

REGION 2 BI-WEEKLY

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CAD IS VITAL LINK IN WATER INITIATIVE



Fostering collaboration between local and state governments is what we do.

Last week in San Juan, CAD Director Alex DeLaCampa brought together officials from the USVI with officials from Puerto Rico's Aqueducts and Sewage Authority (PRASA), including its Executive Director José F. Ortiz Vázquez (above left, with DeLa Campa right), VITEMA Director Mark Walters and USVI Water and Power Authority (WAPA) Director Hugo Hodge.

They met to discuss the water shortages the USVI may face in the wake of a disaster.

In addition to the potential purchase of bottled water from PRASA after an emergency, the group considered the possible construction of a water pipeline from Culebra, PR to St. Thomas, USVI. During a disaster situation, PRASA can produce up to 150,000 liters of bottled water per day, as they did for survivors of Haiti's earthquake earlier this year. PRASA can also supply the USVI with water year round, without affecting its distribution in Puerto Rico.

Next month, the group will meet again, along with the USVI Delegate and the PR Resident Commissioner, to assess the viability of a regional venture to construct the water pipeline and to research funding sources. FEMA has served as the 'honest broker' on this vital initiative.

RISKS DOMINATE RISC *Review of Preparedness' Program*

By John Kapsimalis

FEMA's *Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program* (RCPGP) dominated the agenda of the quarterly meeting of the Regional Interagency Steering Committee (RISC) last week in Albany.

RCPGP is a multi-million dollar program of FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate. It focuses on 10 high-risk urban areas nationwide, mandating "integrated, all-hazards planning for catastrophic events" in vulnerable, high density areas. Region II's oversight includes New York City, Newark and Jersey City, NJ, and Bridgeport, CT.

On Day One, RISC attendees heard a panel discussion of the seven major elements making up the RCPGP program: 1) Critical Infrastructure restoration; 2) Radiological Dispersal Device; 3) Sheltering; 4) Mass Fatality; 5) Disaster Housing Recovery; 6) Logistics; and 7) Debris Management. At the conclusion of each panel, attendees discussed the progress made thus far, and identified strengths, weaknesses and shortfalls of current initiatives.

Day Two centered on a table top exercise positing a nuclear detonation by terrorists in New York City, resulting in over one million deaths, two million injuries, 300,000 with radiation exposure and two million tons of debris. The exercise ended with the identification of logistical shortfalls and action items that will be researched further.

The members of Regional Catastrophic Planning Team include: NYC Urban Area Working Group, Newark/Jersey City Urban Area Working Group, NJ office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, Connecticut NYC Office of Emergency Management, NJ State Police / Office of Emergency Management, Westchester County Office of Emergency Management, Connecticut Department of Emergency Management & Homeland Security and the Suffolk County Office of Emergency Management. Significant input is also provided by our Regional ESF agencies.

A CD is being produced to document the meeting and its findings. It will include Power Point presentations and meeting minutes. Requests for this CD can be forwarded to this writer, John Kapsimalis, in the Disaster Response Division, reachable at 212-680-3663, or via email: john.kapsimalis@dhs.gov.

KEEPING THE STORMS AT BAY: HMGP PAYS OFF FOR LONG ISLAND TOWN



FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) helped a Long Island community dodge a bullet last March, when a nor'easter bore down on the northernmost tip of Nassau County, including the town of Bayville, NY. That's because 12 years ago, HMGP underwrote a storm drainage system, leaching pits and a retaining wall in the town, not only mitigating the affects of the March storm but also protecting its infrastructure.

The town's main drag, Bayville Avenue, is adjacent to Long Island Sound and had a history of erosion. Unchecked, that erosion threatened to cause a breach, or the total collapse, of the avenue, eliminating the only road into the neighboring Village of Centre Island.

HMGP funded the installation of an 800-foot retaining wall along the shoreline, which stabilized the area, and ensured residents of the Village of Centre Island would have access to critical facilities and emergency services during severe storms. Region II's David Mafriaci, a Mitigation DAE, and contractor Joe Fitzgerald, left to right, survey the work

above.

The grant program also funded a drainage project in an area bounded on the north by Long Island Sound and on the south by Oyster Bay Harbor, where severe flooding routinely recurred after significant rainfall and coastal storms. The flood waters, combined with higher than usual tides, often caused Long Island Sound to swell and back up along the village's north shore as there was no outlet for the tidal flood water.

To combat this problem, street drainage structures, leaching pools, overflow and outfall piping equipped with tidal check valves were installed. These enhancements permitted storm waters to drain into Oyster Bay.

"The benefit this work has provided to residents is significant," said Douglas G. Watson, mayor of Bayville. "The drainage system was designed to drain water from low-lying streets in the project area, and succeeded in preventing flooding from severe rain events, such as last March's nor'easter."

PIO SUMMIT: MESSAGES, TECHNOLOGY

This past week, the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management gathered many of its county and local public information officers from across the state to discuss the state's approach to public information during disasters -- including the use of social media and the NJ Alert system -- and the state's plans for September's Preparedness campaign.

FCO Bill Vogel provided an overview from NJ's recent disasters, recapping the JFO's efforts to ensure that the state-federal team reinforced a common message. A follow-up discussion centered on the importance of having county level PIOs quote their elected officials in their messaging, and the absolute necessity that information be accurate.

FEMA gave a brief overview of its use of social media during the NJ disasters, particularly the Region II Twitter account. Many NJ stakeholders were concerned about the validity and effectiveness of the information that comes from Twitter. In fact, NJOEM has stopped all social media outreach efforts until more specific guidelines are drafted by the state's attorney general. Under Administrator Fugate's direction, FEMA has aggressively moved towards the use of social media during disasters, and at last week's summit, Region II provided NJOEM with its SOP documents and supporting legal agreements to help speed the process of getting New Jersey back on-line.



Currently, NJ Alert remain the state's premier vehicle for getting immediate messages out to the public during a crisis. The system is a free, national program that organizations and users can use to receive text messages and e-mail messages in real time during an emergency. Users can register for different groups to only receive messages of interest to them. If their personal data shows that they live in New Jersey, they will automatically receive any emergency messages being put out by NJOEM. For more information on the system you can visit www.njalert.com.

WITH HEARTFELT THANKS



Work came to a standstill in the executive offices this morning, as Regional Administrator Lynn Canton presented a sympathy card, letter of thanks, and photo montage of longtime Congressional "sage" Nestor Llamas to his son, Robert, left, and his daughter and her husband, Debbie and Philip Morris. The photo montage was signed by Regional staff.

Administrator Canton noted that FEMA is an extended family that shares their grief, noting all who worked with Nestor were honored by that privilege, and inspired by both him and his selfless public service.