



# Partners in Preparedness

## Region VIII RISC

*The November RISC emphasized working together toward common goals.*



Under the direction of the executive committee, the November 2009 RISC meeting built upon the foundation laid in Salt Lake City this past July. In addition to important issue-focused presentations, we continued the hands-on task of

developing and testing concepts for the Utah Catastrophic Earthquake Plan.

The one-and-a-half day schedule included presentations from subject matter experts on H1N1 preparedness and response,

(continued page 2)

### *From the Chair..*

For the past year, the Region VIII RISC has undergone a sort of metamorphosis. It has developed into a collaborative, issue-focused forum with its doors open to not only our federal partners, but for those of us from local, state, tribal, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

Let me step back for a moment and take this opportunity to share some of our successes from the year. In November of 2008, we asked for your feedback on what you would like the RISC to become. You identified a number of issues, including an integrated planning approach across the federal and state level, catastrophic planning, information on pandemic flu planning, mission assignments, and increased focus on the National Response Framework and the role of ESFs.

Based on your input we changed the RISC format, focused on catastrophic planning and ESF roles, encouraged more local participation, formalized work groups and increased operational partnering. Most importantly, we've made a commitment to you; one that we intend to grow in the future.



*- Kristi Turman*

### **RISC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Kristi Turman**, Director; SD Office of Emergency Management and Executive Committee Chair

**Dan Alexander**, Director; Denver Office of Emergency Management & Homeland Security, the Denver UASI and Executive Committee Deputy Chair

**Michael Beard**, Emergency Manager; CENWD-DDE, US Army Corps of Engineer



**Robert DesRosier**, Deputy Director; Emergency Management, Blackfeet Nation

**Doug Gore**, Acting Regional Administrator; FEMA Region VIII

**Joe Moore**, Director; Wyoming Office of Homeland Security

**Pamela Sillars**, Colorado Emergency Preparedness Partnership

**Vacant**, Voluntary Organization



**REGION VIII RISC CONTINUED...**



**Hard at Work:** Command & General Staff (above) and Emergency services (below) breakout groups during the Utah Catastrophic Plan Table-Top Exercise.



incident management teams, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, community preparedness best practices, expectations when working with the media, and the impacts of space weather on the region. The afternoon of Nov. 17 was dedicated to validating key planning concepts for the ongoing Utah Catastrophic Earthquake Plan through a tabletop exercise facilitated by SRA International.

During the exercise, participants took part in a general session overview of the plan and goals for the exercise. Participants then disbursed into functional working groups based on Emergency Support Function (ESF) roles and responsibilities.

