Alert

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Flame — not ice — has been winter threat

It makes sense that home fires increase in winter months, because many heat sources involve fire.

It isn't as intuitive, though, that cold, often rainy winter months can be among the worst months for wildfires, but that has been the case in recent weeks as fires across the state have increased in frequency and size.

Fire Services Coordinator Kendell Snyder said several factors combine to heighten the threat.

"In the summertime and springtime, all the foliage is green. Leaves have decomposed. Although temperatures are higher, and there just isn't as much fuel around for a wildfire," he explained. "In the wintertime, the humidity is usually much lower. Fuels are dry, and we tend to have winds. All that means we have a fire danger."

Snyder said wildfires start for many reasons, among them are lightning and more people in wilderness areas for hunting. He noted that many wildfires are the result of a fire that had been set, such as a campfire or agricultural burning.

Putting out a wildfire is sometimes an arduous task because they often occur far from roads.

"In Arkansas, we rely on forestry dozers, but in order to get a dozer in, you have to have a road. Otherwise, you are driving a dozer umpteen miles through the woods at 2 miles an hour," Snyder said. "We don't have the scope of fire crews like they have out West. So, we have fewer people to make that initial response, and the longer a fire burns, the larger it gets, and so that gets you more of an area to try to control."

> ***"In the wintertime, the humidity is usually much lower. The fuels are dry, and we tend to have winds. All that means we have a fire danger.***

Snyder contended that many of the state's fire departments operate in rural areas and have wildfires as a typical threat. That, he said, has resulted in most of those departments developing expertise in fighting them.

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Have an idea to improve the newsletter? Take our survey here.

FIRE

Continued from page 1

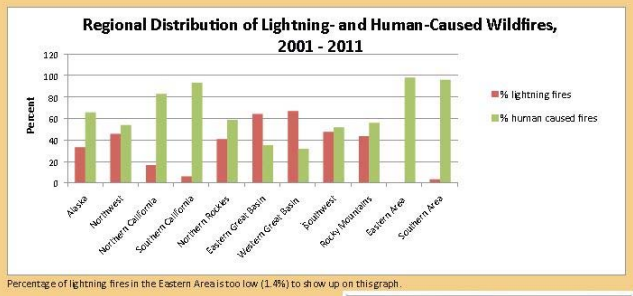
"It is getting more and more common for them to be buying wildland fire gear and wildland fire protective gear with state money, and that's a good thing," he added.

Fighting wildfires in the state is a multi-agency proposition. Naturally, the state Forestry Commission and U.S. Forest Service play integral roles with staff and equipment, including aerial resources that not only provide firefighting support but also offer command and control observation from above. National Guard aircraft are also available.

"Our rural departments and forestry work well together. We have houses in rural areas, and so the local department will often go in on the roads to protect the houses, and forestry does most of the work cutting a fire line," Snyder explained.

To mitigate the potential effects of wildfires, emergency managers should try to educate homeowners on ways to reduce fire fuels on their property and understand wildfire threat conditions and efforts to control fires, such as burn bans, Snyder added.

"A lot of these fires are caused by some sort of human action. So, the more we can do to educate the people, the fewer fires we should have."



Percentage of lightning fires in the Eastern Area is too low (1.4%) to show up on this graph.

Figure 5. Regional distribution of lightning- and human-caused wildfires, 2001–2011. In every region of the United States except the Eastern Great Basin and Western Great Basin, most wildfires are started by people. Source: National Interagency Coordination Center <http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/>

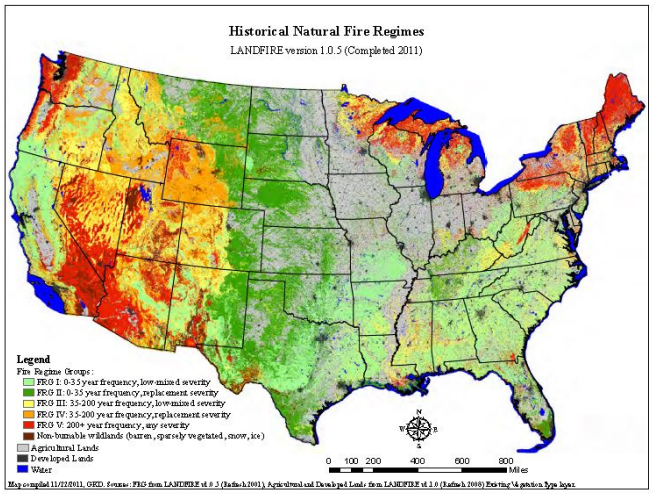


Figure 1. Historical natural fire regimes. Source: FRG from LANDFIRE v. 1.0/5 (Refresh 2001), Agricultural and Developed Lands from LANDFIRE v1.1. 0 (Refresh 2008) Existing Vegetation layer.

