Alert

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2015 and beyond

The director's perspective

After a year dominated by a violent day in April, ADEM staff and emergency managers around the state are ready for the new year.

ADEM Director David Maxwell looks forward to challenges and opportunities in 2015 and beyond:

Q The past year certainly presented its challenges. What aspect of emergency management was the most difficult to deal with in the past year?

A I think always the most difficult aspect is personnel. We have a great staff that is highly motivated and dedicated, so the frustration is working within the system to reward that motivation and dedication. The other challenge we faced in 2014 was the ice event on the freeways. We have to shift our paradigms to recognize we will have events that do not really affect the counties but require action and assistance on our part.

Q As 2015 starts, how would you assess the state of the emergency management community in Arkansas?

A I am extremely proud of the progress ADEM has made over the last few years. Our involvement in the catastrophic planning effort for a New Madrid event leading to the National Level Exercise 2011 brought us up light years. Spending the last couple of years working to fix the gaps and issues identified during that exercise and following up with this year's Capstone 14 has shown additional progress. Being better able to respond to an event the size of an earthquake shows in not only our response to other disasters but in how we are approaching preparedness.

Q Is there a particular component of emergency management that will be a focal point this year?

A I think we will need to spend time focusing on a cyber attack and the consequences that come from such an attack. Much like our preparation for Y2K — which I believe was a seminal point for emergency management — emergency management will need to understand the consequences and how we need to plan, train and respond.

Q Can you point to any area of emergency management in the state that is not where you would like it to be? What can you do to improve that aspect of emergency management?

A Knowing that all disasters are local, I think we have to look at what we can do to better support local governments and local emergency management. I have worked with the County Judges As-

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ADEM Director David Maxwell said that the upcoming accreditation process and ongoing preparedness programs are among his top priorities for 2015.

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sociation for several years trying to identify a funding source to provide some state funding to local emergency management.

In the absence of additional funding we have to look from within to strengthen our support. This could take several directions.

We need to get good suggestions from our local partners on what the needs are that we might possibly be able to assist.

Q Obviously, no emergency situations would be a top goal for 2015, but what other goal have you set for the coming year?

A Number one is becoming re-accredited. The state's emergency management program will undergo a re-assessment in February.

You may notice I did not say ADEM will undergo re-assessment in February but rather the "state's program".

Emergency management for the state is much larger than just ADEM. It involves all of the emergency support functions and the primary agencies responsible for that function.

Number two would be continuing our efforts to ensure the state is as prepared as it can be to respond to a major earthquake on the New Madrid Seismic Zone.

If we can continue that improvement, we will certainly be able to respond to all the other event we might experience.

"Emergency management for the state is much larger than just ADEM. It involves all of the emergency support functions and the primary agencies responsible for that function."

David Maxwell
ADEM Director

Q A year from now, what do you hope to be able to say about ADEM's performance in 2015?

A I am certain I will be able to look back at 2015 and say we continued to respond to events in the excellent manner we have done to date, we continued to improve those areas identified as needing improvement and that we continued to support our partners and customers in the manner that shows how we value customer service.

ARKANSAS HOMELAND SECURITY & PREPAREDNESS AGENCY
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ADEM
PIO

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January

Training

5-7 — HazMat Train-the-Trainer, Baxter County.
5-6 — HazMat Awareness Course, Lee County.
10-11 — Communications Interoperability, Craighead County.
12-13 — HazMat Awareness Course, Franklin County.
12-15 — ICS 300 and 400, Craighead County.
15 — ATC 20 Post Earthquake Building Inspection Course, Craighead County.
17-18 — ICS 300, White County.
19 — Meth Lab Awareness Course, Woodruff County.
19-30 — HazMat Technician Course, Lee County.
20 — Bio Diesel Awareness Course, Woodruff County.
26-27 — Terrorism Awareness Course, Franklin County.
26-29 — ICS 300 and 400, Jefferson County.
31-1 Feb — ICS 400, White County.

Exercises

21 — ADEM State Emergency Operations Center.

Extracurricular

1 — Holiday: New Year's Day
19 — Holiday: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert E. Lee Birthday.

Have training to share? Contact ADEM PIO

Publicaffairs@adem.arkansas.gov

February

HazMat Training

2-5 — HazMat Operations Course, Lee County.
9-20 — HazMat Technician Course, Benton County.
12-19 — HazMat Awareness Course, Craighead County.

EM Training

2-5 — ICS 300 and 400, Pulaski County.
9 — ATC 20 Post Earthquake Building Inspection Course, Pope County.
23-25 — Basic PIO, White County.

Exercises

18 — ADEM State Emergency Operations Center Exercise.

Extracurricular

16 — Holiday: George Washington's Birthday.

