



# MEMA REPORTS

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MEMA REPORTS is a monthly newsletter produced by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to help keep the Public Safety Community of Massachusetts better informed about the day's Emergency Management issues. MEMA REPORTS also appears on the MEMA website: [www.mass.gov/mema](http://www.mass.gov/mema).

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## **GOVERNOR PATRICK ANNOUNCES THE LAUNCH OF FREE SMARTPHONE APP**

On October 5<sup>th</sup>, at a news conference held at MEMA HQ in Framingham, Governor Deval Patrick, Lt. Governor Tim Murray and MEMA Director Kurt Schwartz announced the launch of a new FREE mobile app, *ping4alerts!* This new state-of-the-art tool significantly enhances MEMA's ability to communicate with the public during emergencies. In a matter of minutes, MEMA can highlight an area on a map and then push text messages, text files, image files and audio messages to Smartphone that are in the area that have the app. National Weather Service severe weather alerts are also pushed to phones with the app in affected areas. The app is available today for iPhone and Android Smartphones, and will be available soon for Blackberries. MEMA strongly encourages all Smartphone users to visit the website, [www.mass.gov/mema/mobileapp](http://www.mass.gov/mema/mobileapp) for more information and to download this mobile app. This is a resource that MEMA will share broadly with other state agencies, as well as local public safety, public health and emergency management officials in order to ensure that the public receives warnings about imminent or occurring emergencies and information that will help them take appropriate steps to mitigate their risk.



## **GOVERNOR UNVEILS RENOVATED SEOC**

Following his weekly cabinet meeting, held at MEMA HQ on October 5<sup>th</sup>, Governor Patrick and his cabinet toured and unveiled to the Media MEMA's new state-of-the-art renovated State Emergency

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Deval L. Patrick, Governor  
Timothy P. Murray, Lieutenant Governor

Mary Elizabeth Heffernan, Secretary of Public Safety & Security  
Kurt Schwartz, MEMA Director

Operations Center (SEOC). This is the first major upgrade to the SEOC since it was built in the early 1960s. The project included opening up walls, raising the floor for wiring, removing 'permanent' portions of the raised Command Area, and installing new communications and display technologies. These improvements significantly enhance MEMA's abilities during disasters and emergencies to maintain situational awareness, coordinate state response and recovery efforts, including support to cities and towns, facilitate intrastate and interstate mutual aid, and facilitate requests for assistance from the federal government. Following the ceremony, MEMA hosted an Open House as hundreds of invited guests from federal, state and local emergency management, public safety, public health, the private and volunteer sectors viewed the renovated SEOC, recently upgraded Communications Center and the new Mobile Emergency Operations Center and Communications Support Trailer.

### **WIRELESS EMERGENCY ALERTS/COMMERCIAL MOBILE ALERT SYSTEM ON CELL PHONES**

Another tool for State Emergency Officials and the National Weather Service (NWS) to alert the public to dangerous conditions - called Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)/Commercial Mobile Alert System (CMAS) is being implemented. WEAs are one part of FEMA and the FCC's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) which also includes traditional methods such as the Emergency Alert System (EAS). Wireless Emergency Alerts are already being issued by the NWS for Flash Flood, Tornado, Hurricane, Tsunami, Blizzard and certain severe weather warnings. MEMA expects to be approved shortly as the primary agency to originate these types of alerts in Massachusetts. If you have an older model cell phone, you may not receive the Wireless Emergency Alerts. Check with your cell phone provider to find out if your phone is WEA-capable. These short messages may look like a text message and are limited to 90-characters. Other key information includes:

- Other than having a WEA-capable phone, there is nothing that needs to be done by the user, no "opt-in" or sign up required.
- The alert message will include a unique ringtone and vibration that will be repeated twice.
- Cell phone users WILL NOT be charged for WEA Messages.
- Emergency alerts will not interrupt any calls or downloads in progress. You will receive the alert when your call is finished.
- The system does not identify your location or phone number. It simply sends the message to all devices in a given area.

