

PREPARED

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NEWS

MANAGING THE CHALLENGES of CHANGE

by Tommy Grier, Director, Colorado OEM

Colorado

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Wow. According to the 2000 census, Colorado was the third fastest growing state in the United States during the 1990's with Douglas County leading the nation with 191 percent population growth during the decade. Eight of the nation's twenty fastest growing counties were in Colorado: Elbert was third followed by Park, fifth; Eagle, tenth; Archuleta, fourteenth; Summit, fifteenth; Custer, seventeenth; and San Miguel, eighteenth. On the other end of the spectrum, Baca, Cheyenne, Jackson, Kiowa and San Juan counties lost population. The changes associated with either the increase or decrease of population creates unique challenges for communities.

Colorado statutes provide local governments with sufficient enabling legislation (tools) to plan for and regulate the use of land, including the extraterritorial powers which give one jurisdiction certain powers over land use activities in a different jurisdiction. These tools include traditional and overlay zoning, master plans, 1041 regulations, subdivision regulations, intergovernmental agreements and others. But local officials face tough decisions in trying to find a balance which accommodates the rights of land owners with the interests of developers and special interest groups. Do we allow sprawl like Los Angeles, or promote density? Ever been to Tokyo or Hong Kong? How about open space and hazard areas?

Comprehensive planning at the local level is a challenge which requires research of hazards and at risk population/property, projections of growth and the concomitant infrastructure requirements, life support and community services, and a crystal ball on future financial resources. It is essential that emergency managers are engaged with their planning

department as well as first response agencies, contiguous jurisdictions, and locally based state and federal agencies as they take a holistic view of emergency management and plan accordingly. And we all need to be thoughtful about the impact of shifts in population and business densities on demands for services versus available tax bases with which to pay. Remember, doing more with less is an oxymoron!

We also need to change our mind sets about hazard seasons. While we know that HAZMAT and WMD incidents have no season, we tend to tie natural hazards to seasons or areas purely based on probability of occurrence. Who said tornados are not a threat to the mountains? Remember the tornado in Manitou Springs upslope of the Pikes Peak cog railway in 1979. How about the thunder storm which occurred the last week in March in Boulder while it was snowing. And the latest one for you: "Colorado Severe Weather and Wildfire Awareness Week" (April 22-28) focused the public on the threat of violent thunderstorms, tornadoes, floods and mud slides, and wildfire. **SURPRISE!** The spring blizzard in the eastern plains on April 10-11 did an estimated \$4 million plus damage to rural electric associations (REAs) serving the area. At this writing, we are doing a joint damage assessment with FEMA and the affected REAs, despite the absence of other infrastructure damage, to determine if we can meet the criteria for a presidential declaration. This, too, is a change from our past experience.

It's been said that the only constant in life is change. We can best deal with it with a good, sound, coordinated planning process.

AGRICULTURAL DISASTERS TAKE EMERGENCY MANAGERS DOWN A DIFFERENT PATH

by Steve Douglas, Director, Pueblo County OEM

My office had a number of lessons learned last year regarding agricultural disasters that are worthy of sharing. If you have experienced a local or regional natural disaster that impacted agricultural resources, as well as public and non-agricultural property, you may have already noticed that facilitating recovery efforts relative to that ag damage involves different processes and players than other recovery efforts do. Pueblo County had such an experience following the April-May Flood Disaster of 1999. When agriculture is the only sector heavily impacted by an event, the differences become much more vivid. That was the situation in Pueblo County last year when a severe hailstorm drove across the heart of our irrigated farmland July 20th, one week before harvest. Hail damage to homes and automobiles was largely covered by insurance and therefore did not factor into a disaster declaration. There was no damage to public infrastructure. In contrast, **crop damage totaled approximately \$16 million**, affecting many crops that were uninsurable (no coverage available). **The impact on the agricultural sector of our local economy was and remains, significant.**

From an emergency management perspective, the differences we encountered recovering from an ag disaster relative to others are as follow:

1. **Disaster Declarations** need not follow the same "domino" approach (local -> state -> federal) to mobilize resources and lay the foundation for federal aid. State and federal damage assessment teams will mobilize without a local or state declaration being issued. The local disaster declaration may be omitted entirely and still have federal disaster aid provided to local ag producers. But, if local government intends to provide financial assistance through their TABOR emergency funds, a local disaster declaration must be made. At the state level, the Governor may send a letter to the Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture requesting specific counties receive designation as disaster-impacted counties and thereby be eligible for various types of federal aid. That is not strictly a disaster declaration, but it has a similar effect. In our case, it resulted in a Secretarial Natural Disaster Declaration.

2. **Damage Assessment** is conducted by a team that is quite different from what you would mobilize to respond to damage to public and non-ag infrastructure. It may be comprised of agricultural specialists from the USDA – Farm Service Agency, USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service and CSU Cooperative Extension. That was the case in Pueblo County last year. They were in the field the morning after the hailstorm and they did an excellent job. They do not require a disaster declaration to mobilize.
3. **Recovery Assistance** does not follow an agricultural disaster at nearly the pace it does now through FEMA for other types of loss. Results of the damage assessment and subsequent claims are reviewed (and perhaps revised) by agricultural boards at the local and state levels, before being passed on to the federal level. In years like 2000, when agricultural damage is extensive and widespread nationally, the process can take a long time. That is not offered as criticism, but it is reality.

If you are an emergency manager with an agricultural element in your community, you might be wondering what your role is in this process. There may have been no EOC activation, unless it is to support recovery. The reporting responsibilities may fall on another agency. The USDA – Farm Service Agency (FSA) will likely have the lead in this process. The majority of the claims process will also be the responsibility of FSA, even if the county sets up a claims office to assist through their TABOR emergency funds.