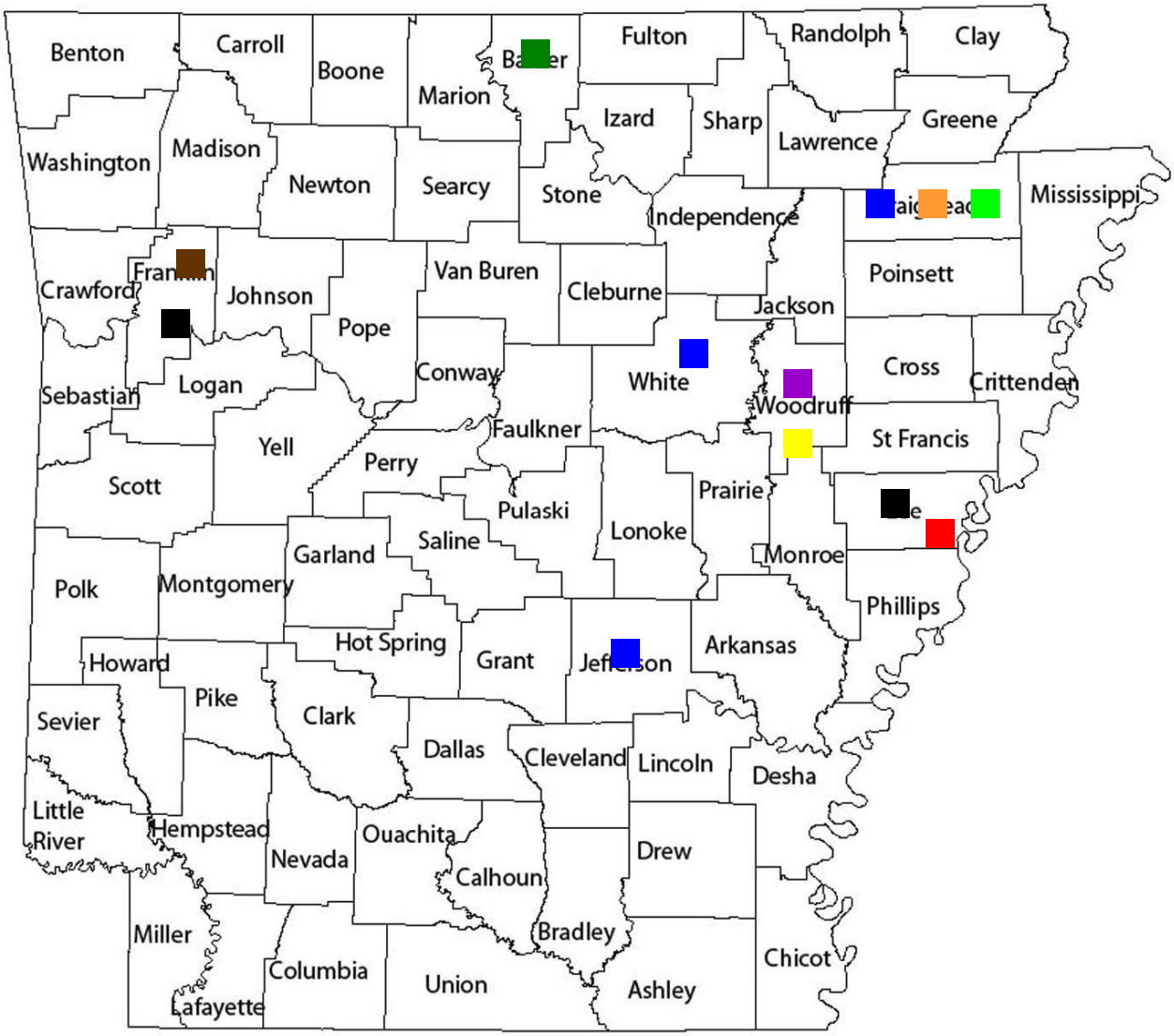
Tell us what you think

Complete the survey at this link, https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HTN8NSD**, to comment on the newsletter.**

Online training opportunities

Code	Course Title
IS-139	Exercise Design
IS-271.a	Anticipating Hazardous Weather & Community Risk, 2nd Edition
IS-37	Managerial Safety and Health
IS-801	Emergency Support Functions (ESF) #1 - Transportation
IS-120.a	An Introduction to Exercises

Upcoming training locations at a glance: January



ATC 20 Post Earthquake Building Inspection Course
Bio Diesel Awareness
Communications Interoperability
HazMat Awareness
HazMat Technician
Hazmat Train-the-Trainer
ICS 300 and/or 400
Meth Lab Awareness
Terrorism Awareness

Follow ADEM on social media for real-time news and information!

Inclement weather process unchanged

The Governor's Office determines when the inclement weather policy will be put into effect and announcements will be made via the media before 630am (when possible) and this broadcast should include a list of affected counties. When the policy is put into effect non-essential personnel should arrive no later than 10am. All essential personnel are required to arrive at their regularly scheduled time.

Essential personnel include: Director, Deputy Director, Division Directors, ADEM Duty Officers, Property Branch Staff, ADEM Area Coordinators. When standby teams are created those personnel also become essential and must arrive as normally scheduled.

ADEM staff may sign up to receive Inclement Weather Policy alerts. Another option is to check the governor's website for announcements.

