Hope

By J. David Smith
Executive Director

Trust, reliance; to cherish a desire with anticipation and expectation of obtainment. As a state motto, HOPE as written, sometimes inscribed on a building façade, is a ubiquitous term that is sometimes taken for granted. In most cases HOPE defines the spirit of our people. We embody an emotion, attitude and belief that somehow we will find a way that is both reasonable in expectation and without unreasonable anticipation.

Emergency Management can be a very structured world and thankfully the procedures, best practices, and formal checklists all make us better prepared to respond and recover from any disaster. However, all of the planning and practice does not always prepare us for the devastation that can be palpable, visible, and in some cases mean loss of life. There is another aspect of devastation that is emotional and sometimes resonates years after the homes and lives of survivors have been rebuilt.

HOPE, as of now in Rhode Island, is also an acronym for Helping Other People in Emergencies. RIEMA was proud to serve as a co-applicant with Director Craig S. Stenning our State Mental Health Authority. Through Craig’s leadership and dedicated staff, the state has been successful in obtaining more than $2.1 million to support flood-related crisis counseling programs. Susan Earley, Rhode Island Disaster Behavioral Health Coordinator will serve as this program director.

Today (6 August 2010) marks a transition from an active Joint Field Office (JFO) where at one time there were more than 300 federal partners working 24/7. A section of the building at 30 Plan Way will still provide a work environment for as many as 20 federal employees, predominantly from FEMA Region 1 in Boston. These folks will remain as liaisons with RIEMA and will assist with the work that still remains to be done. RIEMA and FEMA are just as strong in partnership and resolve as ever to finish the job and provide every penny of financial support possible. We are resolute in our goal to apply what has been learned by the Great Floods of 2010 and implement successful long-term community recovery plans and effective mitigation strategies. The closure of the JFO was inevitable but coincided with the completion of 95% of all project worksheets submitted by communities and state agencies requesting Public Assistance dollars.

Closure of the JFO means losing some of our logistics, security, and other support partners but it marks the beginning of new programs, new friends, and provides a true sense of pride and accomplishment for those who now know they made a difference.

Thanks to everyone who have provided us with HOPE and reasons to believe in each other. Only coincidentally has the closure of the JFO opened another door for RIEMA. Our new Regional Administrator Don Boyce started officially last week and has already made his presence, expertise, and his enthusiasm felt in Rhode Island. Look forward to his leadership in our region for years to come. Don previously

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served as the Emergency Management Director in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and in that capacity as a colleague and friend. We wish him great success in this new venture and pledge support and HOPE from this great State of Rhode Island.

For months we have celebrated the growth of RIEMA and occasionally the opportunity for some of our staff to be recognized for their talent and ability. There are some remarkable people that work mostly behind the scenes to provide fiscal, logistical or administrative support. Bunmi Okele has been working tirelessly behind the scenes in our fiscal office to provide reports and other essential fiscal products to keep us in order (columns and rows). Bunmi has been recognized by her selection from a highly competitive process and accepted a new position at the Rhode Island Department of Health. We wish her great success in her new endeavor.

As always, see you next month…

Children are not Immune to Disaster Stress

WARWICK, R.I. – It is important for parents and guardians to understand that children can be particularly vulnerable to stress following disaster events such as the recent floods. Children may suffer from anxiety because of disaster losses and the upheaval of family life.

“While children tend to bounce back quickly with social support and the aid of their families, it is important to be aware of your child’s reaction to stress and anxiety and seek additional help if necessary,” said Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Federal Coordinating Officer Craig A. Gilbert.

According to Craig Stenning, director of the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals, “Children’s reactions to the flooding and the aftermath are strongly influenced by how their parents, teachers, and other caregivers cope during and after the events. Children often turn to these adults for information, comfort and help.”

Pool openings and ‘beach season’ may also trigger stress in children, with the water reminding children of the disaster event.

Caregivers should be alert to signs of trouble and how to handle them.