Wildfire prevention tips

Never leave a campfire unattended. Completely extinguish the fire—by dousing it with water and stirring the ashes until cold—before sleeping or leaving the campsite.

When camping, take care when using and fueling lanterns, stoves, and heaters. Make sure lighting and heating devices are cool before refueling. Avoid spilling flammable liquids and store fuel away from appliances.

Do not discard cigarettes, matches, and smoking materials from moving vehicles. Be certain to completely extinguish cigarettes before disposing of them.

Avoid backyard burning in windy conditions, and keep a shovel, water, and fire retardant nearby to keep fires in check. Remove all flammables from yard when burning.

Wildfire resources

Click on these links for more information regarding wildfire prevention and safety tips.

ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT WILDFIRES.

Arkansas FIREWISE

Welcome to **IS-320**
Wildfire Mitigation Basics for Mitigation Staff

National Fire Protection Association
The authority on fire, electrical, and building safety

PIO

ADEM Alert is an unofficial publication of Arkansas Department of Emergency Management Public Affairs.

publicaffairs@adem.arkansas.gov
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Rick Fahr, PIO • Krista Guthrie, Deputy PIO

Calendar

February

General Events

1 — Deadline to apply for ACEM Testing at Mid-Year Conference.

HazMat Training

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

EM Training

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

Exercises

18 — ADEM State Emergency Operations Center Exercise.
***26—SW Regional TTX (inclement weather scenario) at AR Department of Health. POC is Chris Rowland.**
***26—Yell County TTX (explosive device scenario). POC is Jeff Gilkey.**

Extracurricular

16 — Holiday: George Washington's Birthday

***Event added after last edition.**

Ready for business

The State Emergency Operations Center sits ready for activation. The control room houses several dozen stations, allowing event managers, emergency support function representatives and other support staff to operate alongside each other.

March

General Events

10 — ACEM Testing at Mid-Year Conference in Little Rock.
10-11 — Mid-Year Conference in Little Rock.

HazMat Training

3-5 — HazMat Awareness Course in St. Francis County.
9-20 — HazMat Technician Course in Pulaski County.
14 — HazMat Awareness Course in White County.
14 — HazMat Operations Course in Searcy County.
17-21 — HazMat Operations Course in St. Francis County.
19-21 — HazMat Awareness Course in Baxter County.
25-26 — Terrorism Awareness Course in Faulkner County.
28-29 — HazMat Operations Course in White County.
28-29 — HazMat Operations Course in Carroll County.
30-31 — Terrorism Awareness Course in Miller County.
30-31 — HazMat ICS Course in Sebastian County.

EM Training

2-4 — Mission Specific Operations Chief Course in Benton County.
7-8 — ICS 300 in Washington County.
9 — G358 Evacuation & Re-Entry Planning Course in Little Rock (during Mid-Year Conference).
12 — FEMA P767: Earthquake Mitigation for Hospitals Course in Craighead County.
20 — ATC 20 Post Earthquake Building Inspection Course in Pulaski County.
21-22 — ICS 400 in Washington County.
23-25 — Mission Specific Planning Chief Course in Garland County.
28-29— ICS 300 in Chicot County.

Exercises

5 — March Madness EMAC Exercise at ADEM. POC is Carol Walton.
21 — ADEM State Emergency Operations Center Exercise.

Around Arkansas

Program to help comfort children

REACH-A-Child is a non-profit organization that equips all first-responders with a sturdy backpack containing books for children with the intent that these be used to distract children from the situation they are in.

The results are heartwarming and effective — reducing the impact of PTSD on the children and the first-responder. Every backpack contains 10 books (ranges from ages 2-12) and 10 drawstring bags to give to the children, and 10 more of each are included as a 'refill'. The cost of these bags is $150 each (plus shipping) but there are several options for funding.

A business sponsor can have a logo printed on the drawstring bags. Law enforcement agencies (LEA) can apply for many LEA-specific grants that can be used for this program.

Foundations that help children at risk have been known to cover the costs, and in Wisconsin the regional AAA auto club office is supplying every State Trooper with a backpack. Anyone interested in using this program locally may email Carole Klopp, the Executive Director, of the REACH-A-Child organization.

Belknap to lead earthquake group

JONESBORO — At January's meeting of the Governor's Earthquake Advisory Council, attendees learned of recent events and welcomed the 2015 National Earthquake Program Manager, Katie Belknap of ADEM.

Among recent seismic activity, a rare "frost" quake was recorded in Faulkner County. A "frost" quake is one resulting from extremely cold ground releasing pressure.

A Kansas tremor was felt in Little Rock and Memphis. Also, recently found sand blows on Crowley's Ridge have researchers trying to determine if they are the result of long-ago earthquakes or more recent activity.