Within the ADEM network: I:\Shared\General files\ADEM Policies\Policy #26 Inclement Weather 2-28-14.

ADEM Inclement Weather Policy

The general policy regarding inclement weather is that State government does not normally close its offices because of hazardous driving conditions. However, the obligation to provide services to the citizens of the State must be balanced with the risk of danger to State employees. It is therefore appropriate that guidelines be established which reflect the safety needs of our citizens and employees.

The primary purpose and function of the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management is to operate during disaster times, which may include inclement weather that directly affects our employees.

Staffing Procedures During Inclement Weather

In the event of early morning severe inclement weather conditions, the Governor's Office will determine whether the inclement weather policy will be put into effect. When the policy is implemented, announcement will be made before 6:30 a.m. (whenever possible) and will include a list of affected counties. On days declared to be covered by the inclement weather policy, all employees should be at their work stations by 10:00 a.m. Employees arriving by 10:00 a.m. will be given credit for a full day's attendance. Employees arriving after 10:00 a.m. will be charged the full amount of time involved in the tardiness, and employees not coming to work at all will be charged a full day's absence.

When severe inclement weather occurs during office hours, it is the Director's discretion whether to allow employees to leave work early for safety reasons. Decisions to allow employees to leave work early, however, should recognize the requirement to maintain designated critical personnel and assure service delivery to the citizens for the full work day. Employees who were on the job and were allowed to leave early will not be charged leave for that time.

The Director shall designate critical (essential) personnel who will be required to reach their work stations by the time of regular office opening, regardless of weather related conditions, to assure that offices are open and services are provided. Prior designation will allow critical (essential) personnel to prepare for weather conditions, and if need be, provide alternative methods of getting to work.

A stand-by team and shift schedule will be determined if the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) is activated or if the need to activate is anticipated. Persons on the stand-by team are considered critical (essential) personnel and should make arrangements to be at the SEOC during their normal scheduled hours (i.e. 8:00am-4:30pm) and prepared for extended hours if the SEOC is activated. Any persons on stand-by teams after normal duties hours (i.e. 7:00pm-7:00am) will be notified if required to report to the SEOC. If transportation becomes a risk, the agency will either arrange transportation for those who request it or the employee may elect to use the agency accommodations and stay at the SEOC. If electing to stay in the agency accommodations, only those hours of actual assigned work by a supervisor or SEOC activation will be accrued.

Critical (Essential) Personnel

As defined, those employees who must report to their designated work station at the beginning of their work hours to ensure services are available to the citizens of Arkansas. Critical (essential) personnel for this agency are noted below; dependent upon the needs of the SEOC, this may include additional employees who will be notified prior to their shift.

- Director
- Deputy Director
- Division Directors — report at their normal scheduled hours, unless designated on the evening shift stand by team
- ADEM Duty Officers — report at their regularly scheduled shift
- ADEM staff assigned to SEOC stand-by teams during the inclement weather
- Property Branch Staff - to include Property Branch Manager and all Maintenance Specialists
- ADEM Area Coordinators — as directed by the Disaster Management Division Director

Method proves effective in search

Lessons Learned

On Oct. 10, a Pike County woman suffering from late-stage Alzheimer's wandered away from her home. Searchers found her three days later more than half a mile from the incident command post. Unfortunately, exposure to the elements claimed her life.

However, the search operation itself is serving as a textbook case in how to manage, plan and implement a complicated rescue.

At a recent Southwest Area meeting, Pike County Coordinator Austen Walls recounted the operation.

He explained that shortly after the woman disappeared, he began calling in search and rescue experts from surrounding counties and across the state.

Teams from Clark and Howard counties responded, as did Fred Mullen and others – noted search and rescue gurus -- from Franklin County.

"Fred and Steve Scott ran operations and planning," Walls said.

Inclement weather hindered search efforts overnight, but the next morning, Walls had called in more support, including personnel from the Game and Fish Commission and State Parks to search the rural, rugged terrain. More emergency personnel from Grant and Sebastian counties also responded. At this point, less than 24 hours after the woman disappeared, about 150 people were looking for her in coordinated efforts. Still, the woman had not been found.

The next day, Walls enlisted the help of tracking dogs from Little River and Howard counties. More inclement weather stalled the search.

On the fourth day, a searcher located the woman about 1,000 yards from the command post, covered in brush along a power line easement. She was suffering from exposure, and ultimately died the next day.

When asked about the search operation, Walls said that he felt a proper process had been used.

"Management of volunteers was exceptional," he noted.

Clark County Coordinator Mikki Hastings agreed.

"The whole time I was at the search, people were assigned jobs and people were doing their assigned jobs. There were multiple tactics going on at the same time," she said.

Hastings said the process used by those managing the search used resources efficiently and effectively.

"This is the first time that I have truly, honestly worked inside a command system and have truly and honestly done operations and plans," she commented. "It was continuous, one assignment after another. They were writing assignments and putting people on these teams, and when they completed their assignments, they had to debrief and give them another assignment."