### **NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH QUITE SUCCESSFUL**

National Preparedness Month officially ended on September 30<sup>th</sup>, but emergency preparedness is a year-round process. MEMA encouraged emergency preparedness in several different ways during September. Daily preparedness tips were posted both to MEMA's *Facebook* and *Twitter* accounts with ways to get better prepared. MEMA worked in cooperation with FEMA's *Ready.gov* "Today is the Day Before Campaign" (<http://www.ready.gov/today>) by stressing the importance of preparing before emergencies occur. 'The Blizzard of 1978' was the event featured for MA on the *Ready.gov* site. MEMA also partnered with Walmart to help increase preparedness by having all Walmart stores in the Commonwealth display preparedness information and group emergency kit items together in the stores. MEMA also discussed emergency preparedness with the public at many events during the month including at the Big E (Eastern States Exposition) in West Springfield, events at North and South Station in Boston, and several private and public sector safety fairs. Preparedness Month was a success nationally, as well as within the Commonwealth. Over 21,000 signed up to become Coalition Members (pledging to promote Preparedness activities throughout the year), with over 1,500 events taking place, reaching over 1.5 million people. MA had 459 Coalition Members sign up, (14<sup>th</sup> overall), which is a 113% increase over 2011. MA also was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> nationally with 69 state and local Preparedness events. Keep looking for updates to the preparedness section of the MEMA website over the next few months.

## **UPCOMING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE/DEBRIS MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE**

Save the Date! On December 19, 2012, MEMA will be hosting the 2012 Statewide Public Assistance Program/Debris Management Conference at The Log Cabin in Holyoke. This day-long, no-cost event will offer guidance and best practices on FEMA's Public Assistance Program—including debris management—within the first 72 hours of an emergency and beyond. This conference will provide participants an educational opportunity to learn about various debris management and public assistance program topics and hear real-world experiences from keynote speakers and local, state and federal subject-matter experts. This conference will allow participants to share ideas and gain knowledge through a series of break-out workshops, presentations, and panel discussions. The target audience for this event is state and local emergency management, public works officials, and municipal leaders. A formal announcement, including registration instructions, directions, agenda topics and conference contacts will be available soon.

## **SEPTEMBER TRAINING UPDATE**

During this past month, an additional 60 individuals took part in 4 different classes, receiving training through MEMA in the following subject areas: *ICS-300* and *ICS-400*. Year-to-date, 1,434 individuals have been through various MEMA trainings. For additional information regarding MEMA Training and future classes, go to [www.mass.gov/mema](http://www.mass.gov/mema)

## **SOCIAL MEDIA CLASS A SUCCESS**

The MEMA Training and Exercise Unit successfully conducted two “Social Media for Disaster Response and Recovery” courses on October 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>, offered by the National Disaster Preparedness Training Center at the University of Hawaii. (The 2<sup>nd</sup> class had to be added due to the overwhelming demand.) MEMA, in partnership with Framingham State University, identified this training need to allow participants the opportunity to learn about social media and how it can play a vital role in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. Participants were provided the knowledge and skills to integrate social media into their communications plan.

## **MASSACHUSETTS CHOSEN BY DHS TO LEAD FIGHT AGAINST CYBER THREATS**

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), National Cyber Security Division (NCSD) is continuing the implementation of the Community Cyber Security Maturity Model (CCSMM) Program. This DHS-funded program is underway in several states and communities. Those that have embarked on the process have enjoyed marked success in using the CCSMM Program as a tool to bring together leadership and resources to protect against and respond to growing cyber threats. The Center for Infrastructure Assurance and Security (CIAS) at The University of Texas at San Antonio developed the CCSMM Program and has been delivering it nationally for the last five years. The program has provided a roadmap for participating states and communities to develop a viable and sustainable cyber security program. This year, the Commonwealth was one of 31 states to express interest in the program. With support from local and state leaders, MA was selected as the next state for implementation of the DHS-sponsored Community Cyber Security Maturity Model. This selection was based on a set of criteria approved by DHS. On behalf of MEMA, and the cities of Boston and Springfield, MA put together a successful and compelling package, hence scoring the highest out of the 31 states that competed. Planning efforts are now ongoing.

