

REGION 2 BI-WEEKLY

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R-2 HOSTS MITIGATION SUMMIT

Agency's Division Directors Talk Policy, Set Agenda



Region II hosted the two-day, bi-annual meeting of FEMA HQ staff and Hazard Mitigation Assistance Branch Chiefs from all 10 regions last week.

The meetings are held in a different region twice each year. They serve to generate a discussion of programs, and to better coordinate policy between HQ and the regions, according to Region II HMA Branch Chief Rob Tranter. "Essentially, the meetings were established to ensure that everyone is on the same page, and that all our customers are receiving the same support and the same information," Tranter said. The meetings also provide an venue to highlight what the division achieved in 2009, and to define priorities for 2010, Tranter said.

Last week's meeting focused on non-disaster grant programs, such as the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Assistance Program, Flood Mitigation Assistance grants, the Repetitive Flood Claims Program and the Severe Repetitive Loss Program. Representing FEMA headquarters were Chief of the Grants Policy Branch Cece Rosenberg; Chief of the Grants Implementation Branch Tony Hake, and

Deputy Chief of the Grants Implementation Karen Magno.

Among the regional concerns presented to the HQ staff was finding alternatives to state and local matching shares for the Hazard Mitigation Assistance programs. The cost share structure of HMA programs vary, but they typically require the federal government to provide 75% of the project cost, and the states and/or local governments provide 25%. In the current economic climate, many states are unable to budget their share or provide the staff necessary to administer the programs, Tranter said. Regional branch chiefs are seeking ways that HQ may be able to find ways to restructure the cost sharing provisions of mitigation grants in order to increase participation. Branch chiefs are also hoping to speed up the grant process by returning control of their financial administration to the regions.

While figures for the total amount of federal grant funding provided in FY2009 are not yet available, the government invested \$90 million on Pre-Disaster Mitigation grants; \$35.7 million for Flood Mitigation Assistance grants; \$10 million on Repetitive Flood Claims; and \$80 million on Severe Repetitive Loss grants.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN WITH NEW FLOOD MAPS

By Adie Koby

This month, the Risk Analysis Branch and the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Branch held five Open Houses in upstate New York, to field residents' questions about the new flood maps that are being introduced in Delaware, Schenectady, Tioga and Putnam counties. Over 800 people attended. These counties were among the most severely affected by the floods of June 2006, which prompted presidential disaster declaration DR-1650.

Our goal was to alert residents in these communities about the changes on their new flood maps, and to promote a deeper awareness and understanding of individual *and* community actions needed to reduce their risk for flooding. To ensure that all residents' questions would be fully answered, we worked with our state partners, NY state Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DCE), as well as insurance specialists.

Because we felt it was so important to get our message out, we weren't very picky about choosing the venues; our main concern was securing a site convenient for residents to ensure maximum turnout. We held meetings at Delhi State University, an Action Bar, county offices and a local EMO office.

In Delaware County, the meeting was scheduled for 2:00pm- 8:00pm. People started lining up at 1:00pm, and we were flexible enough that we could open the doors at 1:30pm. The venue, an Action Bar, was nearly transformed into a conference room, with our eight laptops, printers, posters and hard copies of flood maps strewn at the center of the room.

The crowd was very pleased with our services, and comments like "I got the information I was looking for" and "you guys are very organized" were overheard throughout. The team worked long hours, but we all felt that providing both answers and that 'little extra' customer service was well worth it.



FACES OF THE REGION



Tony DiMarco is the Region's new Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) Manager.

He recently retired as a Lieutenant Colonel from the US Air Force, where he had 20 years experience in Airlift Operations, Logistics Readiness and Contingency Response. As Operations Officer, 438th Mobile Aerial Port Flight, McGuire AFB, Tony was instrumental in the humanitarian airlift into Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, running all US airlift operations out of Split, Croatia. As Chief, Plans and Resources Division, US Air Force Expeditionary Center, Ft Dix, NJ, he deployed to the CENTCOM Deployment and Distribution Center, Camp Arifijan, Kuwait as Airlift Requirements Cell, Shift Chief where he was responsible for the validation of all airlift requirements supporting Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa.

Tony's last assignment prior to retiring, was as the 621st Contingency Response Wing, Chief, Plans and Operations Directorate. He was responsible for all Wing exercise/operational planning as well as the execution of all Wing operations. He had the opportunity to support FEMA operations during Hurricanes Dean, Ike and Gustav as well as Exercise VIGILANT GUARD.

Tony earned his Masters Degree in Telecommunications Management from the University of Maryland. He enjoys skiing, music and is an avid New York sports fan. He is originally from Hopatcong, NJ and currently lives in Springfield Township, NJ with his wife and two children.

Feliz Navidad

from the
Caribbean Area Division



Happy Holidays to All, and to All a Good Night...