> ***"The whole time I was at the search, people were assigned jobs and people were doing their assigned jobs. There were multiple tactics going on at the same time."***
>
> Mikki Hastings
> Clark County Coordinator

Hastings noted that the multitasking implemented by search managers allowed volunteers to conduct specialized searches without slowing down the overall tempo.

"At one point, there were two operations going, a ground search and a pond search. The law enforcement guys felt like they needed to completely eliminate that pond as a possibility. The good thing about the way that did that was they did not disrupt the current plan. Nothing got stopped so this could happen" she said.

As a result of seeing the well-organized operation up close, Hastings said that the Southwest Area search and rescue leaders are considering a command team. The group would fill planning, assigning, debriefing and other roles within a structured framework. The coordinator envisioned the team being able to deploy to other areas and use individuals instead of universally relying on search and rescue teams.

The Pike County search closely followed a structured and organized process, unlike a Garland County search in November.

Coordinator Bo Robertson and Deputy Coordinator Bobby King told the group about a successful, albeit uncoordinated, search involving family, friends and coworkers of a lost hunter.

King noted that the quick-responding and concerned searchers immediately began searching the rugged terrain but that they had not devised a plan. Hours passed as weather conditions deteriorated. Luckily, a searcher heard the lost hunter's voice — away from the active search area — and searchers were able to locate the hunter.

A tale of two searches — one highly coordinated, one fueled by the best of intentions. In many instances, enthusiastic and motivated volunteers are no substitute for a well-reasoned, managed plan of tried-and-true processes, procedures and tactics. When a life hangs in the balance, it's good to have a plan.

Ready Arkansas
A State of Preparedness
Prepare Plan Stay Informed

Around Arkansas

ASU program provides home plans

Many people in Mayflower and Vilonia lost their entire home to the tornados that ripped through the area this past April. ADEM Area Coordinator Rick Kelley was one of the victims who had to tear everything down to the slab and rebuild from scratch.

Kendall Casey heads the computer aided drafting and design (CADD) program at Arkansas State University -Beebe and is a friend of Kelley. After a day of demolition work Casey realized that he could better help the Kelleys by creating floor plans for the new home. Plans like this would have cost them between $500 to a $1,000 but Casey and a student fashioned them for free.

That summer they worked with six other families, taking sketches and descriptions and turning them into floor-plans that builders could use. The homes Casey helped with were all total losses but he believes his students and he could help with any partial rebuilds as well. Most students were gone for the summer but now Casey has plenty to call on for help no matter the time of year.

"I have a whole army ready now. I wouldn't mind at all carrying this on and helping others," Casey said.

The CADD program has been accredited by the Association of Technology, Management and Applied Engineering. ASU-Beebe's Director of Advanced Technology and Allied Health, Dr. Keith McClanahan, is aware of the project but it is not an official program at the college. This program is organized and executed by teacher, Casey, and students.

Guardian app serves as personal security

Private. Free. Secure.

From Rave Mobile Safety comes the latest personal safety Smartphone app. Available to download from the Apple App Store or Google Play. The Guardian app transforms your Smartphone into a personal safety device.

The app features a panic button that allows one to immediately contact public safety or the local 911 dispatch center with the push of a button. The app features a GPS function so that in the event of an emergency, public safety officers will know who you are and where to find you. The app also allows users to send anonymous public safety tips via text. The Guardian app features a timer function that users can set anytime day or night.

Once the timer is set, users select friends and family to act as "Guardians" along with public safety officers. If the safety timer is not deactivated before the set expiration, public safety officers and the selected Guardians are automatically notified.

This is a free service and one does not have to be a student to take advantage of the Guardian mobile safety app. Groups all over the state are finding value in this app.

"Whether you're walking to your car after a day of shopping, taking a hike in our beautiful state parks, or going for an early morning run, the safety timer will help to ensure you make it safely to your destination," said Randie Jones, 911 coordinator.

Dispatcher earns SmartSave Award

Using Smart911 can lead to stories such as this, a recent SmartSave Award-winner from Michigan.

In Grand Traverse on Nov. 6, Central dispatch received a call from caller on a mobile phone who was unable to provide all necessary information. His location information was displaying in Grand Traverse bay in Lake Michigan, but luckily he had a Smart911 Safety Profile that displayed his name and home address. Response teams were dispatched to that location as the remained unresponsive. When they arrived on scene they discovered that his house was on fire and pulled him from the home- saving his life.

Because of Smart911, 11 minutes were saved in response time, and Dan Hoffman is able to hug his daughters every day. On Nov. 14 he met the 9-1-1 dispatchers and responders who saved his life as they were presented with SmartSave awards.

"This is a great story to share to your community, through social media, email, newsletters and with all community partners," said Rave Mobile Safety officials. "Dan's story is one that could happen to anyone, at any time, and in any location, and it stresses the importance of providing valuable information to 9-1-1 in the event that you can't talk.