## **OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH**

National Cybersecurity Awareness Month reminds us that being safe and secure online is a shared responsibility. During the month of October and throughout the year you should act and join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in “Achieving Cybersecurity Together.” While increased connectivity has led to significant transformations and advances across the world, it has also increased our shared risk. Every day, criminals and terrorist organizations use cyberspace to exploit

vulnerabilities. Their goal is to steal money, ideas, and information. In some cases they may disrupt, threaten, or destroy the availability of critical services such as electric power and running water. Combating evolving cyber threats requires the engagement of our entire society, from government and law enforcement to the private sector and most importantly, members of the public. It only takes a single infected computer to potentially infect thousands and perhaps millions of others. During National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, DHS is asking everyone to take these basic steps to improve your online safety and to protect cyberspace: Use antivirus software; Be careful which websites you visit; Do not open emails or attachments that look suspicious; Set strong passwords, and don't share them with anyone; Keep your operating system, browser, and other critical software optimized by installing updates; Maintain an open dialogue with your family, friends, and community about Internet safety; Limit the amount of personal information you post online, and use privacy settings to avoid sharing information widely; and Be cautious about what you receive or read online – if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Additional information can be found at <http://www.dhs.gov/blog/2012/10/01/achieving-cybersecurity-together>.

### **NATIONAL CYBER PLEDGE**

The [Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center \(MS-ISAC\)](http://www.ms-isac.org) has launched its “Cyber Pledge” contest, which aims to raise awareness about staying safe online and encourages individuals to confirm their commitment to doing their part to keep cyber space safe. This pledge is one of several initiatives underway to celebrate National Cyber Security Awareness Month this October. The MS-ISAC, a division of the Center for Internet Security, is the focal point for cyber threat prevention, protection, response and recovery for the nation's state, local, territorial and tribal (SLTT) governments. MA is a member of the MS-ISAC and is pleased to participate in this national pledge. The contest is conducted September 10th through October 31st, 2012 and you may sign the pledge by visiting <http://msisac.cisecurity.org/cyber-pledge/>.

### **MEMA STAFF UPDATE**

Bill DeCola was recently welcomed to the MEMA Team, serving as a Communications Dispatcher.

### **PILGRIM PRACTICE EXERCISE**

On October 10<sup>th</sup>, MEMA staff successfully completed the final practice exercise of the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station Emergency Plan, in preparation for the biennial federally-graded exercise scheduled for November.

### **ONGOING NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL WORKING GROUP PROJECTS:**

#### **Regional Commodities Distribution Working Group**

The Regional Commodities Distribution Project will provide the Region with the following:

- Best Practices Analysis based on existing commodities distribution plans and case studies both within New England and across the Nation.
- Comprehensive Capabilities/Needs Assessment and Regional Gap Analysis, for commodities distribution practices within the New England Catastrophic Preparedness Initiative (NERCPI)
- Regional Commodities Distribution Annex that outlines a strategic vision and universal logistics standard, and is complementary and supportive to existing local and state plans, and also the FEMA Region 1 All Hazards Plan/Resource Management Annex;
- Commodities Distribution Plans for Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Boston Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI), and Providence UASI that address jurisdiction-specific operational and tactical elements of commodities distribution and are reflective of relevant current planning efforts (i.e. Resource Management Systems, etc.);



- Commodities Distribution Template for other NERCPI jurisdictions to follow in order to develop a commodities distribution plan that is both consistent with the Regional Commodities Distribution Annex and jurisdictional procedures for commodities distribution; and
- Training Needs Assessment that outlines a recommended program of logistics training needs at the strategic, operational, and tactical level.

