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Overview:

The devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy has served as a reminder for my department to continually improve the County's resilience to disasters and our ability to optimize our response to save lives and protect property. One of the most important actions we have taken in the last quarter towards this goal was our training on the procedures to quickly activate the Emergency Operations Center and staff it with personnel trained to coordinate local, state, and federal resources in response to a disaster within our county. We also began the process of bringing Story County and its jurisdictions together to revise the county hazard mitigation plan. We began revision of Emergency Support Function (ESF 11) Agricultural and Natural Resources, which address disaster response actions connected to these issues, and ESF 7, which outlines procedures we will use to track and prioritize disaster resources. The office also conducted a drill to test our ability to activate resources to care for motorists directed into Ames should the Iowa Department of Transportation close I-35. While we are pleased with our accomplishments, the list of things to do still remains very long and pressing.

Planning:

In the evening of Nov 8th, thirty-seven people attended the kick-off meeting for the revision of the Story County Multi-jurisdictional/Multi-hazard Plan. This meeting was designed to provide jurisdictions an overview of the planning process, initiate the process of gathering historical information on past disasters and to collect their current hazard mitigation strategies. This also involves gathering citizen inputs through paper and electronic surveys. Story County will be responsible for conducting research to gathering this information for the unincorporated areas of the county and the EMA is working with Supervisor Sanders on this project.

Our office is tackling the revision of ESF 11/Agriculture and Natural Resources which is somewhat unique in that the animal disease/pest aspects of this plan requires development of processes to integrate a state and/or federal agency as the incident commander into our command and control structure. This command and control design is significantly different from the one used for most disasters which typically builds from incident commander in our local jurisdictions through the county EOC up to the state and federal level. This planning effort is particularly pertinent to the County administration as an outbreak of animal disease will most likely occur within the jurisdiction of the County. We are also revising ESF 7/Resources which address the procedures to procure resources to support an emergency

Prevention

Preparedness

Response

Recovery

Mitigation

response, track them while they are being used, and capturing the value of services provided by the resource.

The EMA has been working with representatives from DuPont, Iowa State University, and Story County agencies to assess the potential fire risk that might be associated with bulk storage of the corn stover.

Training:

The Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (IAHSEMD) hosted the annual Governor’s Conference in November and it provided some very good information. Two presentations directly related to Story County operations; Joplin’s Road to Recovery and the Tuscaloosa Emergency Response. The presentation on Joplin’s Road to Recovery focused on their process for long term recovery. It demonstrated the value of beginning the recovery process by immediately getting inputs from the public on how to best repair this damage, but then recognizing that it is important to continue this dialog with the public during the recovery process which extends out for years. The EMA hopes to integrate these lessons learned into revisions of our recovery plans.

Second, Walter Maddox, the Mayor of Tuscaloosa when they were struck by a tornado, brief the actions they need to take to respond to this disaster. The most important contributor to the success of their response was the training his administration had prior to the tornadoes, which allowed his command and control team to quickly come together and perform well under pressure. Mayor Maddox’s presentation reinforces the value of the EOC training that was conducted in three sessions during October. Again, the Emergency Management Agency would like to thank all the elected officials and department head for the support they have shown for our efforts to have a well-trained EOC staff. We had very good turn-out for the training which should have tied the previous training sessions together to allow the EOC staff to have a basic understand of how we will stand-up the EOC and what their roles and functions will be.

The Coordinator attended training on planning for special events, which dovetailed on a presentation at the Governor’s Conference about the collapse of the stage at the Indiana State Fair. While the majority of the causes for the deaths and injuries were associated with decision making by the management, one issue that was highlighted was the development of ordinances for temporary structures and the inspection process for these structures.

Exercises:

The Deputy conducted a drill to evaluate the ability of the Iowa DOT, Story County EMA, Ames, Iowa State University, Ames Convention & Visitors Bureau, and the Red Cross to work together to ensure that if I-35 is closed, motorist and trucks that are diverted into Ames will be directed to adequate parking and lodging. This exercise validated the hard work of the Deputy to revise this plan.

Operations:

The EMA's office twice began the process to activate the STAR 1 search and rescue team for missing persons within Story County. Fortunately, both individuals were located prior to full activation of the team.

Emergency Management continues to monitor the growing impacts of the drought. We have been working with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to use our social media outlets to distribute information connected with the agricultural aspects of the disaster.

We continue to work with Public Health as they develop the concept of a medical coalition to service Story County.

Goals:

For Last Quarter:

- 1) Conduct workshop to train for EOC personnel: Complete.
- 2) Development the FY 14 budget: With Emergency Management Commission members for review and comment.
- 3) Hazard mitigation planning: Underway.
- 4) Map out the Story County 800 MHZ radio system to develop contingency plans for degraded operations: Underway - a member of the Story County Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES), Bill McCall, has taken on this project using federally provided software. He is inputting this data for all three dispatching agencies within Story County.
- 5) ESF revision: ESF 11 and 7 revision underway.

Next Quarter:

- 1) Conduct workshop with response agencies to refine communications procedures.
- 2) Complete draft of ESF 7/Resources and ESF 11/Ag and Natural Resources.
- 3) Start planning of ESF 10/HAZMAT and ESF 15/Public Information Ops and External Affairs
- 4) Conduct the second hazard mitigation planning meeting in February.
- 5) Begin severe weather public awareness campaign Severe Weather Awareness Week March

25th-29th. The State Wide Tornado Drill will be March 27th, 10:00AM.