Dan's story can be found here: http://safety.smart911.com/smartsavegrandtraverse/

You can also view a longer version of the award ceremony here: http://youtu.be/n8Dj3X3pH6g

Remember: if a profile assists on a call in your 9-1-1 agency, in any way, even if it is just to confirm information with a caller, or provide information to responders, submit for a SmartSave or SmartImpact Award here: http://safety.smart911.com/submitsmartsave

Around Arkansas

FaulknerCo accepts $12,000 donation

Presenting a $12,000 donation to Faulkner County Judge Allen Dodson (second from left) and OEM Director Shelia McGhee (second from right) are BHP Billiton representatives (from left) Don Gatewood, Geraldine Slattery and Rick Spicer.

CONWAY – Representatives of the Faulkner County Office of Emergency Management have accepted a $12,000 donation from BHP Billiton for the purchase of new volunteer firefighting equipment. The contribution comes as part of a larger, four-year $46,000 donation to Faulkner County.

"BHP Billiton's continued support of our volunteer fire departments is really appreciated by public safety officials and our residents," said Sheila McGhee, director of Faulkner County OEM. "This kind of support can make a big difference, because often, volunteer fire departments can't easily afford to upgrade equipment."

To date, BHP Billiton has donated $34,000 to the Faulkner County OEM. The remaining $12,000 of the four-year donation will be given next year.

BHP Billiton has committed a grand total of $230,000 to the offices of emergency management in the five Fayetteville Shale counties – Cleburne, Conway, Faulkner, Van Buren and White – where the company operates. The final $60,000 donation ($12,000 each) will be distributed to the five counties in 2015.

One of the largest natural gas operators in Arkansas' Fayetteville Shale, BHP Billiton has offices north of Searcy.

"We see helping our counties, their OEMs, and our volunteer fire departments as mutually beneficial," said Danny Games, corporate affairs manager for BHP Billiton. "We want to support the work they do in the counties that so many of our employees call home."

AEMA to assume ACEM certifications

Arkansas Emergency Management Association (AEMA) is now in charge of the Arkansas Certified Emergency Manager (ACEM) certification process and will begin accepting applications beginning Jan 1.

Those looking to apply should keep a watch on the AEMA website where updates are in progress.

Those who already have an ACEM certification should apply to have it grandfathered into the new system. These applications will be accepted through Dec. 31, 2015, and cost $50. Only pages 1 and 13 of the application need to be filled out, but there must be a copy of your current ACEM included.

Grandfathering will also require that the applicant has completed two contributions (please see website for details) to the greater emergency management community, and it will extend the ACEM certification for two years.

Anyone applying for an ACEM for the first time must complete the entire application ($100 cost) and pass a test. The test is scheduled twice a year on the morning before the Midyear and Annual conferences (Tuesday/Wednesday). Applications for the Midyear test must be submitted by Feb. 1 and those testing at the Annual conference must be received by July 15. No contributions are required for first-time applicants but anyone seeking recertification will need five contributions.

Applications go to AEMA, P.O. Box 578, Star City, AR 71667.

NWS awards StormReady designation

On April 21, 1996, a perfect storm, of sorts, struck Fort Smith shortly before 11:30 p.m.

A violent storm approached the city, spawning an EF-3 tornado. Weather officials were able to provide only four minutes' notice. Just as the warning went out, a power outage at the city's police department prevented warning sirens from sounding. Two children died in the storm.

That incident spawned the National Weather Service StormReady program.

To earn a StormReady designation, a community or county must meet criteria designed to increase storm warning and response capabilities.

On Dec. 17, National Weather Service officials recognized Faulkner County as a StormReady county.

Renee Fair, meteorologist-in-charge, of the National Weather Service forecast office in Little Rock, presented county officials with a certificate and special StormReady signs.

NOAA's StormReady program helps community leaders and residents better prepare for hazardous weather and flooding. StormReady counties have made a strong commitment to implement the infrastructure and systems needed to save lives and protect property when severe weather strikes.

"Following the devastating Mayflower-Vilonia tornado of April 27, Faulkner County became the fourth most-likely county in Arkansas to experience tornado fatalities, based on National Weather Service records since 1950," said John Robinson, warning coordination meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Little Rock. "Preparedness saves lives. I saw that during April's tornado, when so many citizens took shelter in Vilonia's community safe room."

Faulkner County Judge Allen Dodson remarks on the National Weather Service StormReady program as Faulkner County OEM Director Shelia McGhee (center) and National Weather Service/Little Rock Meteorologist-in-Charge Renee Fair look on. Fair presented a signage to McGhee on Dec. 17, certifying the county in the national program.

Faulkner County Judge Allen Dodson said the county's residents are keenly aware of storm preparedness.

"The people of Faulkner County recognize that a high level of storm readiness is of utmost importance, with the constant risk of severe weather to which our county is exposed," he noted. "The April 27 EF-4 tornado that struck our county and other counties is only the most recent in a long history of tornados and other severe weather events. Achieving the National Weather Service designation of being StormReady is significant, and by it the people of Faulkner County can take assurance that the National Weather Service and Faulkner County are remaining vigilant in severe weather preparedness."

