



# MEMO



*A joint publication by N.C. Emergency Management and the N.C. Emergency Management Association*

## Forum Draws Crowd to New SEOC

Nearly 300 state and county emergency managers and State Emergency Response Team partners gathered at the new State Emergency Operations Center January 18 for the biennial forum. The one-day meeting provides EM practitioners an opportunity to discuss recent events, current initiatives and future programs.

Department of Public Safety Secretary Reuben Young welcomed the group and described the progress and plans for the newest state agency as work continues to consolidate three departments into one. N.C. Emergency Management Association President Gordon Deno stressed the importance of solid partnerships among EM practitioners, local agencies, as well as local, state and federal government entities.

Meteorologist Nick Petro from the Raleigh National Weather Service briefed the group on this year’s winter storm potential. (Bottom line: we remain in a La Nina pattern for 2012, which means less potential for frigid temperatures and big snow storms, but North Carolina historically has had more tornadoes during La Nina events.) Mike Cook, NCEM Western Branch Manager, Greg Shuping, Terry Young and David Breedlove – emergency management directors for Haywood, McDowell and Swain counties respectively – discussed how the western counties prepare for and respond to winter storms.

Other presentations provided an overview of the N.C. Helo-Aquatic Rescue Team program, a progress report on hurricane and tornado recovery efforts, an update on career development and training programs and a review of WebEOC performance in recent events.

Between sessions, forum participants toured the new SEOC to see first-hand how response and recovery operations will be coordinated during emergencies and disasters.

“The forum had an interesting and full agenda that left me wondering how we could cover it all in one day,” said Mary Beth Newns, Currituck County’s EM Director. “But it was an eventful day with quality speakers. And the facility tour was the highlight of the day! The new space is beautifully constructed and tastefully decorated incorporating state-of-the-art equipment for what seems to give the SEOC great functionality.”



*Above: Gordon Deno, NCEMA President, addresses NCEM Forum participants. Below: Elaine Wathen, NCEM Asst. Director, leads a group in a tour of the new SEOC.*

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## Pensacola Volunteer Fire Department Gets HazMit Grant

Yancey County last month was awarded a grant by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and North Carolina Emergency Management under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to acquire and demolish the Pensacola Volunteer Fire Department. Federal funds will pay for most of the grant; the state will pay the 25 percent non-federal match.

The current fire department building has been plagued by flash flood events from Cat Tail Creek for many years. Once this project is complete and the VFD is moved to a new location, fire and emergency response operations will no longer be hampered by dangerous flooding.

The county will use the grant to acquire and demolish the current Pensacola VFD building, located at 80 Cat Tail Creek Road in Burnsville. Proceeds from the acquisition will help subsidize construction of a new facility in a nearby location that is safe from flooding. Once the current VFD is acquired and demolished, Yancey County will apply a deed restriction to the property to hold it in “open space in perpetuity;” a federal regulation that guarantees that no future flood losses will occur again on that property.

Yancey County Emergency Management and the Pensacola VFD plan to build a new one-story building with handicap access on property purchased last year. The facility also will be designated as a shelter for the Pensacola community during disasters.

For more information, contact Bill Davis, Yancey County Emergency Management Director, 828-678-9463.



*Left: The Pensacola Volunteer Fire Department has been plagued by repeated flooding. Right: The Cat Tail Creek overruns its banks hampering response capabilities for the first responders.*

## Update on the Emergency Management Certification Program

In 2010, the N.C. General Assembly passed legislation establishing the Emergency Management Training and Standards Advisory Board to provide oversight of emergency management certification programs. Last March, Secretary Young appointed seven members to the board.

Representing the local emergency management agencies are Don Campbell, from Guilford County; Jo Ann Smith, of Carteret County; and Jerry VeHaun, from Buncombe County. Gary Cornett of Biltmore Estate represents private industry on the board. Dianne Benton, Steve Sloan and Mike Sprayberry, all of NCEM, represent the state’s interests.