After a crisis, children below the age of 5 may cry more frequently than usual, become clingy, have nightmares, show excessive fear of the dark, fear of animals, or fear of being alone. Appetites may change. Children may speak with difficulty or revert to behaviors such as bed-wetting or thumb-sucking.

Children ages 5 - 11 may exhibit increased irritability and aggression, and compete with siblings for parental attention. They may also show anxiety through whining, withdrawing from their peers, and losing interest in normal activities. Those aged 11-18 may display outright rebellion, physical problems, and sleep disturbances.

The following suggestions may help to reduce stress in children:

• Spend time each day giving each child undivided attention, even if just for a few minutes. Share experiences. Reaffirm your love. Make plans together. Just “be there” for each other.

• Encourage them to talk. Encourage children to describe what they are feeling. Let them talk about the disaster and ask as many questions as they like. Listen to what they say. Assure them that the disaster was an act of nature and not caused by them. Include the entire family in the discussion, if possible.

• Understand their fears. It is important that parents accept anxieties as being very real to children. Help them understand what causes their anxieties and fears. Recognize their losses, such as their pets, favorite toys and other personal items. Reassure them that everything will be all right.

• Explain what is going on. Make every effort to keep children informed about what is happening. Explanations should be in simple language. With children 5 or older, rehearse safety measures for use in case of future disasters.

• Reassure them. Parents can help reassure children by telling them they are safe, holding and hugging them frequently, restoring normal routines, providing play experiences and making bedtime a special moment of calm and comfort.

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WARWICK, RI— The town of Bristol has reached a major milestone. It is the first jurisdiction to submit, have approved and formally adopt a hazard mitigation plan during Rhode Island’s presidentially-declared disaster (DR-1894). The adoption follows an extensive technical assistance and outreach process coordinated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) in response to the spring 2010 floods.

Hazard mitigation planning involves assessing risks and vulnerabilities associated with natural disasters and strategizing to develop long-term plans for protecting people and property from future hazards.

RIEMA and FEMA collaborated to provide support and technical assistance to Bristol officials who were preparing their hazard mitigation plan and continue to provide assistance to jurisdictions across the state.

“RIEMA was instrumental in connecting us with FEMA,” said Diane Williamson Bristol’s director of community development. “I was so happy when I got a call from a hazard mitigation planner who said: ‘I’m from FEMA and I’m here to help,’ that is when I had a huge sigh of relief.”

Under the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2K), state, tribal and local governments are required to develop a hazard mitigation plan as a condition for receiving disaster assistance. To be in compliance jurisdictions must review and update their plan every five years. With a FEMA approved plan in place, Bristol is now eligible to receive certain types of disaster assistance including Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM), Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP).

“The storm was terrible and a lot of people were impacted by the damage, but the silver lining is that there is a lot of grant money out there,” Williamson said. “Communities should take advantage of this unique opportunity to get assistance from the FEMA team, submit their plan for approval, then get in line for grant applications.” Approval of Bristol’s mitigation plan also enables the town to gain credit under the Community Rating System (CRS), an incentive program that encourages floodplain management activities that exceed National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements. Jurisdictions receive discounted premium rates if they meet three CRS goals: reducing flood losses, facilitating an accurate insurance rating, and promoting the awareness of flood insurance.

“Getting Bristol’s plan approved and adopted as quickly as they did is a testament to the hard work of the town’s planners, emergency managers and community,” said RIEMA Executive Director J. David Smith. “We hope other communities will use Bristol as a model on how to do it right.”
Disaster Preparedness is now a Game

There are at least three new games dealing with the topic of emergency preparedness. This is the first from a company in Maine. Stay tuned, two more are coming.

Elevate your readiness with the Disaster Game!

The Disaster Game is a tool that uses game play to create unique and engaging exercises that make preparedness training flexible, instructional, and fun.

“The Disaster Game is a way to increase BCP/DR awareness in any organization. As we all know, the events of a disaster can change with each passing hour and/or day. This game definitely keeps the participants on their toes and engaged.”