Faulkner County OEM Director Shelia McGhee said that natural disasters are a part of life in the area.

"We are certainly not exempt from disasters. Anything we can do to better prepare ourselves and our community as a whole makes us a more resilient community," she contended.

McGhee explained that the county's warning systems include a free "reverse 911" system, CodeRed, which provides telephone warnings to citizens who sign up for the service.

As part of the StormReady process, emergency officials provided weather radios to local officials throughout the county.

"Anytime an alert is issued through the National Weather Service, the program immediately starts sending those calls to the affected residents," she noted.

During the ceremony, Robinson noted that Faulkner County ranks as the state's fourth-highest ranked in terms of tornado fatalities. He added that the three higher-ranked counties earned their rankings decades ago, when warning systems were in their infancy. In other words, Faulkner County has become Arkansas's own Tornado Alley.

The nationwide community preparedness program, founded in 1999, is a grassroots approach to preparing for natural hazards. Today, about 3,000 U.S. communities are better prepared for severe weather through the StormReady program.

To be recognized as StormReady, a county must maintain a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center, have multiple ways to receive National Weather Service warnings and to alert the public, be able to monitor local weather and flood conditions, conduct community preparedness programs and ensure hazardous weather and flooding are addressed in formal emergency management plans, which include training SKYWARN weather spotters and holding emergency exercises.

The StormReady program is part of the National Weather Service's working partnership with the International Association of Emergency Managers and the National Emergency Management Association. The StormReady recognition is valid for three years.

See next page for another StormReady designee, University of Arkansas-Monticello.

Around Arkansas

Retiring

Southeast Area Coordinator Ken Ouellette (left) reacts to well wishes for his retirement during a recent group meeting in Star City. Pictured with Ouellette are Bobby Brasswell of Union County and Robin Scott of Bradley County. Ouellette joined ADEM in May 2002.

Safe school

Renee Fair, meteorologist-in-charge of the National Weather Service forecast office in Little Rock, presents a StormReady campus sign to University of Arkansas-Monticello Chancellor Jack Lassiter (right) and Jay Hughes, vice chancellor for student affairs.

ADEM volunteers at Arkansas Rice Depot were (from left) Kathy Wright, Linda Crow, Krista Guthrie, Sheila Annable, Erin Townsend, Bobbi Ann Markel, Tim Reavis, Erin Sullivan, Kendell Snyder, Clay Bewley, Trey Gray, Tim Johnson, Jennifer Oakley, Mary Jane Butler, Gary Smith and Pam Hudson.

ADEM volunteers at Rice Depot

Seventeen ADEM staff took time this month to help fellow Arkansans.

On Dec. 2, they portioned out 2,340 bags of rice and packaged them into 195 boxes as well as wrapping up 63 boxes of bread. These efforts will help feed more than 4,000 people.

The Arkansas Rice Depot has been a non-profit organization since 1982 when a few families saw neighbors going hungry, bought rice and handed it out to those in need. The outfit feeds about 15 percent of the state with more than 9 million pounds of food each year.

Four programs are used to fulfill the Rice Depot's mission. Food for Families supplies 300 church and community hunger organizations, Food for Kids sends home backpacks of food out of more than 600 schools, Food for Seniors pairs a volunteer with a senior and has food hand-delivered on a regular schedule and Disaster Relief distributes food, blankets and other disaster assistance. The organization also has a gift store, and the proceeds are used to feed hungry Arkansans.

Arkansas Rice Depot
hunger no more

Bagging rice are ADEM staffers (clockwise from top left) Clay Bewley, Kendell Snyder, Tim Reavis, Linda Crow and Mary Jane Butler.

Merry Christmas … from the beach

ADEM's July in Christmas party mixed food, fun and fellowship on Dec. 11. Following a cookout, planned activities included a number of games and giveaways. Members of the Administration Division orchestrated the event, which saw Larry Pullon (right) dress for the occasion.

Linda Sims (right) greeted partygoers.