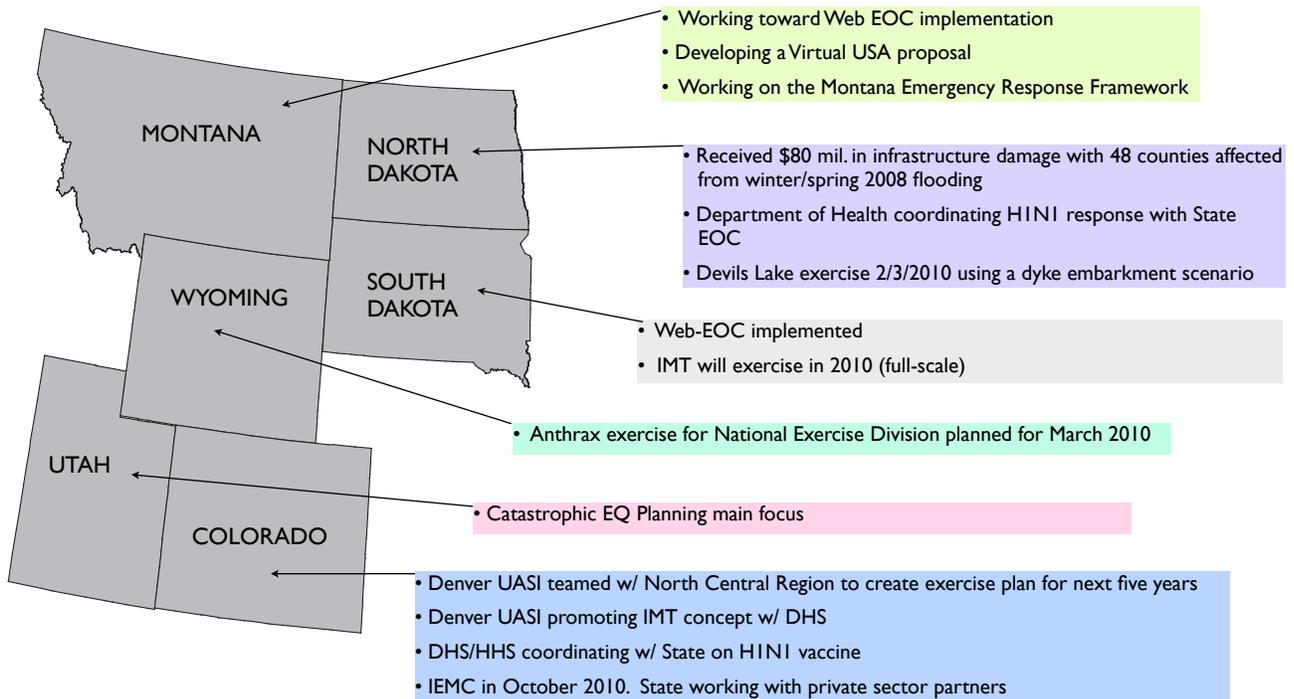
They shared best practices and identified resources and tasks involved in responding to a magnitude 7.0 earthquake along the Wasatch Fault in the Salt Lake City area.

Although focused on a catastrophic event in Utah, participants quickly realized that assets from around the region would be the first line of response. They also realized that collaborative efforts benefit the entire region by not only identifying common goals and procedures, but by building working relationships at all levels of government and with external partners.



**SAVE-THE-DATES:** Next RISC: March 31 - April 1, 2010 at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds (Denver metro area). The following meetings will be in Salt Lake City July 20-22, 2010 and Nov. 16-18, 2010 in Denver, Colo.

**STATE AND URBAN AREA SECURITY INITIATIVE (UASI) ACTIVITIES**





### INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM (IMT) OVERVIEW: REGION VIII HIGHLIGHTS

Lanney Holmes, FEMA Region VIII NIMS Coordinator

Tim McSherry, Incident Commander, Jefferson County IMT

**B**orn out of a recommendation from the Regional Advisory Council, FEMA Region VIII

created an initiative that was folded into its strategic plan to promote the creation, maintenance and interoperability of Type III all-hazard IMTs throughout the region. This initiative is supported by all six states and Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) areas in the region based upon feedback during a workshop held in March 2009.

To formalize the structure of the Type III IMT project, a committee for all-hazards IMTs was established. All of the region's six states and UASI areas are currently working on creating Type III IMTs and are represented on the committee. Efforts are underway to formalize tribal representation as well. Under the auspices of the IMT RISC working group, this committee makes recommendations to the Region VIII Regional Advisory Council.

Moving forward, the IMT committee will seek to provide position specific training and general policy to assist our six states where needed. To be successful in the long-term, the committee must incorporate team training, mentoring and cross-functional training into its practices.

In Colorado, Jefferson County serves as an example of the IMT structure in practice. While a Type IV event happens every day, a Type III is more complex and requires a written Incident Action Plan for each operational period. Most local capabilities are exceeded and the response level elevates to the point where Incident Command System (ICS) positions will be matched to meet the complexity of the incident. Most of Jefferson County has wildland and urban interface that requires an IMT in the response effort.

The Jefferson County IMT completed its first training in October 2001. Command and general staff train as a team at least four times per year (this includes over 20 agencies from fire, law enforcement, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service and Colorado State Forest Service). Since 2002, Jefferson County IMT activations have been mainly during the fire season.