“...the realistic scenarios made the game compelling. (Stuff) happens and the game reflects this truth.”

Disaster Game, LLC - tools & services that elevate your readiness

www.DisasterGame.com

The Family Preparedness Toolkit uses game play to create detailed and realistic disaster scenarios that help your family prepare for the unexpected.

The Toolkit also includes a Simple Steps Guide to Family Preparedness which guides you through the creation and maintenance of a crisis response plan for your family.

find out more at: www.DISASTERGAME.com
Are You Ready?

By Deputy Director Edward Johnson

No, not for Monday night football, which given this baseball season would be a welcomed change, but for the next hurricane, rainstorm, flood, power outage etc.

As of this writing at the beginning of August, the center of tropical storm ‘Colin’ is located approximately Latitude 14.0 north … Longitude 47.2 west, with a projected path that could bring it right up the east coast. ARE YOU READY? Dr. Dennis Mileti, a specialist in social behavior specifically with respect to emergency messaging, recommends repetition as a key for getting us to act before, during and after an event. So, ARE YOU READY? Although social expectations today suggest that somebody needs to come help me now in a disaster, the reality is, we all need to be able to sustain ourselves and our families for about 72 hours before the “cavalry” arrives. So, you guessed it, ARE YOU READY? (is this annoying yet? …. that’s the point). What is your personal plan, how would you evacuate your neighborhood, do you have an elderly or special needs neighbor who may need your help, have you looked at your insurance policy lately, what about your pets, food, water, medicine, important documents etc. etc. etc.?

June 1st was the official beginning of hurricane season; here it comes … ARE YOU READY? If the answer is, probably not, the good news is that there are lots of resources to help you prepare. Beginning with www.riema.ri.gov or www.fema.gov or www.gethurricaneany.org, you are certainly not alone in the process of preparation. So please, take a few minutes and get ready!

Vote For RIDART as Your Favorite Community Project

LET’S GET SOME GOODNESS GOING ON!™ IN OUR HOMETOWN AND HELP DECIDE WHICH FIVE ORGANIZATIONS WILL SHARE A $100,000 SPONSORSHIP FUND

KENNEBUNK, Maine, August 4, 2010 – Tom’s of Maine is asking for the public’s vote to determine five non-profit organizations that will each receive $20,000 through its “50 States for Good” initiative. This year, the “50 States for Good” program drew submissions from every state with a special focus on non-profits that need volunteers to help get important projects started in their community or to broaden their reach. These projects can be found at www.50statesforgood.com, where voting runs today through September 10.

With the intention of featuring 40 finalists in celebration of the company’s 40th anniversary, Tom’s of Maine actually found itself with a tie after the independent judging process; so, 41 community projects have been selected as finalists.

Be sure to cast your vote for RIDART. They do a terrific job taking care of your beloved pets. www.50statesforgood.com

State Emergency Operations Plan

RIEMA is continuing the process of revising the State Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). Emergency Support Function (ESF) meetings will resume following RIEMA’s response to the March 2010 Historic Floods.

An ESF #1 – Transportation partner meeting will be held in late August to work on a final version of ESF#1. Anyone interested in attending this meeting should contact Regional Planning Coordinator Theresa Murray at 462-7336.
Dear Mr. Kass,

I am a long time volunteer for the Boy Scouts and am currently serving on the council committee for the Netop District of the local Narragansett Council. I am the founder and organizer of an annual event called the Merit Badge College. As an employee of Raytheon in Portsmouth, I hit on this concept in 2004 as a means to promote my company and to foster community volunteerism amongst my fellow employees. Since then, the event has grown from its first year attendance of 230 scouts to last year’s attendance of 864. We are planning for 1000 scouts at the next college.