In years like 2000, when agricultural damage is extensive and widespread nationally, the process can take a long time.

So, what is our role as emergency managers? At the very least, we can assist with public information and perhaps, data management (GIS?). To learn more, contact your local USDA and CSU Cooperative Extension representatives; discuss tasks and resources; and then develop a plan that works for your community...if you haven't already done so.

Boulder County Emergency Management

by Larry Stern, Director

Each year In Boulder County we average: 100 wildfire starts, 150 search and rescue missions, 12 hazmat team callouts, a dozen SWAT callouts, and at least one riot. Monthly meetings of our MAC (Multi Agency Coordination) Group prepare the County to handle major events and disasters.

Although we experienced seven large wildfires in the year 2000, finishing with the 1100 acre "Walker Ranch Fire," and have had over 30 large fires, including the "Black Tiger Fire" and the "Olde Stage Fire" since 1962, our number one hazard continues to be the threat of major flooding.

Boulder County has seven major drainages that could produce flooding anywhere in the County. Due to the steepness of the drainages within the mountains, as little as 3 inches of rain in three hours could cause flooding. Four of those drainages; South Boulder Creek, Boulder Creek, North Boulder Creek and Four Mile Creek, impact the City of Boulder and could cause major damage to property as well as loss of life. Two drainages, the North and South Saint Vrain, join east of the Town of Lyons and would cause major damage and loss of life. The Left Hand drainage would impact the Town of Ward and several subdivisions on its way eastward. All drainages pass through the City of Longmont on their way to the Platte River.

The 100 year flood event is the standard event prepared for in flood forecasting, mitigation, response, and recovery. The last 100 year event occurred in 1894 (I was just a kid), before Barker Dam was constructed, and was not considered to be a flash flood. Several smaller events have occurred in Boulder County since then that range from 25 year events to 50 year events.

Due to the nature of storms causing heavy rains west of the populated areas, warning times could be as little as 40 minutes. This causes intense "awareness" of storms especially during peak run off periods from melting snow in the 300 square miles of mountains in Western Boulder County and causes our Emergency Preparedness Group to monitor, track, forecast, and warn, in case of impending floods.

After the Big Thompson flood in 1976, Boulder County began installing flood forecasting gauges in cooperation with the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District. To forecast floods we have installed 46 rain gauges and 15 stream gauges that report to two software programs; have color nexrad radar; and information from a private meteorologist as well as the National Weather Service.

To warn citizens, we ...

- purchased the Emergency Warning and Evacuation System/Emergency Preparedness Network, a 911 callback system to automatically dial and warn citizens at the rate of 1200 calls per minute;
- installed 28 outdoor warning sirens, most with voice capability;
- have "cable interrupt" capability including going "live" during the "Soaps"; the "citizen alert" system in schools, banks, and other major businesses;
- and have suggested that "NOAA weather alert" systems be purchased by concerned citizens.

We have a "flood exercise" annually that simulates a storm somewhere in the County and allows us to use our detection and forecasting system to forecast and warn the public, City of Boulder buildings and schools in the flood plain to evacuate to higher ground.

MITIGATION CLASSES SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED

As requested by local jurisdictions, the Colorado Office of Emergency Management hosted three mitigation workshops around the state, titled Multi-Hazard Mitigation Workshops for Colorado Local Governments. These were one-day eight-hour workshops. Attendees included local emergency managers, planning and health department personnel, and fire and sheriff department personnel. Topics included strategies and techniques for mitigating hazards and potential funding



sources for projects. **Clancy Philipsborn** of The Mitigation Assistance Corporation and **Marilyn Gally** of the Colorado Office of Emergency Management provided the program.

Spring forward proves successful for Mitigation Conference

by Denise Tomlin, Public Affairs Specialist,
US Forest Service

The Colorado Mitigation and Wildfire Conference, traditionally held in September, is now a successful springtime event. The fifth annual conference was held in Longmont, Colorado, on March 30-April 1. In addition to remembering to change their clocks forward, the 200+ attendees enjoyed a wide variety of presentations and vendor booths. Representing 15 states, there were registrants, speakers and staff from as far away as Alaska, Florida, and Massachusetts.



Just a few of the trucks...

Opening keynote speaker, Colorado State Forester **Jim Hubbard**, welcomed the very diverse group. In addition to members of all branches of the fire service, the conference was attended by sheriffs, county commissioners, planners, homeowners, insurance representatives, emergency managers, students, and business owners. **Lyle Laverty**, Forest Service head of implementation for the National Fire Plan, discussed ways in which the fire plan will affect each of those groups. He also presented prestigious national awards. The national Bronze Smokey Bear award was presented to the Pikes Peak Wildfire Prevention Partners, an interagency group of citizens, local, state and federal agencies, the military, businesses, and public schools. The Partners were cited for outstanding work in wildfire prevention since 1994. For the first time in the Rocky Mountain Region, a national Silver Smokey Bear award was presented. The winner for the 2000 season is **Karen Bergethon**, of the U.S. Forest Service in Pueblo, Colorado. Karen's nomination was endorsed by agencies in five states. She was cited for development and expansion of cooperative fire prevention efforts on a multi-state basis. Karen received a standing ovation from an appreciative audience.

Break out sessions on media, prescribed fire, air operations, and a host of other topics filled the days.

Evening keynote speaker **Paul Gleason** presented his perspectives on the decision points at the Cerro Grande incident at Los Alamos, NM, last season. His first-hand account of the events made for a fascinating evening.