### **Regional Disaster Housing**

The Regional Disaster Housing Coordination Project will provide the Region with the following:

- An evaluation of existing nationwide models and case studies to develop a Best Practices Analysis, adaptable for usage within our Region;
- Comprehensive Regional Survey and Gap Analysis of disaster housing preparedness within the region, including an assessment of relevant local, state, federal, and private support available pre-, during-, and post-disaster;
- An analysis of available housing stocks in the Region (vacancy/foreclosure rates, etc.) and other housing options in an Interim/Long-Term Housing Report; and
- Disaster Housing Planning Template for local and state jurisdictions to utilize in developing consistent post-disaster mitigation, recovery and reconstruction plans. This will include “**cut-sheet**” **appendices** for quick reference to plan material, an Executive Playbook to provide critical tasks/decision points, and checklists and templates to assist local and state agencies in accessing available assistance/resources as part of their recovery process.

### **Regional Evacuation**

The Regional Evacuation Project will provide the Region with the following:

- Transportation-based Capabilities/Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis relative to catastrophic incidents necessitating evacuation within the Region;
- Development and/or refinement of a Local Evacuation Plan Template for communities within the Region;
- Development of an Integrated Regional Multi-Modal Evacuation Plan as an annex to the Regional Catastrophic Coordination Plan. The Plan will focus on integrating state and local evacuation plans at the strategic level, and will include communications, public information, and resource support elements as well as incorporate other NERCPI deliverables;
- Regional Database of evacuation route and resource data and, if timeline/budget allow, development of a **scalable geospatial evacuation tool** to assist in situational awareness and evacuation decision making for local and state authorities. This plan may leverage and build upon existing Geographic Information System (GIS) data sets and GIS tools available in the region, and will include threat-based evacuation timelines for notice and no-notice events;
- Development of an Integrated Regional Emergency Debris Removal Plan, scalable in approach and integrated with local/state plans;
- Development of a Regional Integrated Emergency Fuel Plan; and
- Development of a Regional Integrated Re-Entry Plan.

### **Regional Sheltering/MassCare**

The Sheltering/Mass Care Plan will provide the region with the following:

- An evaluation of existing nationwide sheltering models and case studies to develop a Best Practices Analysis, adaptable for usage within our Region and including Functional Needs, Animal Care, Mass Feeding and other relevant Mass Care planning elements;
- A Capability/Needs Assessment and a Gap Analysis for available assets and resources necessary to support one or more large-scale shelters within the region. The guidelines for the shelters will be based upon existing American Red Cross and Federal guidelines, and will factor in current plans and authorities;
- Development of a Regional Sheltering Coordination Plan that prioritizes asset and resource acquisition to fill identified gaps based upon current capabilities and future projected needs; and
- A Sheltering/Mass Care Plan Template for local and state jurisdictions in line with best practice and accepted regional formatting. This will include recommended procedures for shelter site location identification, Memorandum of Understanding/Memorandum of Agreement (MOU/MOA) development, resource pre-positioning and activation timelines.

### **POST-DISASTER HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT FUNDS AVAILABLE**

MEMA and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) recently announced the availability of FEMA post-disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds. This post-disaster hazard mitigation grant funding is available as a result of the federal disaster declaration for the October 2011 Snowstorm. Grant program briefings and technical assistance opportunities will be held throughout September in different locations – the deadline for submission of HMGP applications is December 3, 2012. The grant briefings will provide an overview of the HMGP program, eligible activities, available funding and relevant application process/deadlines. Interested sub-applicants considering submission of an HMGP application are strongly encouraged to attend a scheduled briefing. Details regarding the grant program briefings are available on the 'Hazard Mitigation Grants' portion of the 'Disaster Recovery & Mitigation' section of the MEMA website at [www.mass.gov/mema](http://www.mass.gov/mema). Funding for hazard mitigation plans and projects is intended to reduce overall risks to the population and structures, while also reducing the reliance on taxpayer-funded federal assistance for disaster recovery. State & local governments, tribal organizations and certain private non-profits may be eligible to apply with projects that can include storm-water upgrades, drainage and culvert improvements, property acquisition, slope stabilization, infrastructure protection, seismic and wind retrofits, structure elevations, etc. This HMGP funding is available to all communities in the Commonwealth that meet the sub-applicant and project eligibility requirements. FEMA's hazard mitigation grant programs are not intended as a source of funding for repair, replacement or deferred maintenance activities, but are designed to assist sub-applicants in developing long-term, cost-effective improvements that will reduce or eliminate risk/damage to people and property from the effects of natural hazards. Projects that address operation, deferred or future maintenance, repairs or replacement (without a change in the level of protection provided) of existing structures, facilities, or infrastructure (e.g., dredging, debris removal, replacement of obsolete utility systems, bridges and facility repair/rehabilitation) are not considered eligible mitigation grant activities.