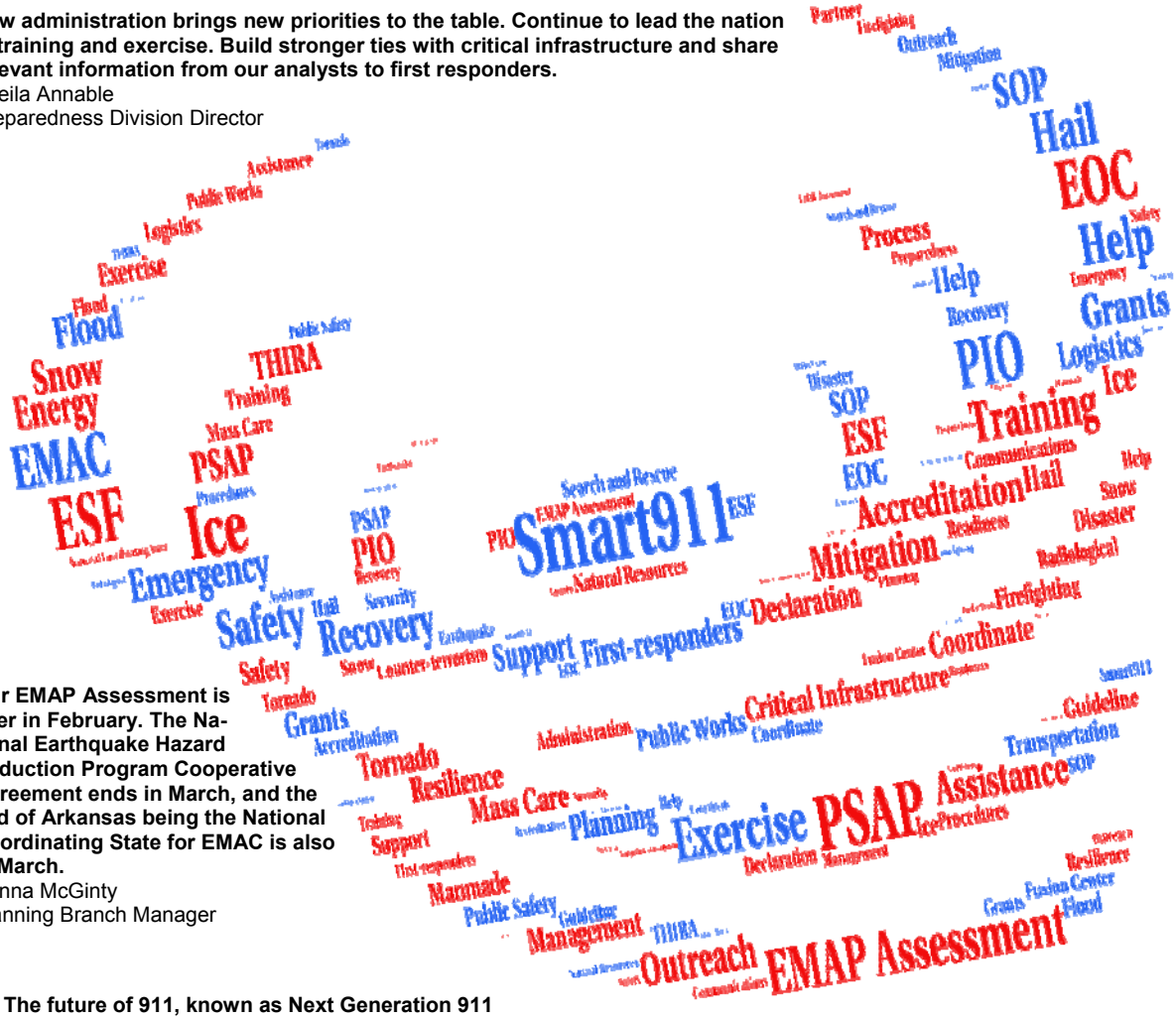
Erin Townsend (below) was one of two limbo finalists.

Glen Beedle (above, foreground) and Kendell Snyder grill hamburgers.

Steve Moore poses before the Hawaiian shirt contest, which he won.

What's on the 2015 horizon?

New administration brings new priorities to the table. Continue to lead the nation in training and exercise. Build stronger ties with critical infrastructure and share relevant information from our analysts to first responders.
Sheila Annable
Preparedness Division Director



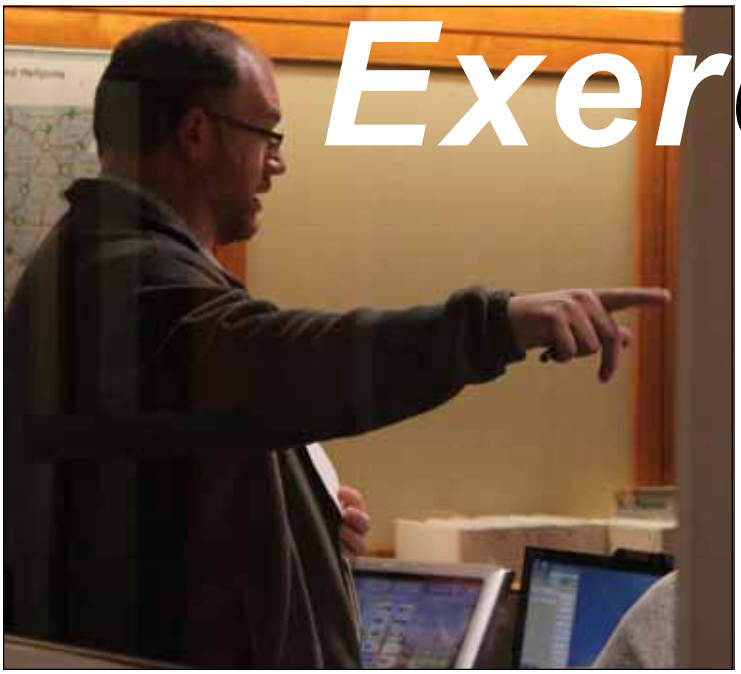
Our EMAP Assessment is over in February. The National Earthquake Hazard Reduction Program Cooperative Agreement ends in March, and the end of Arkansas being the National Coordinating State for EMAC is also in March.
Danna McGinty
Planning Branch Manager