Vendor participation was great!

Between sessions, attendees took advantage of the opportunity to look at new products and services presented by vendors in indoor and outdoor displays. While some "window shopped" and made lists, others pulled out their wallets and took home the merchandise. Some of the best quality take-home of the conference was free – the valuable contacts and discussions that happened in the hallways and over meals.

A highlight of the conference was the Saturday morning keynote address by **Dr. Jack Ward Thomas**, former chief of the U.S. Forest Service. Currently a professor at the University of Montana, Thomas provided a look at "getting past the blame game" when it comes to addressing the wildland/urban fire situation.

Saturday luncheon speaker **Congressman Mark Udall** captured the attention of the audience by explaining some of the legislative tools, proposed and currently in place, which are designed to attack wildland fire issues. An active exchange of questions and answers capped his presentation.



Strike team participants...

Since conditions proved too wet to conduct a planned live fire exercise on Sunday, three strike teams of engines completed preparedness and triage exercises instead. Other attendees enjoyed informative tours on Forest Management, Prescribed Fire, and Homeowner Mitigation.

Wake up Call

by Clyde Anderson, Moffat County Emergency Manager

Wednesday, March 14, 2001 was a typical winter day in Craig. Another winter storm had blown its way into Moffat County. This kind of storm was not unusual for Northwest Colorado. Snow, wind, icy roads, poor visibility and drifting snow were expected with such a storm, and this was a bad one. There had been a rash of traffic accidents earlier in the morning but by noon, things had quieted down. I decided to drive home for lunch and see how badly my driveway was drifted. Finding snow drifting over Colorado Highway 13 north of Craig, I called CSP dispatch on the radio and reported the poor road conditions, estimating visibility at less than 100 yards in places.

Reporting to a one o'clock meeting, I noticed that the clouds were breaking up a little. Tiny patches of blue sky were beginning to show up here and there, but they would quickly move out of sight, being replaced with dark clouds and heavy snow squalls.

At 1:56 PM, the meeting was interrupted by an urgent phone call. An excited caller from the Moffat County Municipal

Airport had already assumed that nobody would believe him. "We just had a heavy land out here, they went off the runway and they're stuck in the mud, really, I'm not kidding." Cutting through the aeronautical jargon, our caller was reporting that a large, commercial aircraft had landed in Craig. This may not seem like much of a crisis, but Moffat County's Airport is a small, General Aviation Airport with a narrow runway less than a mile long. There is no control tower, no gates, and no fire fighting or rescue equipment on site. It is designed for use by small aircraft only.

Since this incident was reported direct to Emergency Management, communications personnel were unaware of the incident. Arriving on scene, at about 2:00 PM, I advised the CSP communications center that we had a commercial aircraft on the ground. A TWA MD81 aircraft was stuck in mud at the east end of the runway. Approaching the nose of the aircraft, I was relieved when the Co-Pilot yelled to me that everyone was OK. Ground transportation would be needed for the 123 persons on board.

My using the terms "Commercial Aircraft" and "stuck in the mud" while talking on the radio may have been a bad idea. These phrases seemed to set off an alarm among the scanner listeners in town. Within five minutes, calls began coming in from national media reporters. Within 10 minutes a news reporter from a local television station was on scene. The CSP communications center and Moffat County Sheriff's Offices were overwhelmed with phone calls. Within 15 minutes traffic control was needed to deal with the large traffic volume. Fire/Rescue and EMS were called to stand by as a precaution. Within one hour from the time the aircraft landed, all passengers and luggage were aboard

ground transportation and on the way to the Yampa Valley Regional Airport in Hayden, which was their intended destination. Everyone was safe, sound.

Reviewing the incident with the flight crew revealed that during a heavy snow squall, while on an instrument approach to the Yampa Valley Regional Airport in Hayden, the pilot had visually observed the



Stuck MD 80...

Moffat County Airport through a break in the clouds. According to the FAA investigation, he landed the plane without checking his instruments. He was supposed to land on a 10,000 foot runway about 17 miles to the east. Being unable to stop the aircraft, the pilot had swerved onto a small turn-around at the end of the runway. This little bit of pavement gave him enough extra room to shave off enough speed. The wheels going into the soft dirt helped also, bringing the aircraft to a stop without doing any real damage. Although the pilot and co-pilot made an error by making a visual landing, their actions in saving the aircraft were certainly commendable. They did a great job saving the aircraft and getting it stopped.

Emergency Managers always come up with a lot of "what if" questions, and this incident was no exception. What if the pilot had been unable to stop and had gone off the end of the runway? The aircraft would have sustained major damage and a fuel spill would have been very likely. The results would probably have involved a large fire. A major Mass Casualty incident would have been a certainty.

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Wake Up Call...

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A Mass Casualty incident of this magnitude would immediately overwhelm all county resources and normal mutual aid resources. Resources from outside our usual mutual aid areas would be needed. Response times for these resources would be several hours. Injured victims could quickly become hypothermic, as they would not be prepared for single digit wind chill factors. To put things into another perspective, the Memorial Hospital in Craig has an Emergency Department with a capacity of 8 patients. The closest level III trauma center is Steamboat Springs, which is an hour away under good conditions.



Command Post

This incident should serve as a warning to rural areas like Moffat County that have limited resources. Emergency responders in these areas may not be used to handling larger incidents. Because of this, there is a great need to conduct frequent disaster exercises in rural areas. We all know that it can be a sacrifice to participate in drills. There are budget concerns that often result in a reluctance to pay overtime to full-time emergency personnel. Volunteer agencies sometimes don't want to burden their people by requiring them to spend even more volunteer hours on days off from their regular jobs. But what's the alternative? If we don't practice larger scale incidents through disaster exercises, we can't be prepared to handle one when it happens.