The board is working to revise the certification program by moving away from specific required courses and incorporating an open curriculum based on number of hours completed. The approach is similar to that of the Certified Emergency Manager Program, which is managed by the International Association of Emergency Managers. The board also has identified goals for this new program and will discuss the recommendations at the NCEMA Spring Conference.

## Solid Planning Reduces Community Risks

*By Callion Maddox, NCEM Hazard Mitigation*

One of the most important aspects in preparing for a disaster is knowledge of a community’s natural hazard risks.

Last year, the NCEM Hazard Mitigation Branch worked with local communities to help identify and assess the level of risk associated with various hazards. The resulting plans not only characterize natural hazard risks, they also enable communities to identify possible precautionary actions that can help reduce the impact of those hazards, making the community more resilient in future disasters.

In recognition of the benefits that mitigation planning provides, and as a condition of receiving mitigation funds, federal and state laws and regulations require communities to formally adopt a hazard mitigation plan and then update it every five years. During the past two years as many of the state’s plans expired, the Hazard Mitigation Branch staff worked tirelessly to make sure that each community completes necessary updates in order to be eligible for mitigation project funds.

The team has made tremendous progress. In one year’s time, the number of plans approved and adopted by both the state and communities has soared from 33 percent to 80 percent! Although a few communities still have outstanding plans, staff have made considerable progress toward ensuring that all communities are eligible for this valuable assistance.

Mitigation Branch staff plan to build on their progress.

“We have taken great strides to reach out to local communities and help them better understand their overall hazard risk,” said Callion Maddox, branch planning supervisor. “And we will continue those efforts to help each community identify appropriate measures to reduce their impact from hazardous events.”

Plan Status	Jan. 2011 Plan Numbers	Jan. 2012 Plan Numbers
Unsubmitted	30	7
Under NCEM Review	20	2
Under FEMA Review	17	8
Approved Pending Adoption	19	10
Approved and Adopted	43	102
Total	129	129

## Dedication for new SEOC Slated for Feb.10

North Carolina’s new National Guard Joint Force Headquarters and State Emergency Operations Center will be officially dedicated Feb. 10.

The four-story facility houses command staff for the National Guard and Emergency Management. Of that, 43,000 square feet has been developed as the new SEOC, which includes a large situation briefing room, breakout rooms for each emergency function, a Joint Information Center, media briefing facility and Governor’s Hotline.

In addition, communications centers for Emergency Management, the Highway Patrol and NCDOT’s traffic congestion management and turnpike operations are co-located together in the building.

Construction began in May 2009 and was completed last fall. Staff from the National Guard, Emergency Management and DOT moved in between October and December.



## Civil Air Patrol Joins Emergency Management

By Maj. Andy Wiggs

While the Civil Air Patrol members and cadets have long supported emergency response and recovery operations, the group officially became part of N.C. Emergency Management division Jan. 1 as part of the creation of the Department of Public Safety.

“The Civil Air Patrol members routinely work with EM at the county and state level to help with missing person searches and provide early damage assessments following major storms,” said NCEM director Doug Hoell. “They are vital state emergency response team partners and I’m thrilled to have them join the division.”

The Civil Air Patrol was founded in 1941 as the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force. In its early days, the group helped the Air Force hunt U-boats. Since then, the CAP has evolved to include three congressionally mandated missions: aerospace education both its members and the public; cadet programs to develop youth leaders; and emergency services to aid in search and rescue missions, disaster relief operations and homeland security missions.

In North Carolina, CAP supports federal, state and local governments in a wide range of activities. These include supporting search and rescue missions by air with 10 Cessna aircraft located around the state or on the ground with more than 150 trained ground searchers (including 30 SAR Tech II and 3 SAR Tech I). Additionally, trained Points of Distribution teams are available to support local governments after disasters supplying vital commodities to citizens and support with aircraft to include over flights, disaster recon, and communications support.

Civil Air Patrol volunteers train regularly during weekly meetings, monthly unit training and major quarterly exercises. Most members are trained in the incident command system, which allows them to augment state and local incident management teams in times of emergency.

