

REGION 2 BI-WEEKLY

Volume 2, Issue 11

June 18, 2010

CAD SUBMITS PA DISASTER REQUEST



Following torrential rains over the Memorial Day weekend — prompting flash floods, landslides and substantial damage to the public infrastructure — Puerto Rican Governor Luis Fortuño declared a State of Emergency June 2nd, and Caribbean Area Division (CAD) staff were quickly summoned to conduct Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) tours with the Commonwealth.

Over the course of their three day labors, the PDA teams documented more than 100 damaged roads (see above), among other infrastructure damage. CAD Director Alex De La Campa worked with the PREMA leadership to put together a request for a Public Assistance disaster in 10 municipalities.

‘SCUSE ME WHILE I KISS THE SKY’

Last week, Region II participated in “Rising Storm: Purple Haze,” part two of a continuity of operations exercise playing out over three years, which tests whether 45 federal agencies and 70 offices in New York City and Northern New Jersey can reconstitute operations after a catastrophic event.

Held under the auspices of the Federal Executive Boards of NY and Northern NJ, the exercise was designed to test emergency notifications, management’s timely arrival at a primary COOP site, reconstitution plans and staff’s ability to telecommute at a moment’s notice.

COOP coordinator Russell Fox reports that Region II performed with flying colors: 99% of Regional staff got the telecommute directive. Regional Administrator Lynn Canton, left, at Fort Monmouth COOP site.



EMAILS EX ETHIOPIA FACES OF THE REGION

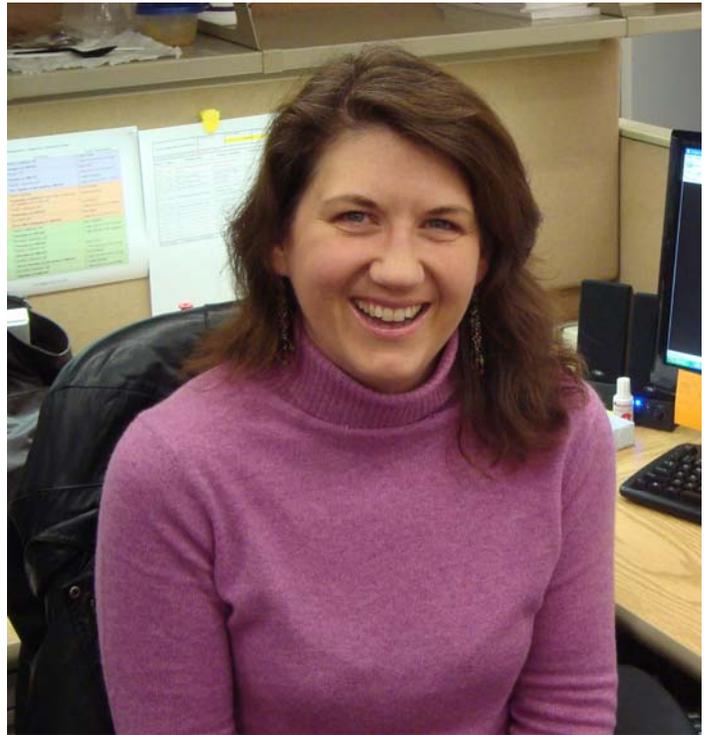
Editor's Note: Preparedness' Terra Flynn is in Ethiopia as part of an USAID-US Department of Agriculture team to help the Ethiopia strengthen its public sector capacity for disaster management. Guided by Region II's IT guru Blaine Frank, Terra was able to log into the FEMA intranet. What follows is his account of the early days of his deployment.

June 14: Things on this end are going well so far. Lots of time in the air coming over (14 hours) w a 4 hour layover in Frankfurt. International travel is significantly different from CONUS travel...I'm in the Capital (Addis Ababa), but everyone just calls it Addis.... This country is in bad shape. Just going out on a walk you get mauled by young kids begging for Birr (Ethiopian money). The old, the sick, the disfigured, it's everywhere you look. Yesterday a girl who was maybe 10 y.o. in rags and carrying a baby on her back begged me for 10 minutes as I walked w John Wendt (Forest Service guy-32 years). At first I thought the baby was a prop, but when I saw it was a living infant I had to dig out some Birr. And as soon as I did you get surrounded.

