-hour training was conducted by the US Federal Labor Relations Authority's (FLRA) Senior Dispute Resolution Specialist Michael Wolf, assisted by FEMA's Deputy Associate Administrator for Mission Support Al Sligh.

This Executive Order mandates the **pre-decisional involvement** (PDI) of workers before workplace decisions are made, explicitly ending the reactive dynamic between labor and management. It seeks to do this by setting-up "non-adversarial forums for managers, employees, and employees' union representatives to discuss Government operations (that) will promote satisfactory labor relations and improve the productivity and effectiveness of the Federal Government."

Collective bargaining is the preferred, statutorily established, method for employees to participate in making the decisions that affect their working conditions. It is an effective form of PDI between management and employees, who speak through their union representatives, on matters the law requires be bargained. The Labor-Management Forums mandated by this Executive Order will complement (not replace) the existing collective bargaining process. In addition, these forums can consider any workplace-related issue, not just working conditions. The consistent, on-going engagement of management with unions is the spirit and intent of this Executive Order.

The President's Executive Order also requires "developing suggested measurements and metrics for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the (national) Council and department or agency labor-management forums in order to promote consistent, appropriate, and administratively efficient measurement and evaluation processes across departments and agencies."

While FEMA's national Labor-Management Partnership Council (LMPC) has been in place since 1993 — and has, with a similar mechanism in OPM, led the way for formal labor-management collaboration in the federal government — the introduction and mandating of PDI is the game changer. "Mandating PDI formalizes what we have been doing for years" Local 2203's Executive Committee noted, "Only now it's the law." Currently, FEMA's national LMPC meets with union representatives quarterly. Region II's labor-management 'forum' meets with RA Lynn Canton the first Monday of every month.

Members of the National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations support activities that advance the goals and objectives of the Executive Order. To this end, the first step in institutionalizing PDI is "training management and labor representatives on the pre-decisional process," said Deputy Associate Administrator Al Sligh. "We've partnered with the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) to promote the new Executive Order, and the FLRA has been providing the trainers."

"The training was an opportunity to review the Executive Order and decide how we can make it work in Region II," RA Canton said. "I look forward to our regional-management partnership improving the labor relations throughout the Region."

FEMA Region II was the final stop on their national tour of the six FEMA Regions with unions: II, III, IV, VII, and IX, and HQ. Regions without collective bargaining units will look for alternative ways to engage workers in the pre-decision process.

"Our presentation was well-received in Region II," Sligh said. "There appears to be an eagerness on the part of both the Union officials and the Regional Administrator to work together more productively."

### **AFGE, Local-2203 Executive Officers:**

**President:** Sharon Edwards

**V.P.:** Michele Sturman

**Treasurer:** Marcia Edwards

**Secretary:** Zandra Gill

**Chief Steward:** Angie Thompson, All Divisions and CAD

### **Chief Stewards' Team:**

**Mission Support:** Yvonne Colon; Cindy Patterson

**PNP:** Marshall Mabry; Aleatha Mudd; Warren DeTemple

**Recovery:** Jerry Dobinson; **Response:** Patrick Cornbill

# A TIMELY TOUR

By Chris Cammarata

With Japan's recent nuclear incident as a backdrop, Region II staff toured the Ginna Nuclear Power Plant in Ontario, NY last week, for an in-depth, behind the scenes look at the workings of a nuclear power plant.

Ginna is a Pressurized Light Water Reactor owned by Constellation Energy. It is one of the oldest reactors in the country, beginning commercial service in 1970. Its' operating license is good



through 2029.

Sara Gelves, Miriam Weston (front row, left to right) and I from REP, and Terry Winters from External Affairs (back row, left to right) got a chance to see the 'ins and the outs' of the nuclear power plant, as the reactor was shut down for scheduled maintenance.

We saw plant workers inspecting the reactor core, and these same workers being monitored remotely by health physics technicians to ensure proper safety precautions, making sure their exposure to radiation was within safety limits. We also walked through the turbine building, and inspected the various sections of the turbine and turbine-Generator.

The tour's highlight was the Control Room Simulator, designed to mirror identically the actual Control Room. Here Reactor Operators test their skills, running through various accident scenarios, and getting real-time experience dealing with a simulated emergency.

We also saw the various security improvements prompted by the events of September 11th, including a security fence, elevated guard posts, and a new security building that serves as a gateway for access to the owner-controlled area of the plant.

