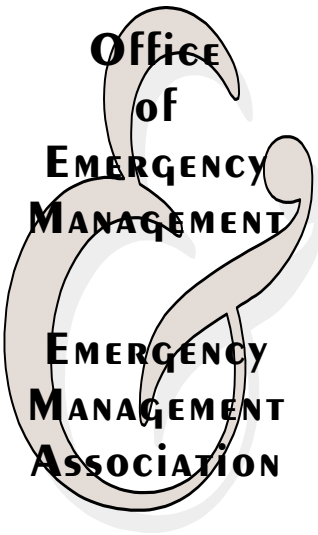


# PREPARED

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NEWS

Colorado



Bill OWENS  
GOVERNOR

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## BUSINESS (GOVERNMENT) CONTINUITY, Is YOUR AGENCY Ready?

by Tommy Grier, Director, Colorado OEM

**T**hose of us in state and local government understand that our success is measured by the effectiveness of our service delivery. But, how many have considered how their agencies would continue to deliver services if they had been at Ground Zero? That's a perplexing question that begs for continuity and business resumption planning by all agencies at all levels of government.

Business resumption? That's an Information Technology problem you say! Wait a minute. Business resumption is everyone problem. "A River Runs Through It" plays great on the silver screen, but not so for a county or municipal government so impacted.

This article is not intended to be prescriptive on how to conduct effective continuity and business resumption planning. Rather, it is shared in the hopes that it will provoke thought regarding actions that your agency may need to take to ensure uninterrupted delivery of services if you are displaced by a disaster.

We all like to think the work we do is essential. The reality is that most of us have so many tasks and projects that we have to reorder priorities on a daily and/or weekly basis. And some of those tasks and projects are eventually overtaken by events due to the passage of time.

When we think about work continuity and business resumption, our focus should be on defining those functions that are critical, those which are essential, and those that are necessary. The state government examples I use come from my colleagues in the Department of Revenue's Cash and Documentation Division.

Collection and deposit of taxes is a critical function (I like to get paid at the end of the month). An essential function might be the processing of my tax refund. It's essential, but it doesn't have to be done right away. A necessary function is renewal of drivers' licenses. It's a necessary function, but one which we can extend for 90 days.

At the local level, critical functions are those that impact public health and safety or cash flow. Examples here include critical infrastructure such as water, sewer, power and communications. Essential functions are those that must be accomplished, but which can be put off for a few days such as plowing secondary roads following a snowstorm. And finally, there are those necessary tasks that can be postponed such as issuing licenses.

Some questions you may ask are... Does my agency have an evacuation plan with procedures for accounting for all employees should we be forced out of our work site? Do we have an alternate facility designated with a plan to move operations from the damaged facility? Has a contingency staff to accomplish critical tasks been designated? Is that contingency staff trained in what they must accomplish? How about location, storage and access to vital records and documents?

Other considerations in developing service contingency/business resumption plans include a management structure, timelines for restoration of services, and agreements with other governmental agencies who may be able to assist with recovery.

*(Continued on back page)*

# 2002 Wildfire SEASON in COLORADO



**N**ationally, the 2002 season was the second largest fire season in the past 50 years, and the largest in Colorado History. As of October 11, 68,230 fires burned about 6.7 million acres nationally; nearly double the 10-year average. Colorado saw over 2,000 fires burning over 500,000 acres, costing a record \$200 million for fire-fighting and emergency rehabilitation efforts.

Thousands of people were forced to evacuate. More than 380 houses and another 624 outbuildings burned, prompting \$70 million in wildfire-related insurance claims.

Nine firefighters lost their lives in Colorado this year, making this the deadliest year since the Storm King Mountain fire above Glenwood Springs in 1994. There is no pricetag for this loss.

So many of these fires were needlessly caused by people, prompting the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to close millions of acres of federal lands to the public for the first time in Colorado's history.

It was also the first time to receive a Presidential Disaster Declaration for wildland fires in the state's history. Colorado received its declaration on June 19 for an incident period covering April 23 through August 6, 2002. Final assistance statistics from the Disaster Field Office for the period declared are:

**Disaster Assistance**

Teleregistration Calls:	2,871
Helpline Calls:	1,078
Disaster Recovery Center Visits:	1,145
Individual & Family Grants	
Approved & Mailed:	\$494,326
Disaster Housing Assistance	\$270,216
Small Business Administration Loans	
Home Loans:	\$2.480 Million
Business Loans Approved:	
Physical/Economic loss:	\$310,700
Economic Loss Only:	\$8.9999 Million
Disaster Unemployment Assistance:	\$85,029

An overview of some of the statistics from Colorado's fires begins in the next column.