June 16: We conducted our first assessment today w the Early Warning System and Food Security gentlemen from the Oromiya Region (the biggest of 9 in Ethiopia). There were 9 Regional staff (all senior) and 4 from our team. A Fed from Ethiopia, John Wendt/retired US Forest Service, now a contractor, Adane Tesfaye a sharp 38 yo Ethiopian who has a Masters (which is a big thing over here), a few years w the Feds here and is now a contractor and me. After introductions, we conducted a 3.5 hour assessment of their Disaster Risk Management (DRM), capabilities using a Checklist comprised of many questions covering the range of DRM. I won't go into detail right now, but they've got a long way to go...That said the conversation was open & informative and everybody seemed to walk away hopeful. They are in the process of changing their National Strategy for DRM and these meetings will have a bearing on the final document.

June 17: Day eight on this African adventure-15 more to go. We sat down with the Deputy Minister of The Ministry of Health and 3 members of his staff. They have many issues including: none to limited email, no historical records/data that doesn't go back beyond 2005, limited funding and staff issues. They say malaria is their number one concern followed by Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD) or cholera and meningitis. They get most of their funding from UNICEF, US AID, HHS/CDC, and several NGO's.

It's rained every afternoon here and they say next month and August is their flooding season. I'm going to sign off and get some beauty sleep. Take care and be thankful to be living in America. Till tomorrow, Terra.



Colleen Jasinski made her debut as one of Region II's newest DAEs last month. She is currently assigned to the Response Division, and also assists Division Director Dug Salley.

Colleen received her Bachelor's Degree from SUNY New Paltz. Immediately after graduation, she settled in NYC to pursue a career in stage management for theatre. But in 1993, she left the city to complete a graduate degree at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. After receiving her MFA, Colleen headed west to San Francisco where she began a career in event management, riding the dot com boom – and the spectacular events that thriving industry promoted –to galas around the world, including such major cities as Paris and Berlin.

In 2003, after six years of California sun, the native New Yorker returned to New York City, where she built a freelance career in events management. Among her high-profile assignments were Super Bowls XLII (Phoenix, AZ) and XLIII (Tampa, FL), as well as the Major League Baseball All-Star Game at Yankee Stadium two years ago.

It was in Phoenix in 2008 that Colleen met Laura Swedlow, who urged her to use her organizational skills as a DAE for FEMA. Colleen's appointment was confirmed in January, and her work with Response is her first deployment.

On her off hours, Colleen is continuing her work in the theater. She recently appeared in an adaption of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in which she played Mrs. Vane, the suspicious yet concerned mother of the protagonist's love interest.



AROUND THE REGION:



New FCO Sworn In

Regional Administrator Lynn Canton (near left) administers the oath of office to John Long, Region II's newest Federal Coordinating Officer. John comes to FEMA after a 30 year career in the US Coast Guard, where he served as a helicopter pilot. His last posting was as Chief of Operations for the Pacific Area and Chief of Staff for the district that mirrors FEMA Region IX.

SELECTED AND STANDING BY...

Following an agency-wide solicitation, the Caribbean Area Division's Emergency Operations Planner Marie E. Gonzalez, pictured below, was selected as one of eight FEMA nominees for membership in the US Government's International Civilian Response Corps (CRC) – Standby Program. Over 42 FEMA employees submitted their resumes for consideration.

The CRC members were selected for their expertise in Mitigation, Response, Risk Analysis, Search and Rescue, Special Event Planning, Recovery, Assessment, and Preparedness.

National Security Presidential Directive-44 tasked the State Department to create the CRC to assist in international reconstruction and stabilization. If the need arises, DHS CRC-S members will be deployed to advise a host country, the US Chief of Mission in-country, Department of State and Defense Department officials on emergency management issues.



JUNE GRADUATES

Friday the Somerset JFO for DR-1897-NJ closed its doors, but not before the backbone of its staff (left) completed L-778, the JFO Middle Managers Training Course. The course covered the basics of NIMS and ICS, emphasized the important role middle management plays in planning, and reviewed management and leadership skills.