For more information, contact Lt Col Lucy Davis or Maj Andy Wiggs at 336-570-6894.



*Above: CAP Cadets and members participate in a point-of-distribution training. Below: CAP members provide support during a disaster.*



## Update on the NCEMA Spring Conference

By Gary Jones, NCEMA Director

Planning continues for the North Carolina Emergency Management Association 2012 Spring Conference, to be held March 11-14 in Sunset Beach.

One track of breakout sessions will be designed for those who have recently joined emergency management. Also, members of the radiological emergency preparedness community will have a separate gathering Tuesday morning.

A significant change for this conference includes Wednesday afternoon sessions that will be geared to **both** the response community **and** to other local government officials. The program includes an accelerated “ICS-402: Overview for Executives/Senior Officials” class. Also, several general sessions will focus on: the extent and limitations of local authorities under a declared state of emergency; identifying vulnerable populations; and the application of the Functional Needs Support Services/Americans with Disabilities Act upon disaster response and recovery activities.

Eight classes or workshops are being planned in conjunction with the conference. Some are set for Monday and Tuesday afternoons (running concurrently with breakout sessions), while others will begin Wednesday or Thursday and continue the rest of the week. Information will be available in TERMS once classes are finalized.

More conference details will be published to the NCEMA website <https://ncema.renci.org/default.aspx> as they are available. For more information, contact Gary Jones at 919- 369-4181 or [gjones007@nc.rr.com](mailto:gjones007@nc.rr.com).

## **More than \$75 Million Aids Irene Survivors Communities Receive \$92 Million**

As Hurricane Irene made landfall near Cape Lookout August 27, North Carolinians braced for the worst storm the state had seen in 12 years. Irene caused seven deaths, injured dozens, destroyed hundreds of houses and damaged thousands others.

In the six months since, more than \$75 million in state and federal aid has been paid to families and business owners in the 38 federally-designated counties to help them recover and rebuild from the category one hurricane. Another \$92.4 million has been paid to government agencies and non-profit organizations through the cost-share Public Assistance program to help them rebuild damaged infrastructure and recoup some of their storm-response costs. The state's share is expected to be approximately \$32 million.

Tragically, many of the counties impacted by Irene were also struck by the April tornadoes. Thousands of people registered with FEMA to seek temporary housing assistance, ask about disaster unemployment assistance, seek crisis counseling or legal aid. Survivors with additional needs were referred to partner agencies such as the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army and the Small Business Administration.

The following is a snapshot of the disaster recovery effort:

- More than 16,800 households received \$33.7 million in federal or state grants to help pay for temporary housing, replace personal property and pay for certain other disaster-related needs not covered by insurance or other aid.
- More than \$42 million in SBA low-interest loans for home owners, renters and business owners.
- More than 35,000 survivors contacted the Federal Emergency Management Agency for help or information regarding disaster assistance.
- More than 27,700 home inspections were completed.
- 194 families were provided temporary manufactured housing units by FEMA as the state's request

## **Six Months After Irene, State and FEMA Continue Helping Families Outreach Team Secures Additional \$5.6 million to Help with Unmet Needs**

Through a collaborative initiative, North Carolina Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency have secured an additional \$5.6 million in disaster assistance to help individuals and families recover from Hurricane Irene.

“For many North Carolinians, Irene has become a distant memory,” said state Emergency Management Director Doug Hoell. “But some families are still trying to pick up the pieces and rebuild their lives. Through this recovery outreach program, we’ve been able to help more than 1,500 individuals or families with unmet needs from the disaster.”

Since early November, special recovery outreach teams have combed the 38 counties designated for disaster assistance. The teams, comprised of employees from North Carolina Emergency Management and FEMA, have provided advice and counseling on topics ranging from how to correctly fill out paperwork to helping survivors obtain assistance with their unmet needs caused by the disaster. Workers also have helped applicants with the

appeal process, explaining letters they may have received from FEMA and assisting applicants with gathering the documentation needed for their recovery.