Attendees identified several needs, including better resources for citizens, a mass shelter and feeding plan, mandated earthquake drills and more information on dams and levees that may be at risk.

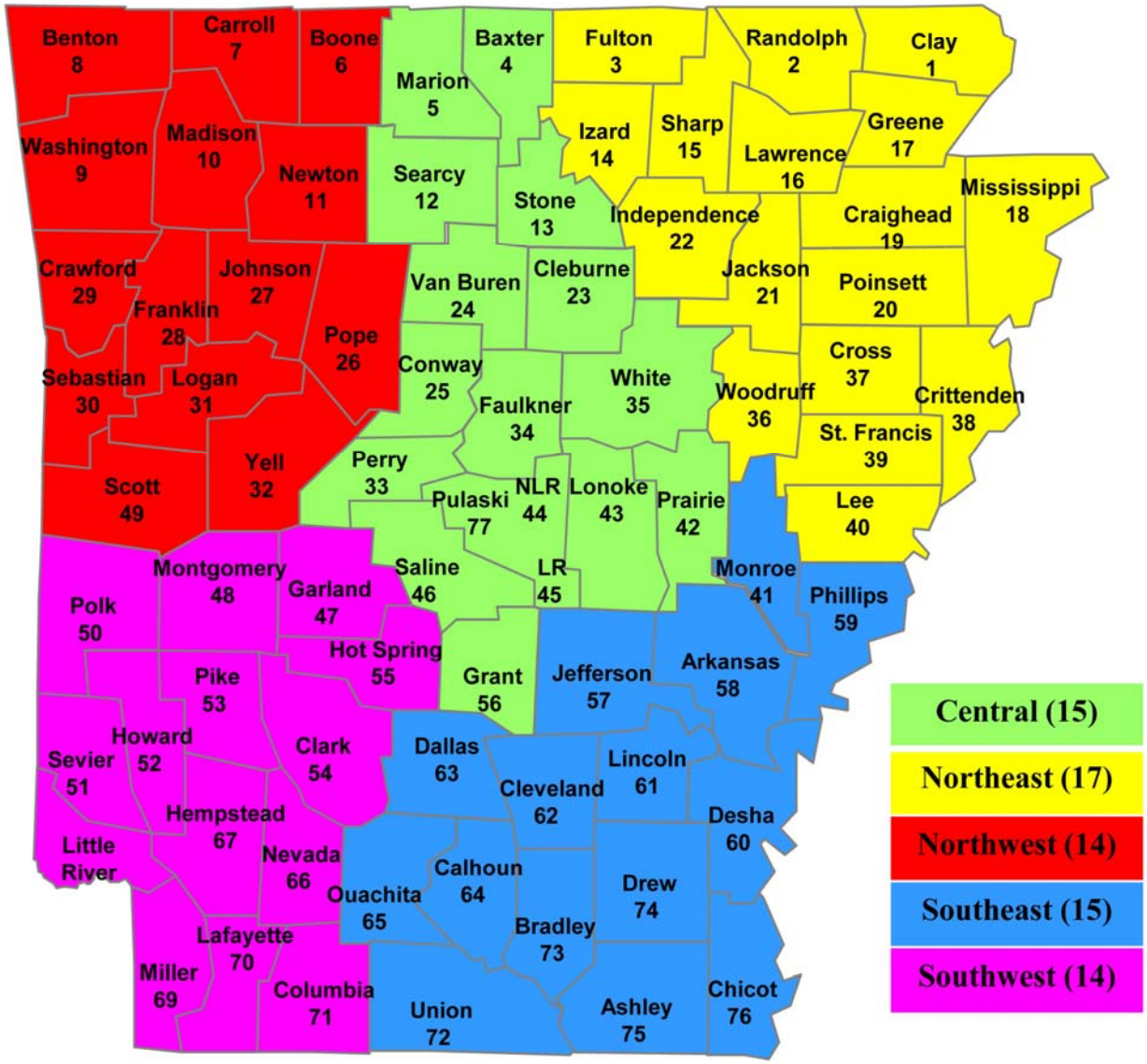
Memory

Robert McClanahan, Vice President of Information Technology for Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corp., snaps a picture of a picture of a train derailment near Pine Bluff. The picture is of particular interest to McClanahan because of a familial tie. McClanahan was among a group of cooperative officials who toured the ADEM facility in January.

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

Changes made to area divisions

DISASTER MANAGEMENT DIVISION
AREA COORDINATION BRANCH



The ADEM Area Coordination map was updated to improve coordination and response efforts in the Northern part of the state.

Highway 65 from Conway allows the Central Area Coordinator to have direct access to these local jurisdictions.