In spite of all our computers and automated systems, mistakes will continue to be made. Mistakes like the one made recently in the skies over Moffat County can have devastating results.

We don't have any control over mistakes like this one, but it is certain that we will be expected to efficiently respond to the aftermath. Moffat County may be able to mitigate this kind of incident to some extent by making physical improvements at the airport site, but the main weapons we have to use against this kind of event are planning, training and practicing our skills by conducting and participating in exercises. Any jurisdiction could have a mass casualty incident occur at any time. Our only hope for an efficient response is to be prepared at all times.

El Paso County Continues Hazard Mitigation Efforts

by Marilyn Gally, State Hazard Mitigation Officer

On April 20, 2001, El Paso County representatives met to move another step towards creating a disaster resistant

county. El Paso County, the successful 2001 applicant for FEMA's Project Impact grant, held its convening meeting in Manitou Springs at The Cliff House. After warm greetings from local, state and federal officials, master of ceremonies Jim Mesite (the El Paso County emergency manager) kicked off the meeting, which included a variety of activities designed to identify hazards, community concerns, and potential projects. El Paso County has two years under this grant to complete projects.



Jim Mesite

The meeting was well attended by private citizens, private industry representatives, local elected officials, and local, state and federal agency representatives.



Wildfire Mitigation Projects Undertaken in Jefferson County

by Judy Peratt, Director, Jefferson County Office of Emergency Management

Jefferson County has been very pro-active in their mitigation efforts, in particular, wildfire mitigation. The County has seen the need and taken steps to aggressively address the wildfire problem. The partnership with the county and fire protection districts in coordinating wildfire mitigation programs to the citizens of Jefferson County has proven to be extremely effective.

The Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners should be credited with the foresight to bring a full-time wildfire mitigation specialist on board this year. This position is already proving to be invaluable with the direct contact with the fire protection districts, homeowner associations, developers/contractors and our own planning & zoning and building departments in providing wildfire mitigation concepts and defensible space techniques.

Land Use Planning - Jefferson County has participated with the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) in land use planning since the early 1970's, requiring defensible space, fuel break and forest-wide thinnings in newly-platted subdivisions. Beginning in 1994, the county began the revision of its land development and zoning regulations to better reflect wildfire concerns. After a two-year public review process, the county adopted the 1994 Uniform Building Code, the 1994 Uniform Fire Code and created a Wildfire Hazard Overlay Zone. Within this zone, roofing must meet Class "A" construction and material standards, all new construction (and additions larger than 400 square feet) must have defensible space thinning completed prior to the release of a building permit, and private roads and driveways must meet new standards for width, grade and turn radius that all fire departments within the county agreed to. In addition, all new plats must have an approved Forest Management Plan that addresses wildfire hazard mitigation.

Wildfire Mitigation Plan - Using Colorado's Wildfire Mitigation Plan as a model, the CSFS and the county's Planning Department developed a County Mitigation Plan. This plan has guided mitigation efforts of numerous agencies within the county.

County Wildland Fire Coordinator - In the past, the county has funded a wildland fire coordinator to work on mitigation and suppression related issues. These duties are now being handled by the Wildfire Mitigation Specialist and the Critical Incident Response Director.

Wildfire Mitigation Specialist - A fulltime Wildfire Mitigation Specialist within the Department of Emergency Management is on staff to plan, coordinate and implement an aggressive public awareness and education program for proper wildfire mitigation techniques.

Defensible Space Forester - CSFS provides a forester to conduct defensible space marking and inspections under the Wildfire Regulations. This position is funded in full by fees charged to conduct the inspections.

Critical Incident Response Director - This position acts as the Sheriff's fire liaison and provides insight and communication of wildfire concerns.

Jefferson County Fire Council - The Fire Council has been active for more than 20 years and has acted as a consolidated voice, both to and from the local fire districts. Recognizing the special needs and concerns of the mountain-area departments for interface issues, the council created a sub-committee, the Wildland Fire Committee.

Fire Crews and Equipment - Several fire "crews" have organized from fire protection districts within geographical parts of the county. These resources can be called upon as mutual aid by departments within the county. These crews have organized independently of, but with the sanction of their departments and the Fire Council. They train as a unit and develop their own standard operating procedures, unique to their geographical areas and needs. CSFS has provided and refurbished two equipment trailers. Tools have been donated through Fire Council and Jeffco Open Space. Money provided through the fireworks fund made it possible for larger items to be purchased. Teams currently in place are: Jeffco 285, Jeffco 70, Jeffco 93 and Jeffco 470.

Wildfire Hazard Clean-up Program - The County has provided funds annually to develop collection sites where people can bring limbs and branches from their properties and from defensible space thinnings for disposal.

Wildfire Safety Tips Brochure - Jefferson County Public Information, Emergency Management and Colorado State Forest Service developed brochures for citizens living in the wildland urban/interface areas. The brochures are shared with the fire districts, libraries and State Forest Service for distribution throughout the county.

Wildland Fire Committee - This committee meets every other month and reports to the Fire Council. The committee developed the local IMG concept (see below); is responsible for coordinating and conducting annual county-wide fire training, including annual table-top and live mobilization exercises, and conducts interagency informational meetings to market itself to agencies.