The future of 911, known as Next Generation 911 (NG911), allows telecommunicators access to data in all forms. The expectations of our citizens are changing and our 911 system must adapt to these changing needs. Simply stated, NG911 is the ability for any person, regardless of location, to place a call for service from any device at any time. The challenges of this transition are many, but it is an endeavor well worth pursuing.
Randie Jones
911 Coordinator

ADEM led Arkansas to accreditation under the Emergency Management Accreditation Program in 2010. The initial effort took more than ten years an involved an enormous amount of effort throughout the state's emergency management program. Accreditation is a validation of the program – it is a documented proof that we can hold our own against the nation's best emergency management programs. However, accreditation is temporary and only lasts for five years – we are scheduled for reassessment in February 2015.
Larry Pullon
Executive Officer

Our public affairs goals for 2015 are straightforward. We want to continue to reach more of the citizenry with our messaging, and we want to better highlight what emergency managers across the state do day in and day out to protect Arkansans.
Rick Fahr
Public Information Officer

Exercise!



ADEM's December exercise involved multiple wrinkles, starting with a situation that forced the staff to evacuate headquarters and manage several threat situations from an alternate location, while doing so in a simulated blackout circumstance. Disaster Management Division Director Scott Bass (above) served as team chief for the exercise. Exercise Section Chief Christie Minner (below), was among those crafting the threat situations. Staff the emergency operations center were (clockwise from right) Randie Jones, Tim Johnson and Brenda Wilson.

Around Arkansas

WebEOC

Learning about ADEM's online event management platform, WebEOC, are emergency managers (from left) Bobby King of Garland County, Larry Pritchett of Miller County and Randy Pruitt of Grant County. The managers and other Southwest Area emergency managers learned about the platform during a recent meeting in Sheridan.

Handy gadget

Don Hale, Little River County coordinator, tells other Southwest Area emergency managers about his Yaesu FT1D radio during a recent area meeting. The gadget broadcasts in analog, digital and HAM signals, and its handset microphone has a built-in camera that can send digital images to other Yaesu radios.

Public Affairs

Holiday weeks full of slow news days

By Rick Fahr
ADEM PIO

During my years in the newspaper business, I never was a big fan of holidays.

In the first place, more often than not, I had to work. And, even if I did get the day off, I had to work doubly hard ahead of time to have a story or two or three ready for the holiday and, more importantly, the day after. Column inches don't fill themselves, you see.

So, about a week before a holiday, I'd start scrounging around for stories that I could save for those slow news days. Often, I'd look to government officials, who could usually point me toward something.

Those memories come in handy today because I can encourage emergency managers around the state to take advantage of the wide open newspaper pages and broadcast air that holidays bring.

Of course, some of the tips for getting positive media coverage of your activities and events extend beyond holidays and are applicable at other times.

So, to get the best exposure you can, try the following:

Advance notice. Most assignment editors and reporters have an idea what they are going to be working on before they get to the office each day (disasters notwithstanding, of course). If they have a few days' notice, they are much more likely to carve out time for a given story.

Offer ideas for visual elements. Editors love pictures, illustrations, video. Be sure to have an idea or two for visuals — the "optics" as people say these days. What's a good visual? It's not two people staring at the camera or pointing to a map. It's not a shiny vehicle sitting in a parking lot. Some sort of action shot is better. Movement is good. Close movement is better.

Be flexible on your scheduling. Just because the timing of an event makes sense to us, that timing might not work well for media folks. They run skeleton crews on weekends, and if another event conflicts with yours, you might get left out. Try to have at least two options for when the media can cover your activity. Remember, there's nothing wrong with setting up a photo opportunity ahead of an actual event.

Finally, **suggest story ideas**. You don't have to wait for a reporter to contact you. If you have a good story, market it, and going back to the original point, a phone call to a reporter on the Tuesday before Memorial Day or a few days before Christmas is a great time to catch a reporter looking for material.

ADEM Alert user's guide

Content

Each month's newsletter will contain information about ADEM personnel, programs and activities; news from coordinators around the state; and updates on legislative, policy and other important matters.

Hyperlinks

Throughout each issue, embedded "hyperlinks" will allow users to click on an image, graphic or blue text to view additional information on an external website, such as Facebook or www.ready.arkansas.gov.

These hyperlinks will include links to photo galleries, video interviews, more information about a given subject and/or other types of multimedia content.

Many smartphone operating systems are not set up to properly follow hyperlinks. Therefore, this newsletter is best viewed on a desktop, laptop or tablet device.

Submissions

To submit information to ADEM public affairs or request public affairs support, call 501-683-6700 or email publicaffairs@adem.arkansas.gov.