Ready Arkansas
A State of Preparedness
Prepare Plan Stay Informed

Disaster Management

New public assistance guidelines set

The State Public Assistance Program Guidelines have been updated for 2015.

Key updates to the guidelines include:

All eligible damages must equal or exceed the annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustment of the county-wide per capita impact indicator ($3.56 per capita) as used under the FEMA Public Assistance Program.

This per capita indicator will be adjusted to reflect the annual change in the CPI for all urban consumers by the department of labor.

The total damages (actual costs) for each jurisdiction within a county requesting assistance must equal or exceed $15,000.

The eligible damages per site must equal or exceed $3,000.

The State Public Assistance cost share for a state disaster will be limited to 35 percent of the eligible damages assessed in the State Project Worksheet form for each eligible site/project. Under the State Public Assistance Program, the maximum amount allowed per applicant is $500,000 annually.

Emergency Work, or Categories A & B, must be completed within 6 months of the Governor's designation of a disaster area (Governor's Proclamation).

Permanent work or Categories C-G must be completed within 12 months of the Governor's designation of a disaster area (Governor's Proclamation).

All documentation shall be submitted within 90 days of completion of all work (including approved time extensions).

Contact the ADEM Recovery Branch, (501) 683-6700 or email, with any questions.

FEMA announces state's 2014 receipts

DENTON, Texas — The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provided more than $47 million in 2014 funding to the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM) and community partners for disaster recovery, mitigation and preparedness.

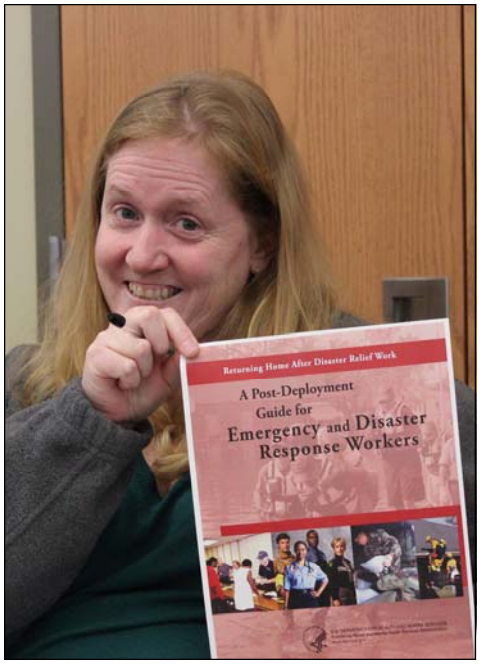
"FEMA, in partnership with ADEM, continues to provide funding to assist communities recovering from and mitigating against future damage," said FEMA Region 6 Administrator Tony Robinson. "We are committed to helping Arkansas residents strengthen their resilience."

The $47 million includes more than $7 million from FEMA's Individual Assistance program, $23 million in Public Assistance dollars for repair and replacement of infrastructure after a disaster, $6 million in Hazard Mitigation, and more than $11 million in Preparedness funding to mitigate damage from future disasters.

"We at Arkansas Department of Emergency Management and all Arkansans affected by disaster appreciate the partnership we have with FEMA," said ADEM Director David Maxell. "This relationship allows governmental entities and individuals to better protect themselves before an emergency and then begin down the road to recovery if a disaster occurs."

The 2014 federal funding covered numerous projects in Arkansas including:

- More than $7 million to individuals for rental and lodging expenses, home repair, and replacement for those who suffered damage during the April severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding.
- Over $3 million was used to either replace or repair bridges and low water crossings destroyed or substantially damaged during the declared events.
- $2.2 million was provided for school safe rooms throughout the state increasing the capacity to protect students, faculty/staff and residents.



Learning the process

Jennifer Oakley, Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Coordinator, poses with a handout during EMAC Personnel Accountability and Processing Package (EPAPP) training. EPAPP is the behind-the-scenes process that facilitates deployments under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).

Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)

Exercise requirements explained

Each person receiving EMPG funding for salary, benefits or other expenditures must conduct one exercise in their jurisdiction and participate in two exercises for a minimum of 3 exercises within the grant period of Oct. 1, 2014-Sept. 30, 2015.

Participation will depend on the individual's name and signature being on the sign-in roster and the completion and submission of the AAR/IP for the exercise within 90 days of the date of the exercise.

The sign-in roster is available on the ADEM website. Exercise notification forms, after-action review forms and sign-in rosters must be emailed to the exercise section at exercise@adem.arkansas.gov

ADEM will allow up to 10 people from local jurisdictions to participate in the monthly SEOC exercises. This will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

An SEOC exercise can only be used for participation credit once per grant year.

Frequently asked questions regarding exercises

Q. Can two or more counties go together and conduct an exercise as a joint effort but the exercise is only physically held in one location, will each county get credit as "their own" exercise based on them writing an after-action review (AAR) and inclusion of an Improvement Plan?