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Wildfire Mitigation Projects Undertaken in Jefferson County

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Incident Management Group (IMG) - The IMG formed knowing that when a large scale fire occurred within the county, someone must manage the fire for up to 36 hours, until a state or regional fire management team could arrive and assume command. Built along traditional ICS lines, but using local forces, the IMG trains annually for this responsibility. The team has been used in '96 with the 12,000 acre Buffalo Creek Fire; '98 Beaver Brook, Linnegar, Bear Track fires; 2000 Hi Meadow Fire and several smaller fires in the county. The concept of the IMG is spreading throughout the state. The team has provided information and training to Douglas, El Paso, Clear Creek, and Summit counties.

Fire Management Caches - Evergreen Fire Protection District, CSFS and the Jefferson County Fire Council have jointly developed mobile caches of equipment and supplies needed for fire management. The caches can be requested by departments or the IMG.

Wildfire Hazard Mapping - In conjunction with CSFS, the county has converted existing wildfire hazard and fireline-intensity maps to a geographical information system (GIS). The county is exploring methods to develop wildfire hazard maps using information available within existing GIS data layers.

Wildfire Pre-attack Plans - A basic format for pre-attack plans has been developed, field tested in several local subdivisions, and distributed to fire protection districts for their use. Jefferson County Open Space is contracting with CSFS to develop pre-attack plans for selected parks and properties.

Forest Management and Fire Mitigation Plans - Plans have been prepared for several mountain subdivisions. Implementation is underway in Genesee, The Promontory, Homestead, Hilldale Pines, Douglas Ranch, Conifer Ridge, and The Ridge at Hiwan.

Genesee Fuelbreak Program - The Genesee Foundation, using their own crews, thin about 25 acres of their open space lands each year. Material is piled and a "community burn" is conducted each winter by CSFS using foundation crews, fire protection district personnel, and homeowners. The activity is topped off by a "firehouse chili luncheon".

Prescribed Fire - Prescribed fires on agency lands are used as training for fire protection district personnel. This "live fire" training is an invaluable tool for demonstrating fire behavior and the use of fire as a mitigation resource. Jefferson County Open Space has contracted with CSFS to develop a prescribed fire program for its open space lands.

Fire Weather Program - Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, along with the state and US Forest Service, Evergreen Fire Department and the Urban Drainage & Flood Control District, developed a fire weather and fire danger rating program that covers the entire county.

School Property Mitigation Plans - Forest management and mitigation plans have been prepared for those schools in the mountain area that have significant land ownership. Plans and thinnings are underway for Conifer High School, West-Jeff Middle School, Windy Peak Outdoor Lab (including a joint sale with USFS to develop fuelbreaks), and the Mount Evans Outdoor Lab.

Colorado Mitigation and Wildfire Conference - West-Metro Fire Protection District, Jefferson County, Jeffco Fire Council, COEM, and the CSFS sponsor a three-day conference and field exercises for suppression agencies, elected officials, planners, architects, and homeowners. Topics emphasize fire management, planning, and mitigation. Jefferson County participated in the 2001 conference held in Longmont on March 30, 31 and April 1st.

Fire Management Program - Coordinated by CSFS, all major non-state, non-federal public lands within the county are managed under a similar fire program that allows reimbursements to fire protection districts for suppression costs. Cooperating: Denver Mountain Parks, Jefferson County Open Space, City of Golden, and Denver Water.

Hilldale Pines Project - A voluntary enrollment program supported by the Forest Stewardship Program has had more than 100 homeowners have their properties marked for defensible space thinnings.

Matrix Sign Display - A joint prevention program with Colorado Department of Transportation. When fire danger reaches very high to extreme, the large matrix signs over I-70 and Highway 285, where the roads enter the foothills, display the message, "Foothills Fire Danger Very High".

Wildfire/Flood Task Force - Representatives from Jefferson County Emergency Management, Road and Bridge, Sheriff's Office, Public Information, Open Space, CSFS, USFS, Urban Drainage & Flood Control District, National Weather Service, and Fire Council meet biweekly starting April 1st through September. Discussions focus on wildfire in dry conditions to floods in wet conditions. Consensus on Fire Bans is coordinated with state and local Fire Officials before proceeding with Fire Ban implementations.

"Things may come to those who wait, but only the things left by those who hustle."

--Abraham Lincoln

CEPC News

by Richard Bardsley, COEM

CEPC Annual LEPC Conference: The annual Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Conference will be held at the Colorado Hotel in Glenwood Springs, CO on September 13 and 14, 2001. Glenwood was selected because of its central location, access to both the western and eastern slopes. **Now is the time to mark your calendar!**

The attendance policy has been amended slightly from past conferences. Each single jurisdiction LEPC may send three representatives and each multi-jurisdictional LEPC may send four representatives. If your LEPC would like to send more - please submit applications for the extra representatives. They will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

The CEPC will supply a room for the nights of September 12 and 13 for those traveling more than one hundred miles to attend the conference. A room for the night of the 13th will also be provided for those traveling between 50-100 miles to attend. Reimbursement will be made in accordance with the State Fiscal rules for per diem and travel. Travel reimbursement has been increased to \$0.28 per mile for use of a Privately Owned Vehicle (POV). Breakfasts and lunches are provided both days.

The Hotel Colorado will extend the conference rate of \$82/per night to anyone who wants to spend the weekend after the conference. Attendees will be responsible for reservations and charges for anything other than the room. Submit your Form 75-5 EZ to COEM, 15075 Golden Road, Golden, CO 80401. Get an application from your LEPC or by calling COEM at 303.273-1622. The hotel is located at 526 Pine Street, Glenwood Springs, CO 81601. The hotel reservation line is 1.800.544-3998.