The main advantage of the IMT structure is that a quicker response is possible for local events; increasing cost effectiveness, improving recovery and reducing the need for a Presidential Disaster Declaration.

For more information, please contact Lanney Holmes at [Lanney.Holmes@dhs.gov](mailto:Lanney.Holmes@dhs.gov).



### U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION 101: SECURING BORDERS, FACILITATING LEGITIMATE TRADE AND INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

Chuck Huthmaker, Chief Customs & Border Protection Officer, Office of Intelligence & Operations Coordination, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Since Hurricane Katrina, and more recently the Presidential inauguration, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has been an integral player in the mission of

the Department of Homeland Security. The CBP defends American borders against all threats and is the line of defense for ports of entry into the United States. CBP is one of the first agencies with "boots on the ground" and can respond very quickly to any disaster anywhere in the country.

After 9/11 the issue of border security gained focus and many changes have been made. In the intervening years, this responsibility has been consolidated into U.S. Customs and Border Protection. CBP now participates in the ESF-13 mission for FEMA Regions VI and VIII with the U.S. Department of



Justice Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF).

With a presence in 56 ports of entry in 33 countries around the world, CBP has electronic surveillance on 85 percent of the trade destined for the United States. The CBP administration alone has 56,000 employees with an additional 44,000 badged and armed officers in service.

New technologies, such as non-intrusive inspection systems, sensors, video surveillance cameras, unmanned aerial systems, and the advanced passenger information Interpol interface provide critical help in CBP daily missions.

A current issue facing CBP is violence along the southern border (due in part to low seizure rates

from staffing shortfalls) as drug cartels from South and Central America attempt to gain access into the United States.

For more information on CBP, or how they are involved in the ESF-13 mission in Region VIII, contact Chuck Huthmaker at [charles.huthmaker@dhs.ic.gov](mailto:charles.huthmaker@dhs.ic.gov).



## HiN1 PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

Dr. Zachary Taylor, Regional Health Administrator, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

LCDR Ron Pinheiro, Regional Emergency Coordinator, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

The novel Influenza A HiN1 virus was first detected in the U.S. in April 2009 and the

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) immediately began planning to respond to the spread of the virus. Early in the season (spring 2009) there was a rapid rise in cases with another spike in the fall. Currently, HHS is starting to see a decline in cases nationally, but they caution that a third phase of the virus is still anticipated in January/February 2010.

To date, 200,000 cases of the virus have been recorded with 30,000 deaths. Pediatric hospitalization rates are higher than any other group (72 percent of which had additional risk factors), while the virus does not seem to have an impact on people 65 years or older.

Other important notes to consider are that the HiN1 strain of the Influenza virus is part of what we see every season, but that the virus keeps mutating. So far the CDC estimates 22 million cases worldwide.

Dr. Zachary Taylor or LCDR Ron Pinheiro can be contacted at [Zachary.Taylor@hhs.gov](mailto:Zachary.Taylor@hhs.gov) or [Ronald.Pinheiro@hhs.gov](mailto:Ronald.Pinheiro@hhs.gov).



## WHAT ONE COMMUNITY CAN DO TO BE BETTER PREPARED: THE HERITAGE EAGLE BEND STORY

Bill Lane, Chair, Emergency Preparedness Committee for Heritage Eagle Bend Community

Deanne Criswell, Coordinator, City of Aurora (CO) Office of Emergency Management

Located in Aurora, Colo., the Heritage Eagle Bend Community is primarily senior-occupied, but considered one of the best prepared communities in the nation. Bill Lane, chairman of the community's Emergency Preparedness Committee, initiated basic preparedness activities throughout the community, and coordinates monthly meetings as needed to address important issues.

Priority actions of the committee include developing evacuation plans and creating emergency

stockpiles of essential supplies for the community. Additionally, a survey was developed to assess the needs of the nearly 1,500 homes and identify community assets such as doctors, nurses and medical supplies. This basic survey had an 85 percent response rate and helped identify training and supply needs for the community. Every new resident currently receives a copy of the survey while funding from the state and local hospitals has made it possible to procure equipment, generators and radios for the community in the event of an emergency.