A. Per EMPG program papers section 4 states "Each person receiving EMPG funding for salary, benefits, or other expenditures must conduct 1 exercise in their jurisdiction and participate in 2 exercises for a minimum of 3 exercises within the grant period of **Oct. 1, 2014-Sept. 30, 2015**." Only the jurisdiction the exercise is physically held in will get credit for the exercise in their jurisdiction. The others will receive participation credit which can count toward the two exercises.

Q. If the hospital exercise is being held in our county can we count it as our one exercise that we put on in order to meet the new requirements for EMPG this year?

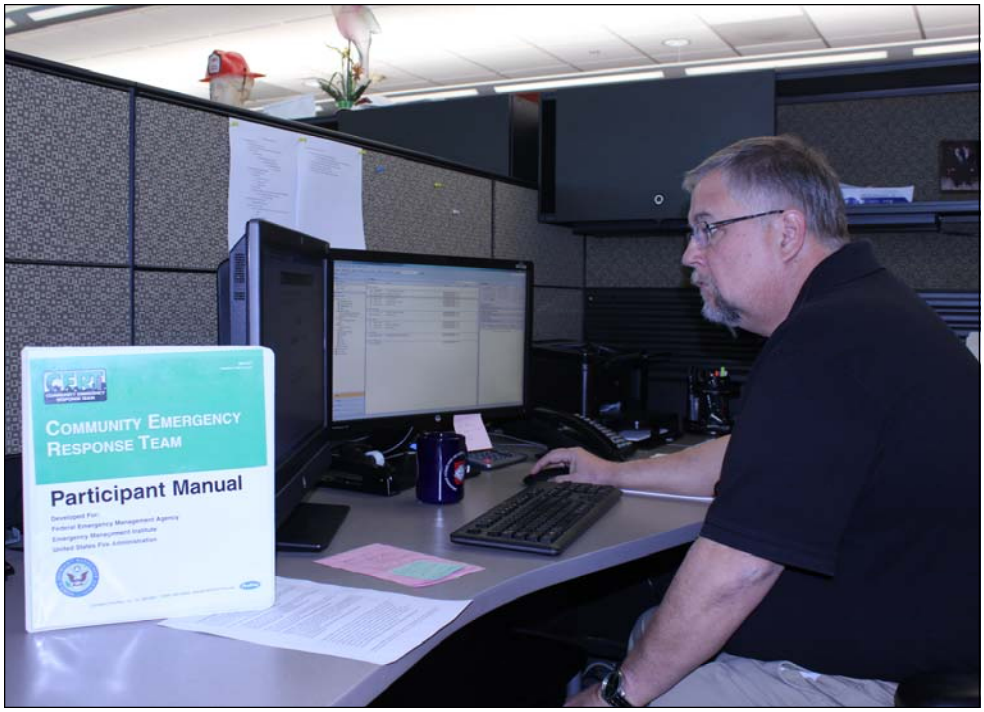
A. Yes with the following 3 requirements: all responders participate, an AAR including the first-responder portions is completed and a sign in sheet is submitted.

Q. Are Exercise Notification forms required to be submitted to ADEM in order for the exercise to count and the AAR to be accepted and counted?

A. They are required per EMPG program papers section 4 states "Exercise notification forms, AAR, and sign-in rosters must be emailed to the Exercise section at exercise@adem.arkansas.gov".

CERT leader

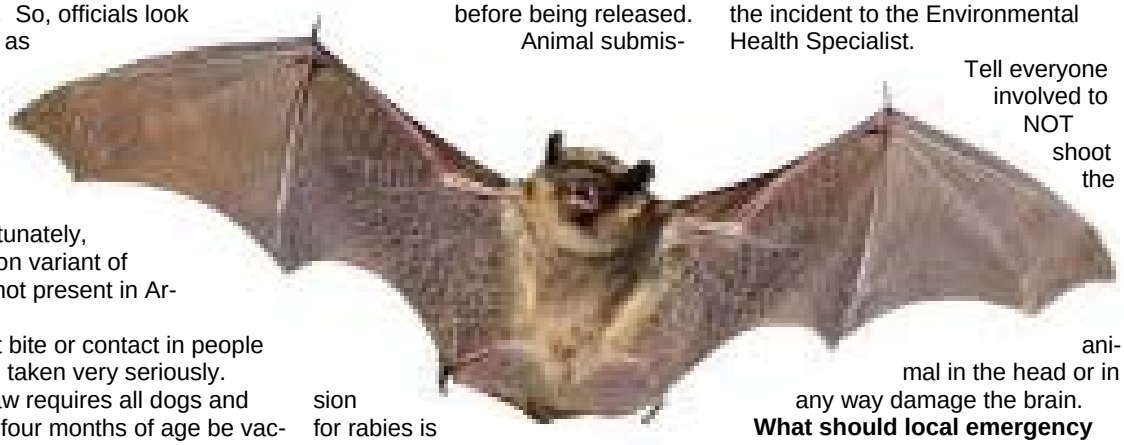
Gary Ragen is new Grants Program Manager at ADEM, and he is excited about becoming the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) manager for the state. He brings more than 30 years of experience gained from local emergency management and response operations to the position. Watch an interview here with Gary in which he talks about his plans for CERT.