To supplement the Annual Conference, three regional one-day meeting/workshops are being considered for the May, June, and July time frame. Locations under consideration for these one-day activities are Durango, Ft. Morgan, Craig and Trinidad. More information will be distributed when available. Information regarding the conference agenda, activities, and the regional workshops will follow. We hope to see you there!!

CEPC Vacancies: The Colorado Emergency Planning Commission (CEPC) is a twelve member commission appointed by the Governor. Five of the positions are statutorily appointed and they are: one from COEM, Department of Local Affairs; one from Department of Public Health and Environment; one from the Division of Local Government, Department of Local Affairs; one from Division of Fire Safety, Department of Public Safety; and one from the Colorado State Patrol. The seven remaining positions represent the following areas: two from local

government; two from community groups; two from affected industries; and one from the LEPC community. These seven positions are appointed by the Governor, usually for a two-year period. The seven appointed members terms expire on June 30, 2001. If interested in one of the positions, you should fill out an application, attach a resume, and forward it to the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions, c/o Colorado State Capitol, Denver, 80202. Applications can be obtained from your LEPC, the CEPC, COEM or the Governor's Boards and Commissions Office.

CEPC Outreach Meetings: The CEPC has a policy of holding one meeting per quarter outside of Denver. The CEPC met March with the El Paso County and Colorado Springs LEPCs in Colorado Springs. The next meeting is June 14 in Greeley to meet with the Weld County LEPC. More information will be provided, however meetings are open to the public and all local government representatives and interested parties are invited and encouraged to attend. If your LEPC is interested in hosting a CEPC meeting, please contact any CEPC member or either of the CEPC Co-Chairs Susan Jones-Hard at 303.692-3019 or Richard Bardsley at 303.273-1619.

Colorado Attends Project Impact Conference

Colorado was well represented at the annual FEMA Region 8 Project Impact Conference, held April 11-13, 2001. Attendees included **Rich Sales** from Delta, **Laura Nay** from Clear Creek County, **Steve Enfante** from Morgan County, **Jim Mesite** and **Joe Loop** from El Paso County, and **Kevin Kuretich**, **Jeff Brislaw** and **Marilyn Gally** from the Colorado Office of Emergency Management. Due to their extensive knowledge and successful implementation of the Project Impact program, Rich, Laura, Steve and Kevin were invited to speak on various topics. All participants felt the conference was informative and afforded a good opportunity for sharing ideas and success stories.



Regional News & Views



The Decision *Steve Denney*

We have all been in the position of making an immediate decision. Should I buy the brown shoes or the black ones; should I eat at Burger King or Healthy Habits; should I evacuate the sub-division or shelter in-place. Obviously, some decisions are of greater importance than others. The question is: are there decision making models that are more appropriate for use in a crisis situation, or are all methods similar and applicable under any circumstance?

Some of the current research centers on cockpit crisis communications. In the event of an in-flight emergency, pilots must communicate effectively and make immediate decisions that affect the lives of all on-board the aircraft. In a micro study, Mary J. Waller found that the timing of communications was more often a better indicator of success than the quantity of communication. "She found that crews that made mistakes had the same number of conversations as the high-performing crews, but did not engage in information exchange at the right time." (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)

As emergency managers work toward developing an effective coordination system, they must look at issues related to timely decision making. When a disparate group comes together to provide incident coordination/support, they often do not have common expectations of what mechanism will be used to provide the incident commander(s) with resource support. Questions that should be addressed include, but are not limited to: how will priority incidents be identified; how will resource allocation decisions be made; and how will those decisions be tracked?

Development of a clear decision making protocol for use by the coordination function is important for the success of incident support activities. Decision making considerations might include:

Situation Awareness

- Recognize need for action
- Ability to see future events
- Obtain/provide information in advance
- Demonstrate on-going awareness of incident(s) needs

- Identify vulnerabilities
- Briefings
- Good sense of time
- Red flags—change (larger/faster), expectations not being met, lack of communication

Decision Making

- Gather/display data (not any data, relevant data)
- What are the consequences of an action plan
- Justification for an action plan
- Watch out for
 - o Tired people
 - o Mental stress
 - o A person who needs to talk
 - o Over confidence
 - o Acceptance of increasing risk
 - o Not receiving/distributing resources
 - o Multiple agency involvement
 - o Tracking actions taken in your head (not on paper)
 - o Reluctance to ask for assistance
- Groups will take more risks than individuals (groupthink)
- Keep options open
- Provide clear management guidelines

In future editions of Prepared, I would ask that the professionals in emergency services provide input as to how they make decisions in the crisis mode. Emergency managers could use this information in development of emergency coordination protocols and procedures. As a community of interest, I think all emergency management professionals will benefit from an exchange of ideas regarding the process of crisis decision-making.

Storm Ready Accredited

A Program for Hazardous Weather Preparedness

Kevin Kuretich

The National Weather Service honored Yuma County as being the first county in Colorado to be designated StormReady. The NWS's new program entails the weather service working with counties and communities implementing an efficient action plan that responds to the threat of all types of severe weather, from tornadoes to blizzards.



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Yuma county has a strong network of storm spotters, a system to warn citizens through cable television, Emergency Notification to warn residents by telephone, and a NOAA transmitter in the area. Yuma County Office of Emergency Management has installed hundreds of weather radios in homes and businesses throughout the county. There are signs located at each county line along the main highways stating that Yuma County is StormReady.

Why StormReady?

In the last few years, many laws and regulations have been created to help local emergency managers deal with hazardous material spills, search and rescue operations, medical crises, etc., but there are relatively few uniformly-recognized standards dealing with the specifics of hazardous weather response.