### **MUTUAL AID AGREEMENTS**

MEMA continues to encourage all communities and governmental entities to take advantage of the opportunity to opt into the Statewide Public Safety Mutual Aid Agreement and the Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement program. To date, 233 entities are on board with the Statewide Public Safety Mutual Aid Agreement and 162 have signed onto the Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement. See the list at [www.mass.gov/mema](http://www.mass.gov/mema). Local officials with any questions regarding the Agreement should contact their MEMA Regional Office or Allen Phillips, MEMA Operations Manager at (508) 820-1426 or [allen.phillips@state.ma.us](mailto:allen.phillips@state.ma.us).

## **RMS INVOLVEMENT CONTINUES TO BE ENCOURAGED**

Additional communities are encouraged to complete Resource Management System (RMS) Training and begin to actively enter and update their resources and facilities into the system. The RMS, which was developed with financial support from the state's Homeland Security Councils and the Executive Office of Public Safety & Security (EOPSS), is a secure web-based system that may be used by all cities and towns, state agencies and other emergency management partners including public works, public health and emergency medical services, to facilitate emergency and non-emergency mutual aid across the Commonwealth. MEMA urges all cities and towns, agencies and organizations to take full advantage of RMS by using it as an internal inventory management system and to facilitate emergency and non-emergency mutual aid support. The success of the Resource Management System, meaning the degree to which it helps municipalities, agencies and organizations locate needed resources during emergencies, ultimately depends on the commitment of the system's users to complete the training, enter their resources (equipment, people and specialized teams) into the system, and to keep the system updated. To date, over 100 entities have completed Resource Management System (RMS) Training, with over 30 actively entering and updating their resources and facilities into the system. MEMA is presently testing a mobile version of the RMS Website. Please contact your respective MEMA Regional Office to request additional assistance, if needed.

## **FEMA RECOGNIZES LOCAL EFFORTS**

FEMA has announced the multi-state recipients of the 2012 Individual and Community Preparedness Awards. These awards recognize innovative practices and achievements of individuals, Citizen Corps Councils and non-profit, faith-based, and private sector organizations working throughout the nation to make communities safer, stronger and better prepared to manage disaster or emergency events. Two MA organizations were recognized for their efforts: Barnstable County Sheriff's Office CERT was runner-up in the 'Outstanding Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Initiatives' and the MA Office of Disabilities was runner-up in the 'Awareness to Action' category.

## **NATICK LAB DESIGNATED STORMREADY**

The National Weather Service has recognized the Natick Soldier Systems Center (Natick Lab) as a *StormReady* military installation. NSSC is the first military installation in New England to be certified as *StormReady*. To become storm ready, NSSC met or exceeded established criteria in six areas: communication; National Weather Service information reception; Weather and Water monitoring systems; local warning dissemination to include NOAA Weather Radios in key locations; community preparedness -- safety/spotter talks and employee education and administrative tools/record keeping. Each *StormReady* site that is recognized represents several thousand more people that are better prepared, whether it be in a town, a city, a college or university, a commercial site, or a military base. This program encourages communities to take a new, proactive approach to improving local hazardous weather operations and public awareness. *StormReady* arms communities with improved communication and safety skills needed to save lives and property before and during an event. MA now has 16 *StormReady* sites (11 communities, 3 universities, 1 commercial site and 1 military site. For more: [http://www.army.mil/article/88525/National\\_Weather\\_Service\\_deems\\_Natick\\_StormReady/](http://www.army.mil/article/88525/National_Weather_Service_deems_Natick_StormReady/)