Learn about rabies before a case exists

The last three years have had a large increase in number of animal rabies cases and since OEM's may be asked for information or help, here are some tips that OEM's need to know.

In Arkansas, rabies lives in the wild in skunks and bats. In the past, all domestic animals with rabies (dogs, cats, horses and livestock) have gotten it from skunks, rather than bats. So, officials look at skunks as being the biggest risk for our domestic animals. Fortunately, the raccoon variant of rabies is not present in Arkansas.



Any bat bite or contact in people should be taken very seriously.

State law requires all dogs and cats over four months of age be vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian and these vaccines work very, very well. The over-the-counter vaccines purchased at feed and farm supply stores and given by the owner are not acceptable.

The state Department of Health is the primary agency that imposes quarantines. Animal control officers and law enforcement officers assist with this in their jurisdictions. All the animal rabies positives are investigated by the health department's Zoonotic Section, and determination made as to exposures to people as well as domestic animals.

If a domestic animal is exposed to a known rabid animal, AR state law has some quarantine requirements. If current on rabies vaccination, it receives an immediate rabies booster and a 45 day quarantine. If NOT current on rabies vaccination, there is a six month quarantine and it must receive a rabies vaccination at least one month prior to being released. However, it is recommended to be given immediately for preventive benefit.

If a dog or cat bites a person, a 10-day quarantine is required. If the animal was current on the rabies vaccine, no booster needs to be given and the dog/cat is released. If the animal was not current, it must be vaccinated by a veterinarian before being released.

Animal submission for rabies is done through local health units in each county. Specimens must go in a 'rabies bucket' that is available free at every county health unit. Unless the animal is smaller than your hand, the head must be removed before submission. Veterinarians and/or animal control officers will remove heads. Whoever does the head removal must wear protective gear so there is no potential exposure to rabies.

What should local emergency managers do if asked about an animal bite to a person?

Find out where the animal that did the biting is and have it confined. If it has been killed keep the body, or at least the head, chilled.

Call the local health unit and report the incident to the Environmental Health Specialist.

Tell everyone involved to NOT shoot the animal in the head or in any way damage the brain.

What should local emergency manager do if asked about a wild animal with unusual behavior (ex. a skunk out during the daytime) or having contact with people or domestic animals?

Try to have the wild animal either killed or confined in some way, safely. Do NOT shoot it in the head. Keep the body chilled. Call the local health unit and report the incident to the Environmental Health Specialist.

If it is a bat or skunk, we would want the animal submitted for rabies testing, especially if there has been contact with a person.

The state Health Department website has materials about rabies.

The site has maps going back to 1990, as well as the current map that is updated with each new case. The site also includes legal information, such as the Rabies Control Act, rules and regulations, as well as information for medical professionals and the public.

Information provided by Susan Weinstein, DVM, MPH
State Public Health Veterinarian
Arkansas Department of Health
Susan.Weinstein@Arkansas.gov
(501) 280-4136

Jonesboro, Craighead join Smart911

JONESBORO — One of the state's most populous counties has joined the Smart911 community.

In a recent presentation, Jeff L. Presley, Director of the Emergency 911 Communications Center for Jonesboro and Craighead County, discussed the union of area family safety and the latest communications technology innovations employed by the 911 Call Center operations.

"Due to much of the new technology advancement in sophisticated communications equipment and specialty software integrated into our system, we have added a new dimension in our ability to serve our community," he said. "This equates to faster more efficient direct access and management of emergency event data for first responders at a scene with specific personal life saving information in a shorter timeframe."

Kerri King, Emergency Operations Planning Manager agreed.

"Our 911 Emergency Call operation is a very personal mission for each of us carrying the responsibility of saving lives and limiting damage for our Jonesboro and Craighead county families," she said. "Nothing affects our 911 call operators more personally than receiving a panicked call for help and the distraught caller not being able to speak coherently to pass on valuable location and type of event information. Now, with the addition of the new www.SMART911.com integrated into our system, we provide you, as a citizen, the ability to proactively provide important details about yourself and your family to 911 before an emergency happens. Your information is stored in secure facilities and is only made available to our 911 operators when you make an emergency call from a phone tied to your Safety Profile."