In some cases, workers helped families get food stamps, find local child or mental health services, or get volunteer labor to help repair damaged homes. They also have helped dozens of the families find clothing, furniture and appliances to replace what was destroyed by the flood waters.

Their work has paid off. Literally.

To date, the state and FEMA have approved more than \$75 million in grants and loans for individuals and families, including \$5.6 million that is a direct result of the outreach initiative. That initiative netted survivors \$3.4 million in FEMA grants, \$1.9 million in U.S. Small Business Administration loans and an additional \$254,000 in cash or in-kind donations from faith-based, non-profit or other charitable groups.

“We know there are survivors who still need our help,” said Federal Coordinating Officer Michael Bolch. “This face-to-face initiative helps to ensure that those people are getting the maximum grants they are eligible to receive. We want to ensure that no stone is left unturned, because so many lost so much.”

## **April 2011 Tornado Aid to Survivors Tops \$20 Million \$27 Million Goes to Governments**

A series of 25 tornadoes that wreaked havoc across central and eastern North Carolina last April 16 killed 24 people, injured more than 130 others, destroyed or damaged thousands of others. Twenty counties received a federal disaster declaration to help homeowners, renters, business owners, local governments and non-profit organizations recover from the devastation.

In the nearly 10 months since, North Carolinians have received more than \$20 million in federal and state disaster assistance grants and loans.

Additionally, more than \$27 million in federal Public Assistance funding has been paid to state agencies and local governments in the 20 declared counties to help them repair and replace storm-damaged infrastructure, buildings and equipment. Public Assistance is a cost-share program in which the Federal Emergency Management Agency pays 75 percent of the cost of eligible projects and the state pays the 25 percent nonfederal share.

The record-breaking storms are expected to cost the state an estimated \$9 million to help its citizens and communities recover.

### **Tornado Recovery Snapshot**

- More than 3,400 households have received more than \$10 million in federal or state grants to help pay for temporary housing, replace personal property and pay for certain other disaster-related needs not covered by insurance or other aid.
- More than \$2.3 million to help individuals replace personal property and pay for certain other disaster-related needs not covered by insurance or other aid.
- More than \$9.9 million in U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) low-interest disaster loans for homeowners, renters and businesses.
- Nearly 9,800 people contacted FEMA for help or information regarding disaster assistance.
- More than 6,300 home inspections were completed.
- 35 families were provided temporary manufactured housing units by FEMA at the state’s request.

## **Guilford Schools and First Responders Partner to Improve Safety Plans**

The Guilford County School System is comprised of nearly 70,000 students at 123 public schools in the Greensboro City, High Point City and Guilford County school districts. The system also includes middle colleges that send students to college courses at A&T State, Bennett College, Greensboro College, Guilford Tech and High Point University.

Needless to say, keeping that many faculty and students safe is a daunting task and tremendous responsibility.

That is why 35 academic and emergency management officials recently participated in a two-day class to learn how to develop planning teams that can recognize potential hazards (and the resulting possible damage) that present the greatest risk to schools.

As with many school systems, the biggest concerns for the group were violence, gangs and drugs on campus. As part of the course, participants heard presentations by SBI Agent Eric Tellefsen on how to deal with an active shooter on campus, and by Dr. Melissa Reeves on using school psychologists to help identify and prevent school violence issues. Dr. Reeves also stressed the need to heal and recover from a disaster, whether it was manmade or natural.

While Guilford already has an all-hazards emergency plan in place, school officials and first responders felt it was important to train together to update the plan and identify issues that may pose ongoing challenges to the growing school system. During the two-day class, the team determined that:

- Different assistant superintendents for each of the five districts could present challenges with consistency.
- Consensus in developing safety policies is needed.
- Aging buildings and facilities can present safety challenges, but with tight budgets this challenge will likely continue and may increase.

During the class, two local events seemed to reinforce the value of having a solid all-hazards emergency plan for the school system. A school resource officer (and one of the class participants) responded to a hostage situation on school property and a sheriff's deputies were called to respond to a nearby hazmat spill. While both incidents ended peacefully, they emphasized importance of having updated plans in place.

