



Melissa Spencer, Coordinator

Board of Supervisors Update

As of March 10, 2023

Response:

Responded to two significant snow events with impacts to Story County. The Christmas blizzard included a 16-hour closure of I-35 at Ames. This storm brought approximately 30 semis and used approximately 100 hotel rooms during the closure. The second storm in February coordinated response planning for the potential of a winter storm closing I-35 in Minnesota and the Iowa Department of Transportation's (IDOT) plans for I-35 in Iowa. The closure points north of Des Moines are Ames and Mason City/Clear Lake exits. Luckily this storm did not cause a closure. Early notification from the National Weather Service for both events, allowed us to preplan with response partners and be ready to meet sheltering and parking needs. Because of local relationships, the Coordinator was able to participate in a conference call with the IDOT and directly ask their plans for the February storm. Thank you to all of our partners for their quick assistance with these two events.

Preparedness:

Planning

The contract for the update of the County-Wide Hazard Mitigation Plan has been signed with WSP, formerly Wood, who completed the previous update 5 years ago. The first meeting on March 29, 20023 at 6PM over Zoom. The agendas for all meetings will be emailed and posted on in the agenda center on the County website. FEMA's planning focus, in addition to schools and jurisdictions, is the inclusion of diverse community-based organizations and populations. We have identified several local organizations and will be inviting them to the planning process. In order for communities, the County, and school districts to be eligible participants in the plan, they have to attend 2 of the 3 meetings and develop at least one mitigation strategy. By participating in the plan, jurisdictions are eligible for pre and post disaster hazard mitigation funds.

The Strategic Planning Committee met for the first time. Cooper and Spencer provided an overview of the current state and background data to consider moving forward. The Committee reviewed and made recommendation for the Planning Training & Exercise (PTE) survey that will got out to jurisdictional executives and first responders. The responses will assist the Committee in determining the needs of these groups and the focus of the agency. Thank you to Supervisor Murken for participating in this planning.

School security assessments have been completed for all districts in Story County. As of this report, the Gilbert, Nevada and Ames Christian Schools have applied for grant funds. Not all school districts chose to share their assessments. We will be reviewing the ones we received over the next few months.

PREVENTION

PREPAREDNESS

RESPONSE

RECOVERY

MITIGATION

Proudly serving the communities of:

*Ames – Cambridge – Collins – Colo – Gilbert – Huxley – Kelley – McCallsburg – Maxwell- Nevada
Roland – Sheldahl – Slater – Story City – Story County – Zearing*

Intern Samantha Scharper, as part of developing the reunification plan, facilitated several meetings with potential response partners. So far we have met with Karla Webb from CICIS, Captain Lennie and Lt. Ellis from the Sheriff's Office, Melissa McCoy with Iowa 211, Angela Berenz from FBI Victim Services. We have initial commitments from each organization to participate in the continued planning process. Scharper will now look to plan smaller break out sessions to flesh out the plan.

Training

Conducted EOC staff training to prepare for the functional exercise with the Ames ICC on April 27th. Twenty-one EOC staff participated in the training. The training used a scenario of a tornado striking Colo to refresh staff on operations before the exercise.

Spencer participated in a webinar with Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) for child care providers across the state that are developing their emergency plans. Spencer introduced the providers to emergency management across Iowa and how they may be able to assist them as they develop their plans.

Attended CO2 Pipeline Awareness training provided by Navigator for local first responders. Attendance was very low with only four Story County first responder agencies present. Navigator is promising there will be a grant opportunity for departments to receive financial assistance with purchasing needed equipment to respond to a pipeline incident.

SCEMA hosted and attended Administrator training on the Iowa Alerts System provided by Iowa Homeland Security. This was a good refresher for Spencer and good in person training for Cooper.

Exercises

Operations

Considerable amount of time has been spent by Spencer developing and reviewing agency policies and procedures. Procurement and Recruitment were updated due to federal grant requirements and agency operations. A new On-Call Compensation policy and Emergency Driving Policy will be coming in the next few months. Thank you to Alissa Wignall for her assistance with the On-Call Policy.

We are working with ISU researcher Anne Kimber and her staff on a grant funded project to determine alternate energy resources for communities. We will assist them as the initial conduit to community leadership and provide general local knowledge for disaster response and recovery. We previously worked with this research group in relation to a portable solar powered generation system that could be utilized during prolonged power outages.

Assisted Christ Community Church with a grant application from the Non-Profit Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP). They are planning to purchase portable communications equipment to assist them with communications across their large foot print. Collegiate Methodist Church is also applying for funding for increased security measures.

The SCEMA is applying for HSGP funds to replace PC bases for the Emergency Operations Center. (EOC) The current bases are provided by IT when they exchange out old computers and are already 4-5 years old when they come to the EOC. We are working with IT to ensure the bases we would purchase meeting the security guidelines of the County if the grant is awarded.

Met with Mike Frechette with Team Rubicon about the disaster recovery services they may assist with. They will take about 1 week to organize members and deploy. They specialize in muck and gut along with rebuilding teams. Team Rubicon is now open to non-military volunteers.

Looking Forward

Severe Weather Awareness Week will be March 27-31 with the State-Wide Tornado Drill on Wednesday March 29th starting around 10:00 AM. We will be using our social media for public education during the week and will be participating in the state-wide tornado drill.

The EOC/ Ames Incident Command Center (ICC) functional exercise will be April 27th.