Recognizing this need, the National Weather Service (NWS) has designed a pilot program to help cities, counties and towns prepare for disastrous, weather-related consequences.

By participating in this project, local agencies can earn accreditation for their jurisdiction by meeting criteria established by the NWS in partnership with federal, state, and local emergency management professionals.

StormReady Benefits

By successfully participating in the StormReady Program, counties and communities will:

- Establish / improve effective local hazardous weather operations.
- Improve the timeliness and effectiveness of NWS hazardous weather warnings.
- Receive additional Community Rating System (CRS) points from the Insurance Service Organization (ISO). (This applies to those communities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program.)
- Recognize local hazardous-weather mitigation programs that have achieved a desired performance level.

- Provide an image incentive to counties, cities and towns that the community has taken reasonable steps to mitigate the effects of hazardous weather.
- Encourage the enhancement of hazardous weather preparedness programs in locations surrounding StormReady Communities/Counties.

StormReady Criteria

To become accredited as a "StormReady" community, the following criteria must be met:

Communications

24 hour warning point, Emergency Operations Center

NWS Information Reception

Multiple ways of receiving warnings

Hydro Meteorological Monitoring

Monitoring local conditions / monitoring radar data

Warning Dissemination

Multiple ways of alerting the public

Preparedness

Promoting public readiness community seminars

Administration

Formal hazardous-weather plan, training spotters drills/ exercises

Since each community's tax base typically dictates the resources applied to public programs, the criteria listed above are adjusted based on population.

StormReady Information

The StormReady Program is a voluntary program, and is being offered as a means of providing guidance and incentives to officials interested in improving their communities operations.

For information, contact Robert Glancy of the National Weather Service-Boulder 303.494-3210.

WaterGates...

The Morgan County Office of Emergency Management, in partnership with the communities of Brush and Fort Morgan, are reducing damage from disasters in the county. Historically, flooding is the most frequent and damaging emergency in the downtown districts, and this past summer, many homes and businesses have faced flooding problems.

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With the help of local engineering firms, Morgan County OEM has located a supplier of portable gates that can be placed in doorways to keep water from entering and causing damage.

According to **Steve Enfante**, Morgan County Emergency Management Director, WaterGate is a new, easy to install, sturdy steel frame flood gate. The Gate, which can be installed by one person in minutes, is inserted into a rubberized pouch and placed in a doorway or opening. Turning the handle on the top of the Gate expands the gate until the opening is completely sealed. WaterGate is equipped with protective foam padding on the side and bottom to ensure a tight seal and to prevent damage to the doorframe. Rising floodwaters are contained and do not pass through or around the Gate.

At this time, six businesses and two residences have signed on and are installing the gates.

If you want further information on the WaterGate, please contact Steve Enfante at 970.867-8506.

Large Delivery Area

Bob Wold



Not even Pizza Hut can cover as much ground in the state as Colorado OEM's Regional Planners. Regional planners based in Golden and in four field offices give the agency the ability to maintain closer contact with communities in the farthest reaches and corners of the state.

Prior to 1993, all employees of Colorado OEM were based at Camp George West in Golden, including planners and other staff that worked most closely with local government officials. Direct contact with communities was naturally less frequent, presenting obvious challenges to the agency's ability to develop and maintain strong local-state working relationships.

During the mid-1990s, in an effort to improve customer service and place emergency management planners closer to the communities that they serve, four regional planners were added to existing Department of Local Affairs field offices in Grand Junction, Pueblo, Loveland and Durango.

Five regional planners and the state training coordinator make up the Plans, Training and Local Programs Section, which helps local governments to achieve their emergency management goals by providing technical assistance with respect to strategic planning, emergency plan development, community preparedness, disaster recovery, hazard mitigation, and training and exercise support.

Role of the Regional Planner

The principle responsibility of the regional planner is to support local emergency managers in the development of comprehensive, sustainable emergency management programs. Emphasis is given to customer service, and to providing local officials with information regarding best practices in the emergency management field. Regional planners and the training coordinator assist local governments in the following ways:

- planning assistance** – including analysis of local hazards, preparation of emergency operations plans, formation of incident management groups, and development of hazard education campaigns;
- training assistance** – including management and delivery of the state emergency management training program and annual conference, development of new training curricula, providing briefings to local elected officials, and support of local training activities;
- exercise assistance** – including assistance in the design and conduct of local emergency training exercises and maintenance of an exercise reference library; and
- grant administration** – including assistance with administration of federal pass-through funds and the Search and Rescue Grant program, and assistance to local governments in identifying other grant sources for planning and hazard mitigation activities.

The establishment of planning regions and the move to out-station planners has strengthened local-state partnerships and yielded a number of other benefits, including:

- greater **familiarity**, on the parts of state staff, with people, places and hazards in local communities, and a better appreciation of local challenges and issues;
- stronger **liaison** role and a direct link between local and state officials before, during and after the occurrence of a disaster;

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- ❑ improved **regional cooperation** and inter-jurisdictional coordination on emergency management issues,
- ❑ better **information-sharing**, including the transfer of success stories and lessons learned from one jurisdiction to another; and
- ❑ improved **efficiency**, including offering better customer service and serving as a single point of contact for information about resources and assistance available from other sources.

For further information and assistance, please contact a member of the Plans, Training, and Local Programs Section.

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NWS Radar Images Available on the Internet

by Bob Glancy, Warning Coordination Meteorologist
National Weather Service, Boulder, CO

The National Weather Service now has real time radar information available on the internet from every NEXRAD radar in the United States. The data is free and current. This data will be an excellent tool for emergency managers and storm spotters to monitor thunderstorms and snow.