As well, since our beginning we have grown from only volunteer Raytheon employees, to now involvement of other companies and community organizations. These volunteers come together to teach workshops for the scouts in one of over 50 different merit badge topics. All are subject matter experts. This year we are adding volunteers from the RI Veterinary Medical Association, the Small Business Development Council at Johnson & Wales. Other organizations include RGB Architects, the RI Association of Professional Land Surveyors and the local Plumbers and Painters Unions.

At one time we had representatives of the RI EMA teaching a workshop in Emergency Preparedness Merit Badge. When the state’s budget crisis began a few years ago, they were no longer able to continue. After reading the story in the Journal today, I am writing to you to invite the EMA to participate again. The 7th Annual Merit Badge College will be on January 22, 2011 at Rhode Island College. Hopefully the state’s financial status will not keep a volunteer or 2 from your organization from stepping forward?

Joe DelPonte
Chairman, Merit Badge College Committee

This Course Required to earn the Eagle Scout Rank

1. Earn the First Aid Merit Badge.
2. Do the following:
   A. Discuss with your counselor the aspects of emergency preparedness:
      1. Prepare for emergency situations
      2. Respond to emergency situations
      3. Recover from emergency situations
      4. Mitigate and prevent emergency situations
      Include in your discussion the kinds of questions that are important to ask yourself as you consider each of these.
   B. Make a chart that demonstrates your understanding of each of the three aspects of emergency preparedness in requirement 2a (prepare, respond, recover, mitigate) with regard to 10 of the situations listed below. You must use situations 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 below in boldface but you may choose any other five listed here for a total of 10 situations. Discuss this chart with your counselor.
      1. Home kitchen fire
      2. Home basement/storage room/garage fire
      3. Explosion in the home
      4. Automobile accident
      5. Food-borne disease (food poisoning)
      6. Fire or explosion in a public place
      7. Vehicle stalled in the desert
      8. Vehicle trapped in a blizzard
      9. Flash flooding in town or in the country
      10. Mountain/backcountry accident
      11. Boating accident
      12. Gas leak in a home or a building
      13. Tornado or hurricane
      14. Major flood
      15. Nuclear power plant emergency
      16. Avalanche (snowslide or rockslide)
      17. Violence in a public place
   C. Meet with and teach your family how to get or build a kit, make a plan, and be informed for the situations on the chart you created for requirement 2b. Complete a family plan. Then meet with your counselor and report on your family meeting, discuss their responses, and share your family plan.
3. Show how you could safely save a person from the following:
   A. Touching a live household electric wire.
   B. A room filled with carbon monoxide
   C. Clothes on fire.
   D. Drowning using nonswimming rescues (including accidents on ice).
4. Show three ways of attracting and communicating with rescue planes/aircraft.
5. With another person, show a good way to transport an injured person out of a remote and/or rugged area, conserving the energy of rescuers while ensuring the well-being and protection of the injured person.
6. Do the following:
   A. Tell the things a group of Scouts should be prepared to do, the training they need, and the safety precautions they should take for the following emergency services:
      1. Crowd and traffic control
      2. Messenger service and communication.
      3. Collection and distribution services.
      4. Group feeding, shelter, and sanitation.
   B. Identify the government or community agencies that normally handle and prepare for the emergency services listed under 6a, and explain to your counselor how a group of Scouts could volunteer to help in the event of these types of emergencies.
   C. Find out who is your community’s emergency management director and learn what this person does to prepare, respond to, recover from, and mitigate and prevent emergency situations in your community. Discuss this information with your counselor and apply what you discover to the chart you created for requirement 2b.
7. Take part in an emergency service project, either a real one or a practice drill, with a Scout unit or a community agency.
8. Do the following:
   A. Prepare a written plan for mobilizing your troop when needed to do emergency service. If there is already a plan, explain it. Tell your part in making it work.

B. Take part in at least one troop mobilization. Before the exercise, describe your part to your counselor. Afterward, conduct an “after-action” lesson, discussing what you learned during the exercise that required changes or adjustments to the plan.