NCEM Training Officer Bill Chamberlain credits Guilford emergency management officials, Don Campbell and Eric Griffin, and county school officials and law enforcement with making the training so successful.

Originally developed by FEMA, the Multi-hazards Emergency Planning for Schools course (or G-362) was adapted and administered by N.C. Emergency Management to give local agencies and organizations the knowledge, skills and tools necessary to develop effective plans for any type of school emergency. The course is designed for school administrators, principals, first responders, teachers, students and bus drivers.

NCEM first offered the multi-hazard emergency planning course for schools in 2001 to help schools develop better plans to adequately respond to any emergency on campus. Since then, the division has taught the course in 29 counties to nearly 1,500 school administrators, safety officers, principals and assistant principals.

For more information or to schedule a class, contact Bill Chamberlain, 919-825-2261.

## Spotlight on Felicia Price, NCEM

*By Quinn Woolard*

For the last 12 years, Felicia Price has served as the administrative assistant for N.C. Emergency Management's Planning and Homeland Security Section. She originally had planned to stay in Florida following her 1997 graduation from Pensacola Christian College, but family roots brought her back to North Carolina and subsequently to NCEM in 1999.

During this time, she has become familiar with the federal and state laws concerning on-site chemical storage under the Emergency Planning Community Right-to-Know Act. In fact, she actually covered the vacant position for several years and was crucial to keeping the program alive and in touch with the public.

Felicia is great at keeping everyone in the Planning and Homeland Security Section on track, thanks to her wide variety of



*Felicia Price (center) in a self-photo with her three children Marshall, MaKenna and Christa underneath a beach pier.*

administrative talents. She recently expanded her skills by becoming a super user for the Microsoft SharePoint program and has actively been searching for ways to increase efficiencies throughout the division using the program. She is a tremendous resource for NCEM.

When not at work, Felicia stays busy with church activities, watching college basketball and caring for her three children, Christa, Marshall and Makenna. For over six years, Felicia has been a dedicated Sunday School teacher at Beacon Baptist Church in Raleigh.

As November approaches, Felicia settles deeply into college basketball. She is a die-hard Duke Blue Devils basketball fan and has been following the team for over 30 years, since she was a small child. Her children are now the third generation to continue this family sporting tradition.

In her spare time, Felicia enjoys recreational photography. This past year she won a weekly award in the State Fair blog for an adorable picture she submitted of one of her daughters attending the annual fair.

Felicia stays busy with her three children and their array of activities which include soccer, football and dance classes. Her oldest, Christa, is 13. Middle child, and only son, Marshall, is 10, and her youngest, Makenna, is 6.

The family enjoys traveling, especially in the early spring or late winter, to the southern Outer Banks for quiet, fun vacations. They also enjoy traveling to the North Carolina mountains periodically to see the sights.

Price says she loves her work and the people she works with at NCEM. She really enjoys assisting and working with Planning Support Branch employees.

“I wouldn’t trade them for anything,” Price says. “They are like family.”

## Counties Showcase Local Talent and Attractions



Seventeen counties have submitted an array of art that features some of their natural beauty, geographical features and attractions while highlighting local artisans. Contributions to date have included oil paintings, photographs, watercolors, wood carvings and photo collages.

“North Carolina is blessed to have some of the most beautiful and diverse people, scenery and topography,” said NCEM Director Doug Hoell. “Having the work of so many talented artists in the Emergency Operations Center is truly inspiring for both visitors and staff.”

The pieces line the corridors of the new Emergency Operations Center providing visitors and State Emergency Response Team partners with a virtual tour of the state.

Hoell said they hope to eventually have pieces from all 100 counties, plus the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to help portray the rich diversity of the state.

If your county is interested in submitting art for the collection, contact Julia Jarema at 919-825-2270 or [jjarema@ncem.org](mailto:jjarema@ncem.org).

*Brian Parnell (top) Northampton County’s Emergency Management Director and Ann Keyes (bottom) Washington County’s Emergency Management Director proudly show off art that represents their counties.*