The Jonesboro/Craighead county Police and Fire departments, as well as Emergency Medical Transport companies endorse this system and are urging citizens to get online and create their own free Smart911 profile.

Linda Gann, Emergency 911 Dispatcher encouraged residents to fill out their profile.

"We look at our community as an extension of our own family and we care immensely," she said. "We need everyone to join www.SMART911.com and create their free family profile before an emergency happens."

Social media is a need, not a fad

The top benefits to having a social media platform are increases in exposure, website traffic and partnerships. As you know, managing a disaster works best when the public is informed. These days studies are showing that social media is fast replacing press releases. Information released from an organization's Facebook page or Twitter feed goes directly to followers (both media and citizens). This is perhaps the most valuable part of social media for government organizations.

Traditional communication with the public required the media outlets as middlemen and that gave them the ability to alter the original message. Social media allows government representatives to send their message directly to the citizenry and in most cases the media will still pick up that message and echo it word-for-word with shares and retweets. Facebook pages have already made large impacts here in Arkansas.

There are several groups (with memberships from 100-12,000) focused on the Mayflower and Vilonia tornadoes and many of these efforts began the same day of the disaster.

People coordinated to find friends, family and pets. They used Facebook to address donation needs and find volunteer information. Smaller incidents can benefit from social media just as much.

Building a social media presence before a disaster will allow for faster communication with your audience during an event.

Giving out tips and preparedness information will allow the public to respond more appropriately during an event.

Traditional media will only carry some of these messages or will only carry them in parts. Social media on the other hand allows you to send out information when and how you want.

Tips to grow your audience

Define your Brand, Create your Personality
The first step is to decide who you are, what your brand ethos is, what your voice will be, and what types of content you'd like to publish.

Get Talked About, Stay Relevant
Get noticed, make a splash and use every social media channel that is appropriate for your brand to stay relevant. Keep the conversations going on each channel, as consistency is key.

Promote with a Perfect Picture
Grab the attention, stir the imagination and use unique strategies whenever you can. It has been said that social media and visual technology has put the power back into the hands of brands (versus the established media) and, if harnessed well, it can certainly do wonders for your brand awareness.

Manage your Message
When it comes to getting your message across on various social media sites and apps, one size does not fit all. Using the same marketing method or content for multiple media networks may be the quickest method but, in most cases, it is often the least effective.

Federal Surplus Property

Among the items available at Federal Surplus Property: Kovatch Renegade MFD fire truck, 1997, 1250 GPM 4x2, 3,181 miles, 1,963 hours engine, 406 hours pump, $26,500; rolling red tool cabinet (w/tools)
$175 each; sandbags 1,000 bags/ bundle
$12.50/bundle. To view more items, visit the FSP newsletter here.

Public Affairs

How's the view from the podium?

By Rick Fahr
ADEM PIO

Anybody who's ever heard me speak knows two things.

One, I'm not from New Jersey. Two, I sound like a hick from Bumpkinville.

Listen closely, and you'll pick up on something else. I stutter. It manifests itself in a couple ways. Sometimes, I repeat a word. Other times, I can't say a word and have to try to substitute another. The more nervous I am, the more I stutter. No way around it.

But, I enjoy speaking to groups — students, members of civic clubs, church groups, even TV audiences.

To be sure, not all of my statements are great orations. My mind and mouth don't always agree. But it's not because I dislike public speaking.

I'm probably in the minority on that. Lots of people have a true fear of talking in front of large groups of people. There are plenty of reasons that's the case, and some of those reasons make perfect sense. Often, though, the fear is an unfounded sense of potential embarrassment.

Truth is, we all know how difficult it is to talk in front of people. We can empathize with the speaker who loses his notes or who mispronounces a word.

We've been there.

For many of us, part of our work involves (or should involve) regular public speaking. It's imperative for emergency managers to spread their messages of preparedness and mitigation far and wide.

We need to take every opportunity we can to share information, and that will occasionally necessitate a "speech".

"There will be six designated yawning breaks during my presentation. Please pace your boredom accordingly."

I put that word in quotation marks because I don't like to "give a speech". I much prefer talking with people, and sometimes those conversations occur in a group setting.

If you have the chance — or responsibility — to share information verbally in front of a group of people, including media folks, remember a few things to make your talk more effective (and less painful for you).

Prepare. Know your material. The more knowledgeable you are about what you are saying, the more comfortable you will be delivering the message, especially if you take questions from the audience. If you have time, practice your talk a couple times to yourself.

Don't read to the audience. There is little more boring than someone reading word for word, stopping every few seconds to look at the audience. Focus instead on your important points and a thought or two on each. Let the rest of your talk come naturally.

Keep the proper tone. If you're talking about serious subject matter, don't make off-the-cuff remarks, but when appropriate, there is nothing wrong with a bit of levity. But that joke you heard a few years ago? Leave it in the closet.