C. Prepare a personal emergency service pack for a mobilization call. Prepare a family kit (suitcase or waterproof box) for use by your family in case an emergency evacuation is needed. Explain the needs and uses of the contents.

9. Do ONE of the following:
   A. Using a safety checklist approved by your counselor, inspect your home for potential hazards. Explain the hazards you find and how they can be corrected.
   B. Review or develop a plan of escape for your family in case of fire in your home.
   C. Develop an accident prevention program for five family activities outside the home (such as taking a picnic or seeing a movie) that includes an analysis of possible hazards, a proposed plan to correct those hazards, and the reasons for the corrections you propose.
Governor Carcieri
Thanks FEMA Employees for Flood Efforts

Governor Donald L. Carcieri joined Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency Director David Smith on a visit to the FEMA Joint Field Office (JFO) in Warwick on Thursday, August 5, 2010, at 11:30 a.m., to thank the more than 50 FEMA employees who are based in Rhode Island to assist with flood recovery.

The JFO will officially close today, Friday, although FEMA will continue to maintain a presence in Rhode Island for coordination of long-term flood recovery and mitigation assistance. At the height of operations, FEMA had more than 300 employees based in Rhode Island to assist residents, businesses, and government with flood recovery and relief efforts.

Governor Carcieri presented FEMA Coordinating Field Officer Craig Gilbert with a proclamation of appreciation for all FEMA did to help Rhode Island through the historic floods.

With Change Comes New Opportunity

By Amy Grzybowski

Throughout the past several months, since we learned we were moving to Virginia, I began seeking employment for the year. For all of you that know me, you know that I am not the type to sit at home for the next year and not do anything! As we made the move down here to Virginia, however, I have since received and accepted an offer that will take me beyond the next year.

After four and a half years, I will be leaving RIEMA for a private sector opportunity that will allow me to grow professionally. I cannot express enough gratitude for the support and opportunities that I have experienced over the past several years. I started at RIEMA fresh out of college, with little experience, and feel that I now have a working knowledge of emergency management that can only grow with more experience and education – both of which I intend to pursue.

I want to thank everyone who I have worked with from local, state, and non-profit agencies. It is amazing to me the amount of different agencies and people I have had the pleasure of working with while at RIEMA. I have had the opportunity and pleasure of watching RIEMA grow and thrive under Director Smith. In 2008, RIEMA was at an all time low of about 16 employees and now they are bustling with 35 employees.

To watch and be a part of the response and recovery effort of the March 2010 Floods was an amazing opportunity and a tribute to all the first responders, state agencies, and non-profit agencies that pulled together to get the job done. I do know and respect, however, that it is still a continuing effort.

Though it is bittersweet for me to say my goodbyes, I hope that in my new capacity I may still have the opportunity to work with some of you, and we know how small Rhode Island is – I am sure upon our return to Rhode Island next year, I will bump into many of you somewhere!
**Children and Disasters cont.**

- Encourage activities with their peers. As with adults, social time with friends is a very important part of the recovery process.
- Temporarily lower expectations. Allow for the fact that stress from the disaster can show itself in many ways over a period of time and make appropriate allowances.

Through your persistence, children will realize life will eventually return to normal. If a child does not respond to the above suggestions, seek help for them from a behavioral health professional. Help can be accessed 24/7 through Rhode Island’s statewide 211 telephone referral system.

RIEMA accepts delivery from FEMA of a trailer full of shelter supplies that will be prepositioned at CCRI. 600 cots are among the many items included.

**RIEMA is now on Twitter: RhodeIslandEMA**

**Understanding and Planning for School Bomb Incidents (UPSBI)**

*Sponsored by the RI Emergency Management Agency*

*Conducted by the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology*

**Date:** Tuesday, Sept. 28, 2010

**Location:** Radisson Airport Hotel, 2081 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886

**Times:** 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**Questions?**

If you have any questions Regarding this newsletter or any articles that have appeared in it, please contact:

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