## **SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND WEATHER CONFERENCE**

The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Southern New England Weather Conference will be held on Saturday, October 27<sup>th</sup> at Meditech Corp. in Canton, MA, located at the base of the Blue Hills. The conference is sponsored by the Blue Hill Observatory Science Center. Unlike previous conferences, which covered a wide range of meteorological topics, this year's event will explore in-depth 3 major events that occurred in 2011: 1) June 1 Springfield/Monson/Brimfield Tornado; 2) Tropical Storm Irene; and 3) "Snowtober" - the late October snowstorm. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Greg Forbes, the Severe Weather Expert from *The Weather Channel* in Atlanta, to discuss the very severe 2011 that struck the entire

nation. Also, before the conference, there will be a "Breakfast with Matt" with some tidbits about various weather websites. Registration (collected by Blue Hill Observatory Science Center) after September 10 is \$99 (\$109 at the door). This includes a continental breakfast and lunch buffet provided by Rita's Catering of Boston. Conference website: <http://www.snewweatherconf.org>.

### **HURRICANE SEASON WINDING DOWN**

As the 2012 Atlantic Hurricane Season nears November 30<sup>th</sup> (the official end of the Atlantic Hurricane Season) there have been 16 named storms, eight of which reached hurricane strength. To date, Hurricane Isaac remains the only storm which seriously impacted the U.S. Mainland, leaving a path of flooding and damage along the Gulf Coast. The only storm of consequence to New England has been Hurricane Lesley, producing high seas and rip currents. Hopefully the trend continues as we continue to watch the South Atlantic.

### **NAMING/CATEGORIZING WINTER STORMS ON THE HORIZON**

During the upcoming 2012-13 winter season The Weather Channel will name noteworthy winter storms. Their goal is to better communicate the threat and the timing of the significant impacts that accompany these events. The fact is that a storm with a name is easier to follow, which will mean fewer surprises and more preparation. Hurricanes and tropical storms have been given names since the 1940s. In the late 1800s, tropical systems near Australia were named as well. Weather systems, including winter storms, have been named in Europe since the 1950s. Important dividends have resulted from attaching names to these storms. Read more and see some suggested names offered by TWC <http://www.weather.com/news/weather-winter/why-we-name-winter-storms-20121001>. There is also a campaign afoot to categorize snowstorms as we do hurricanes or tornadoes. See the chart: [http://vortex.accuweather.com/adc2004/pub/includes/columns/margusity/2012/920x780\\_02011451\\_winterstormindex.png](http://vortex.accuweather.com/adc2004/pub/includes/columns/margusity/2012/920x780_02011451_winterstormindex.png).

### **NEDRIX ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

On October 22<sup>nd</sup> through 24<sup>th</sup>, the Northeast Disaster Recovery Information X-Change (NEDRIX) will offer their 2012 Annual Conference at the Hyatt regency in Newport, RI. Details about the conference, which is entitled "Strengthening Regional Resilience: A 'Whole Community' Approach" are available on the NEDRIX website: <http://www.nedrix.com/>.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA ADDRESSES**

MEMA has streamlined its Social Media addresses: Twitter is [www.twitter.com/MassEMA](http://www.twitter.com/MassEMA); Facebook is [www.facebook.com/MassachusettsEMA](http://www.facebook.com/MassachusettsEMA); and YouTube is [www.youtube.com/MassachusettsEMA](http://www.youtube.com/MassachusettsEMA). And do not forget to download the *ping4alerts!* app.

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