The data includes:

- low level base reflectivity
- composite reflectivity
- radar estimated one hour precipitation
- radar estimated storm total precipitation

How do you get this information? All you have to do is get on the internet and go to your favorite National Weather Service site. In Colorado, go to:

for Denver (northeast Colorado)
www.crh.noaa.gov/den

for Pueblo (southeast Colorado)
www.crh.noaa.gov/pub

for Grand Junction (western Colorado)
www.crh.noaa.gov/gjt

for Goodland (Kansas/ Colorado border area)
www.crh.noaa.gov/gld

Once on the site, click on radar. The most recent image of the base reflectivity for the local radar will display. You can display a loop or timelapse for any of the data listed above. From one radar you can click directional arrows to go to adjacent radars. For example, if you are looking at the Denver radar and you click the arrow pointing west, you will move to the Grand Junction radar display. You can also display national and regional displays and loops.

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NWS Radar Images Available on the Internet

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Is this the same data that your warning forecaster at the National Weather Service is using? YES, it is a portion of the data we look at to make warning decisions on storms. We are not turning you into warning forecasters, but this data will greatly improve your ability to monitor storm development and movement. The data will be helpful in deploying storm spotters, making decisions on snowplow operations, and a number of other weather related decisions.

The Warning Coordination Meteorologist at your local National Weather Service Forecast Office is available to answer questions on the radar data. ...and we could offer classes on radar interpretation on a state or local level if enough interest is generated.

**“Not everybody could be famous, but everybody can be great because greatness is determined by service.”
--Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968)**

Weld County Needs More Items for Museum

The Weld County Missile Silo Museum is again requesting any Civil Defense items that anyone would like to donate. They are desperately in need of the old movies involving “duck and cover” or any other flyers, handouts, brochures, or posters.

Please contact **Ed Herring** at 970.304-6544 if you have anything at all. He'll be happy to make arrangements to pick your items up.

Ouray gets public health folks involved in bio-terrorism

by Cheryl Roberts, R.N.

Director, Ouray County Public Health

Harriet Palmer-Willis, R.N., nurse consultant, held the quarterly meeting for Regions 9 and 10, Public Health Directors in Telluride on April 5. The meeting included an afternoon with Mark Estock, Epidemiologist from CDPHE. Ouray County LEPC director Jack Rowe and Cheryl Roberts, R.N., Public Health Director, also presented the grant-writing portion on bio-terrorist funding.

Mark showed the video tape "Topoff Lessons Learned" and presented the nursing directors with information that will help them integrate this emergency planning and become involved in the local emergency planning boards which will include bio-terrorism responsibilities. Many questions were answered about how to start involving public health in the overall planning for emergency situations.

Governor Bill Owens has appointed eight new members to the Governor's Expert Emergency Epidemic Response Committee. The committee is charged with developing, by July 1, a new supplement to the state disaster plan that deals with the public health response to acts of bio-terrorism, pandemic influenza and epidemics caused by infectious agents.

The table top exercise brought home the strong need for more public health involvement and collaboration with other lead agencies. This networking will assist in the process.

Iraqi terrorist, Khay Rahnajet, didn't pay enough postage on a letter bomb. It came back with "return to sender" stamped on it. Forgetting it was the bomb, he opened it and was blown to bits.

Emergency Management Planning on an Olympic Scale

FEMA Supports Planning for 2002 Winter Olympics

More than 1,500 emergency responders from more than 60 federal, state and local agencies participated in a training exercise in Salt Lake City, Utah April 4 - 5 which featured a mock train derailment, bomb threats, a hostage situation and the detonation of a radiological device.

"While we are optimistic that the 2002 Olympics will come and go with out any trouble, it is important to be prepared for anything," says Scott Behunin, Utah's Comprehensive Emergency Management (CEM) director and member of the Utah Olympic Public Safety Command (UOPSC).



In March, 100 representatives of UOPSC attended a special Integrated Emergency Management Course at FEMA's Emergency Management Institute in Emmitsburg, Maryland. During the course, experts in the field discussed the role of emergency management, law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services and volunteer organizations in special events like the Olympics and disaster response and recovery. Exercises, including an earthquake scenario, helped participants learn to work together and share resources.

The 2002 Winter Olympics will be one of the largest peacetime events in the history of the United States. During the 16 day run, the games will draw an estimated 3,700 athletes, officials from 80 nations, and over 70,000 visitors per day from across the globe.

"We certainly don't expect problems of this scale during the games, but we have to be prepared for the worst possible scenario," said Utah Commissioner of Public Safety Robert Flowers.

The Olympics is expected to attract over 15,000 members of the worldwide media and approximately 1 billion television viewers.

Timely response to natural disasters or man-made emergencies is critical. That's why FEMA is actively involved in training exercises and planning for the 2002 Winter Olympics.

Local, state and federal officials have been planning and preparing for the event for the past four years. The April exercise provided a unique opportunity for agencies and organizations to work together to improve coordination and hone their response plans.

During the Olympics, FEMA will be responsible for consequence management with a focus on planning for any type of emergency that exceeds local and state capabilities.



We'd like to hear from you...

We'd like to hear from you if you have items of interest appropriate for our newsletter. Articles, comments, meeting news, web sites, stories, etc., should be addressed to:

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*"We've got to pause and ask ourselves:
How much clean air do we need?"*
--Lee Iacocca



Governor's Annual Conference on Emergency Management

Breckenridge, Co

August 28 - 29, 2001

Mark your calendars!



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