# STOCKING PEP

Region II hosted an Open House in Orange County, NY last week, to showcase its Prepositioned Equipment Program (PEP) to the more than 75 law enforcement and emergency management professionals from 36 agencies that attended.



*From left: Marine Corps Systems Command Director Edward Beban; NYS Senator John J. Bonacic; DHS Infrastructure Protection Regional Director Mary Raymond; and RII Deputy PNP Coordinator David Musick at Open House.*

The PEP program addresses the fact that the Nation still faces continuing threats from chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive weapons of mass destruction. State and local officials must have resources immediately available to sustain and replenish assets depleted by their initial response to a major attack.

To meet these critical needs, FEMA launched PEP, which consists of standardized equipment pods that are prepositioned in select geographic areas to permit rapid deployment to States and localities. Specialized equipment and frequently used off-the-shelf items are stored in pods, transportable by land or air after help is requested. This equipment is specifically tailored to sustain and reconstitute the capabilities of local and State first responders.

The 10, strategically-placed PEP depots situated across the continental US can respond to an incident in any major population area within 12 hours. PEP provides for immediate ground or air transportation of the first pod, as well as a team of support staff. If circumstances warrant a greater level of support, FEMA may dispatch additional pods. The Rockland site will service 500 square miles surrounding the NY metropolitan area.

# REGIONAL ROUND-UP

External Affairs Director Kristina Simpson, EA Deputy Don Caetano, right, and EA CAD Specialist Maria Davila provided JIC Training to 20 of the USVI's public information officers last week.

The class detailed both the new technologies for disseminating information, and the time-tested methods of collecting it before and after natural and man-made disasters. The course was held at VITEMA's new Emergency Operations Center on St. Thomas.



The Region gathered last week to celebrate the graduation of our Spring semester interns.

Each student was given the opportunity to deliver a brief presentation on their projects. (see list below) The Region then presented each intern with a certificate of thanks for their time commitment.

Regional Administrator Lynn Canton, center left, with (left to right) Anne Beth" Baker, Zachary Campbell, Laura Wierichs, Nicole Aimone and Sufiyan Saeed. Interns not pictured: Chantel Hamilton and Megan Ayscue.

Here is a list of their projects and supervisors::

**Preparedness Grants Management** (Nicole Aimone- Supervisor Tania Hedlund)

**International Relations** (Megan Ayscue- Supervisor Sean Waters)

**Outreach to Vulnerable Populations: Functional Needs** (Anne Elizabeth Baker-Supervisor Sean Waters)

**USVI Hurricane Operations Planning Synopsis** (Zachary Campbell-Supervisor Jose Dos Santos)

**Continuity of Operations** (Chantel Hamilton-Supervisor Russell Fox)

**Financial Grants Management** (Sufiyan Saeed-Supervisor Flora Moy)

**Threat/Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment** (Laura Wierichs –Supervisor Terra Flynn)

# CONFERENCE HONORS R-2 PARTNERS

## *NY, NJ Flood Plain Officials Cited by Peers*



The 2011 Annual Conference of State Flood Plain Manager (**ASFPM**) honored two good friends of Region II last week, when NY State DEC's Bill Nechamen, left, was elected to the ASFPM's Executive Board. Bill will be the ASFPM's Vice Chairman. He's been tasked with managing the committee structure of the 7,000 member organization. (Thirty state chapters, including NY and NJ, more than doubles the rolls, with an additional 8,000 floodplain managers represented.)

"This is an opportunity to break through the stove pipes," Bill said. "I hope to be very active, partnering with FEMA and the USACE, on policy issues nationally, and see how all our programs work together."

Bruce Funk, (right, center) the Flood Plain Manager for the Borough of Longport, NJ, received the 2011 ASFPM Larry R. Johnston Local Floodplain Manager Award last week, for his work in his own community and as an outstanding floodplain management advocate in the state of New Jersey.

This award recognizes outstanding individual efforts and contributions at the local level. The LRJ Local Floodplain Manager of the Year is designed to honor an individual responsible for the development of a distinguished local program or activity or one who struggles to implement flood hazard reduction at the local level.

Over the years, Mr. Funk has aggressively improved his community's flood resiliency. He updated its' Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, and successfully increased the community's CRS rating to a Class 8.



*Left to right: George Riedel, ASFPM Deputy Executive Director, Bruce Funk, Borough of Longport, NJ, Larry Larson, ASFPM Executive Director*