In 2007, the Heritage Eagle Bend Community won the Tri-County Public Health Hero of the Year Award. For more information, please contact Bill Lane at [twobadgers@comcast.net](mailto:twobadgers@comcast.net).





### EXPECTATIONS WHEN WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Lynn Kimbrough, Office of the District Attorney, Denver, Colorado

In today's environment, you can find information anywhere. Knowing how to control that information to relay your organization's goals and activities requires an understanding of how the media works, especially during a disaster response.

Based on the size and scope of the disaster response, the

dynamics and interest of the media will vary. Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc) are almost essential in today's world to relay information. In some ways, Facebook has become the new face of e-mail. It is critical to include crisis communication as part of the planning process. In the absence of concrete information about a disaster the media will often rely on unofficial sources.

In order to instill public confidence and relay critical aspects of an emergency response, agencies need to be proactive in reaching out to media outlets regarding response activities.

Make sure you have good intelligence on what is happening during the response, and utilize partnerships to verify information whenever possible.

In a disaster response, your credibility is your most important asset. By using some caution, and being proactive in your approach, you can successfully manage the expectations and information needs of most media and the general public.

For more information on working with the media, please contact Lynn Kimbrough at [lynn.kimbrough@denver.city.org](mailto:lynn.kimbrough@denver.city.org).



### SPACE WEATHER PREDICTION AND IMPACTS OF SOLAR STORM ON THE U.S.

Bill Murtagh, Program Coord. & Space Weather Forecaster, NOAA Space Weather Prediction Center  
Joseph Kunches, Space Scientist, NOAA Space Weather Prediction Center

During the sun's most active periods, solar wind disturbances (created by coronal mass ejections and flares) impact Earth's magnetosphere, producing large magnetic storms lasting one or more days. These storms have been known to seriously damage electric power networks; affecting communications, damaging satellites and other technology-reliant systems.

Geomagnetic storms induce electrical currents that can have a significant impact on electrical transmission equipment. Power companies have procedures in place to mitigate the impact of geomagnetic storms, but a worse-case scenario would result in a widespread blackout for a significant period of time. On March 13, 1989, in Montreal, Quebec, six million people were without commercial electric power for nine hours as a result of a geomagnetic storm. In October 2003, power blackouts in Sweden and significant transformer damage in South Africa were attributed to

geomagnetic storms. FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate recognizes the potential threat space weather and peak solar activity pose. He has designated FEMA Region VIII to work with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Space Weather Prediction Center in Boulder, Colo. as a center of excellence for space weather prediction. Together, FEMA and NOAA are working in conjunction with the European Union on a best practice approach to geomagnetic storms.

A workshop is scheduled for February 2010 in Boulder, Colo. that will focus on communication and coordinated response during a solar event.

For more information, or to subscribe for real-time updates on space weather, please contact Bill Murtagh at [bmurtagh@noaa.org](mailto:bmurtagh@noaa.org).





**WORKING GROUP BRIEFS**

**COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS WORK GROUP**

Contact: Stephanie Poore, FEMA Region VIII  
[stephanie.poore@dhs.gov](mailto:stephanie.poore@dhs.gov)

The Community Preparedness Work Group reported to the RISC on several activities:

- Channel 4 Denver and the American Red Cross, together with FEMA, promoted a \$1 per hour “Ready Kit” contest
- National Preparedness Division and FEMA External Affairs held a Jeopardy-style game for National Preparedness Month
- CO and MT developed Fire-Ready Series
- SD & UT partnered with FEMA for booths at their state fairs
- Girl Scouts have partnered with FEMA nationally to develop a preparedness patch

**CRISIS COMMUNICATION/EXTERNAL AFFAIRS WORK GROUP**

Contact: Derek Jensen, FEMA Region VIII [derek.jensen@dhs.gov](mailto:derek.jensen@dhs.gov)

The Crisis Communication/External Affairs work group briefed the following activities:

- SA Tools site to share external affairs resources has been developed
- Agencies are developing checklists for key actions in catastrophic disaster response
- Plan to work with local media in UT to get a better sense of capabilities and to strengthen partnerships with the media to help inform the public during a disaster

**CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE WORK GROUP**

Contact: Joe O’Keefe, Protective Security Advisor  
[joseph.okeefe@dhs.gov](mailto:joseph.okeefe@dhs.gov)

The Critical infrastructure Protection Work Group has focused on these key areas:

- Energy/electricity
- Water/waste water
- Telecommunication
- Transportation
- The Automated Critical Management System (ACMS) was utilized during an exercise to help evaluate assets.

Additionally, they are working to support policies and procedures of Incident Management Teams (IMT) to identify hazards in the private sector.

**TRIBAL RELATIONS WORK GROUP**

Contact: Scott Logan, Deputy Coordinator, FEMA Region VIII, National Preparedness Division. [scott.logan@dhs.gov](mailto:scott.logan@dhs.gov)

The following details tribal activities in the Region VIII States:

- CO - Southern Ute’s partnered with state for an Operations Course
- MT - FEMA helped sponsor and participate in an annual HazMat conference
- ND - Focus is on the impacts of flooding. There have been more disasters declared here than any other state
- UT - Activity has focused on grants assistance
- WY - FEMA Logistics and National Preparedness are in Riverton regarding a POD project
- SD - Focus has been on housing with assistance from Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

**Tell Your Story**

Do you or your organization have information that would be valuable to the RISC?

Are you looking for a way to tell the region about the good work you are doing?

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

Future issues of this newsletter will feature a “partners in preparedness” section that will highlight the good work from federal, state, local, tribal, non-governmental and private sector entities in the region.

For more information, contact Daniel Nyquist at [daniel.nyquist@dhs.gov](mailto:daniel.nyquist@dhs.gov).



**Test Your Knowledge!** The following is the winning response from the “Quick Readiness Quiz” distributed during the November RISC meeting. The winning entry received an autographed copy of Unthinkable, by Amanda Ripley.

**Name:** Brian Anderson      **Agency:** TSA      **WINNER!**

- 1. Name 3 things besides water that should be in your 72-hour kit?**    **HIGH-ENERGY SNACKS, WHISTLE, KNIFE**
- 2. What 3 places should you have an emergency kit?**  
**CAR OR TRUCK, HOME, WORK**
- 3. What is the appropriate length of time to properly wash your hands?**    **20 SECONDS**
- 4. How often should you practice your family emergency plan?**  
**QUARTERLY IS OK, BUT AT LEAST ANNUALLY**
- 5. What should every home have at least 1 of on every floor?**  
**FIRE EXTINGUISHER AND A SMOKE DETECTOR**

### Contributors

#### LYNN PISANO-PEDIGO

Lynn Pisano-Pedigo is the Preparedness Analysis & Planning Officer (PAPO) for FEMA Region VIII . She has been the chief planner for the RISC in the region since November 2008 and is the chief editor of this newsletter.

#### DANIEL NYQUIST

Daniel Nyquist is the Preparedness Analysis & Planning Specialist (PAPS) for FEMA Region VIII. He has been a planner for the RISC meetings since July 2009 and is the content/layout editor for this newsletter.

#### PAT SARIN & ANNA CHENG

Both took copious notes during the RISC. Without them, this newsletter would not have been possible.

The RISC meeting in FEMA Region VIII is a collaborative effort coordinated through the National Preparedness Division. For more information, please contact [lynn.pedigo@dhs.gov](mailto:lynn.pedigo@dhs.gov) or [daniel.nyquist@dhs.gov](mailto:daniel.nyquist@dhs.gov).



### Tell us What you Think

In our efforts to grow and improve, we would like to invite you to give us feedback on the RISC Newsletter. Please follow the link below to take a short survey. Your feedback is important! The Survey will remain open until March 10, 2010.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/M7BPP7P>



FEMA REGION VIII  
PARTNERS IN PREPAREDNESS