

# REGION 2 BI-WEEKLY

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## DR-1857: READY FOR YOUR CLOSE-UP?

The marquee of the movie theater in Gowanda (above), one of the hardest-hit communities along New York's southern tier which sustained torrential rains and flooding Aug. 8-10, thanked the hundreds of volunteers who helped residents until the presidential disaster declaration of Sept. 1. Individual Assistance was turned on



Sept. 4, and Region II's Community Relations teams (left, Yvonne Whiteley, Jose Fernandez) hit the ground running, canvassing devastated neighborhood during the Labor Day holiday. CR got out the word quickly, and FEMA inspectors, working throughout the holiday weekend, approved nearly \$1 million in disaster assistance by close of business Labor Day. FCO Jaime Forero at first All-Hands meeting below.



# STORM FIZZLES; RESPONSE COORDINATION SOARS

As Tropical Storm Erika churned towards Puerto Rico the first week of September, the RII IMAT-Caribbean Area Division (CAD) team geared up with the PR Emergency Management Agency's (PREMA) response activities.

It was **PREMA's first full activation during this hurricane season**, and it provided FEMA and the Government of Puerto Rico an opportunity to appraise current plans, actions and resources.

The year-round partnership of RII IMAT-CAD Lead Alejandro De La Campa (right) with PREMA Director Heriberto Saurí (left) ensured a coordinated pace during the Tropical Storm Erika response. As part of that joint emergency response undertaking, the RII IMAT-CAD Lead participated in planning and decision-making meetings, and in National Weather Service Director daily briefings to Governor Luis Fortuño (center, at podium) and his Chief of Staff, and Cabinet members.

In order to assist PREMA in the Commonwealth emergency communications strategy, IMAT-CAD Lead De La Campa joined PREMA Director, Governor Fortuño and Cabinet members in three press conferences. De La Campa highlighted the importance of individual and families all-hazards preparedness, and also explained the federal disaster declaration process.

The RII IMAT-CAD fine-tuned its readiness and completed key tasks within the first day of its activation. The RII IMAT-CAD swiftly co-located at PREMA's Emergency Operation Center (EOC) and was all set to tag on to the EOC's 24-hour operations and other related response activities.

The storm passed. The FEMA- Commonwealth team work continues.



## R2-IMAT IN USVI for Tropical Storm Erika's Response

As the National Hurricane Center's forecasts were placing Tropical Storm Erika closer to the Virgin Islands, on Thursday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> Region II's IMAT quickly deployed to support the Territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Upon arrival, the IMAT members joined the Virgin Island's Territorial Emergency Management's Emergency (VITEMA) Emergency Operation Center in to St. Thomas, which was already activated, and fully engaged in response operations

The next day, Tropical Storm Erika was downgraded to a tropical depression and did not represent a threat to the islands. Nonetheless, IMAT took the opportunity to train and discuss with VITEMA officials plans for future events.

Later that day IMAT FCO Phil Parr joined VITEMA's Director Mark Walters in a live interview on WXTS 970 AM "Straight Talk" radio program. Both Parr and Walters highlighted FEMA's and VITEMA's partnership in emergency preparedness, and the coordination with local and federal agencies.

Although Erika fizzled, Region II demonstrated it could coordinate a response and field teams in the two Caribbean locations simultaneously. By noon that day, the IMAT was all set to travel to the US after successfully accomplishing its mission.



## MAKING A LIST....



The National Preparedness Division hosted a workshop (above) on Target Capabilities Lists for federal, state, local, private sector and nonprofit organizations in the Region. The goal was to provide guidance for large-scale, non-routine events, drawing on the proven practices of prevention, protection, response, and recovery homeland security mission areas.

## 'THUNDERBOLT' SIGN-IN



Region II staff (above) sign in after being summoned to unannounced "Thunderbolt" exercise on Sept. 11, 2009. Participants report initial confusion, but all parties were eventually accounted for.

# FACES OF THE REGION



**Bernie Preisser** is a familiar face around Region II. He began as a DAE following Hurricane Katrina, and went on to work in the Region as a liaison to NYC for storm preparation. By 2007 he had joined Logistics, and was deployed following the Nor'easter, which prompted two simultaneous declarations in New York and New Jersey. Later that year, he was again deployed after a tornado and flood brought a declaration for portions of New York City.

Last year, Hurricanes Gustav and Ike brought Bernie to Louisiana, where he served as Logistics' liaison to Individual Assistance, coordinating the operation of the 11 M-DRC's that were deployed in response to those far reaching storms. Bernie cites this as his pivotal FEMA experience, bringing together his financial acumen with his commitment to helping others.

While a DAE, Bernie continued his career as a financial services professional with Mass Mutual, which he has been doing for the past 17 years. This position involves preparing individual financial plans for clients, running the gamut from estate planning to investment programs.

Bernie's business career started with Price Waterhouse & Company where he became a Senior Accountant and a Certified Public Accountant. He then joined American Export Lines where he was the Assistant Controller. Before joining Mass Mutual, he was at Bowe Systems and Machinery, the US subsidiary of a German Company, which manufactures Dry Cleaning Machines and high-speed mail inserting systems. Here he served as VP of Finance and later President of the company.

Bernie recently joined Region II full time, as a Financial Management Specialist in the Management Division.