You don't know what you don't know. There is nothing wrong with saying "I don't know" if someone asks you a question that you don't have the answer to. The audience will better respect an honest answer than one that tap-dances around the subject.

Hold to the allotted time. If the civic group ends its meeting at straight-up 1 p.m., don't run past that time. Use as much time as you need, but don't drone on and on with details that the audience doesn't need and likely won't remember anyway.

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

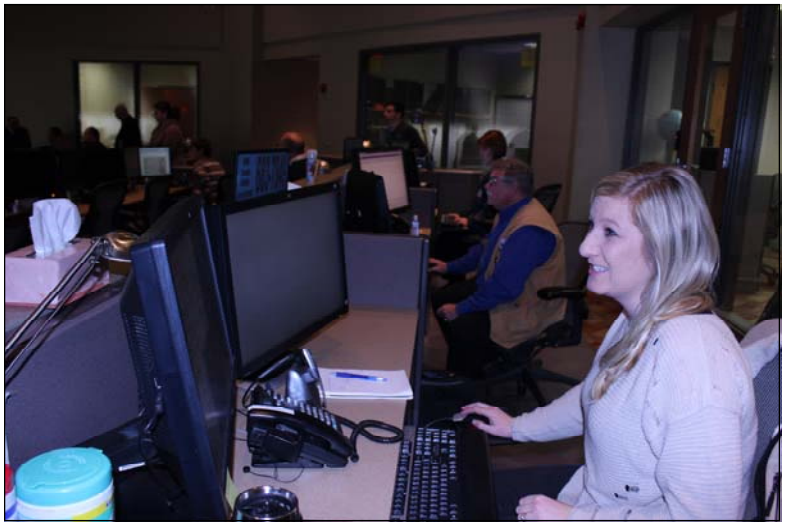
To submit information to ADEM public affairs or request public affairs support, call 501-683-6700 or email publicaffairs@adem.arkansas.gov.

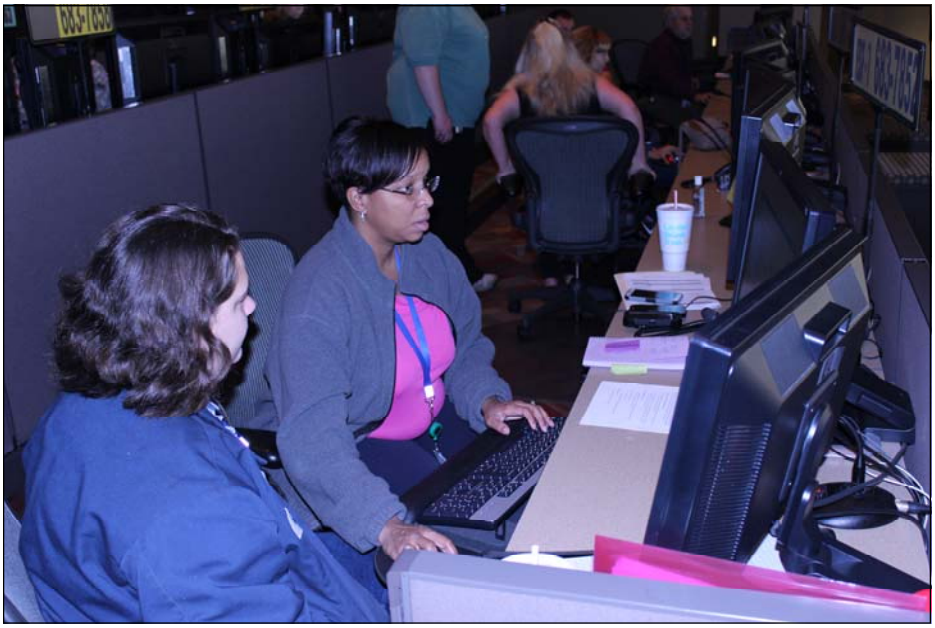
Cenita Wilford, Administrative Specialist at Federal Surplus Property, helps out as telephone support in the public information office during January's exercise as Deputy Public Information Officer Krista Guthrie looks on. Administrative Specialist Ross Schultz compiles data in the background with the help of Katherine Benenati of the state Department of Environmental Quality.

Exercise: Derailment disaster

A simulated train derailment in Pope County, and a subsequent explosion that killed nearly two dozen firefighters, put ADEM emergency managers through their paces in January.

Among the response tasks were containing hazardous materials, evacuating affected areas and setting up shelters.





Participants in the exercise included (clockwise from top) Executive Officer Larry Pullon, Recovery Branch Manager Jodi Lee, Individual Assistance Officer Pam Burton and Federal Surplus Property Property Agent Brandi Roe.