**Topaz Mountain fire**

Started **April 18** on Topaz Mountain, about 4 miles north-northeast of Tarryall Reservoir in Park County  
 Size: 350 acres  
 Cause: Burning slash pile  
 Injuries: 10  
 Structures burned: 0  
 Cost \$0.8 m

**Snaking fire**

Started **April 23** near Platte Canyon High School near Bailey. At the fire's height, more than 1,000 homes were evacuated.  
 Acres burned: 2,590  
 Cause: Human  
 Structures lost: No buildings were destroyed.  
 Cost: \$2.6 m

**Breen fire**

Started **April 29**, 25 miles southeast of Durango.  
 Acres burned: 180  
 Cause: Lightning  
 Structures lost: 1 and several damaged  
 Cost: not available

*(Continued on page 3)*

# 2002 Wildfire SEASON in COLORADO



*(Continued from page 2)*

## **Cuerno Verde fire**

Started **April 30**, 10 miles south of Westcliffe in Custer County. Forced the evacuation of two subdivisions.  
Acres burned: 388  
Structures lost: 2 homes  
Cause: Trash fire spread out of control.  
Cost: not available

## **Black Mountain fire**

Started **May 5**, 40 miles southwest of Denver. At the fire's height, 2,400 homes were evacuated and 140 firefighters battled the flames.  
Acres burned: 345  
Cause: Human  
Structures lost: 0  
Cost: \$1.1 m

## **Bucktail fire**

Started **May 19** about eight miles northeast of Nucla in western Montrose County.  
Acres burned: 2,200  
Cause: Lightning  
Structures lost: 0  
Cost: \$1 m

## **Cow Camp fire**

Started **May 21**, 8.5 miles south of Mancos, Colorado.  
Acres Burned: 340  
Cause: Lightning  
Structures lost: 0  
Cost: \$0.5 m

## **Schoonover fire**

Started **May 22** near Deckers. The fire was fully contained on May 27.  
Acres burned: 3,860  
Cause: Lightning  
Structures lost: 13 structures, including four homes and several buildings at a youth camp.  
Cost: \$2.2 m

## **Trinidad Complex**

Started **June 1**. This complex was made up of a number of fires including Fisher (James John) and Spring (Springer) 8 miles south of Stonewall, Colorado.

The Spring Fire started in New Mexico and crossed the state line into Colorado. The James John Fire started about 9 miles southeast of Trinidad, Colorado.  
Acres burned: 32,896  
Cause: Lightning  
Cost: \$1.1 m

## **Iron Mountain fire**

Started southwest of Canon City on **June 2**.  
Acres burned: 4,400  
Cause: Human  
Structures lost: 100 cabins, A-frames, doublewides, campers and fifth-wheel trailers.  
Cost: \$7.5 m

## **Coal Seam fire**

Started **June 8** four miles west of Glenwood Springs.  
Acres burned: 12,209  
Cause: Underground coal fire  
Structures lost: 29 homes, 14 outbuildings  
Cost: \$7.3 m

## **Hayman fire**

Started **June 8** in Park County, four miles northwest of Lake George in Pike National Forest, and spread into Jefferson, Douglas and Teller counties.  
Acres burned: 137,760  
Cause: Illegal fire  
Structures lost: 133 homes, one business and 466 other structures destroyed.  
Injuries: 3  
Cost: \$39.1 m

## **Miracle Complex fire**

The Miracle Complex involved two fires, the Dierich Creek Fire that burned 2,533 acres and the Long Canyon Fire that burned 1418 acres. Both started **June 8** in Mesa County.  
Acres burned: 3,951  
Cause: Illegal campfire/lightning  
Injuries: 3  
Cost: \$1.7 m

## **Missionary Ridge fire**

Started **June 9** in a ditch beside Missionary Ridge Road, about 15 miles northeast of Durango. The fire forced 2,100 people to flee at various times.  
Acres burned: 70,485  
Cause: Human  
Structures lost: 56 residences and 27 outbuildings  
Injuries: 48  
Deaths: 1  
Cost: \$40.4 m



*(Continued on page 4)*

# 2002 Wildfire SEASON in COLORADO



*(Continued from page 3)*

## **Million fire**

Started **June 19** two miles south of South Fork.  
Acres burned: 9,346  
Cause: Spontaneous combustion of illegally-dumped sod  
Structures lost: 11 residences destroyed, 7 residences damaged, 2 outbuildings destroyed.  
Injuries: 2  
Cost: \$9.4 m

## **Pinon Ridge fire**

Started **June 22** near Elk Springs, about 50 miles west of Craig.  
Acres burned: 2,400  
Cause: Lightning  
Structures lost: 0  
Cost: \$0.9 m

## **Spring Creek fire**

Started **June 22**, about 7 miles north of New Castle.  
Acres burned: 13,493  
Cause: Lightning  
Injuries: 8  
Cost: \$6.98 m

## **West Beaver fire**

Started **June 22**, 15 miles west of Telluride near Lone Cone Mountain.  
Acres burned: 580  
Cause: Lightning  
Structures lost: 0  
Injuries: 1  
Cost: \$1.5 m

## **Wiley Ridge fire**

Started **June 23** three miles northwest of Gunnison.  
Acres burned: 1,084  
Cause: Lightning  
Structures lost: 0  
Cost: \$0.15 m

## **Mack Gulch fire**

Started **June 25**, south of the Hayman Fire.  
Acres burned: 311  
Cost: n/a

## **Valley fire**

Started **June 25** in La Plata County, west of the Missionary Ridge fire.  
Acres burned: 406  
Cause: Unknown  
Structures lost: At least six residences lost.  
Cost: n/a

## **Bear fire**

Started **June 27**, 20 miles northeast of Dinosaur.  
Acres burned: 4,800  
Cause: Human  
Structures lost: 0  
Cost: \$1.1 m

## **Fountain Gulch fire**

Started **June 29**, one mile northeast of Idaho Springs.  
Acres burned: 240  
Cause: Lightning  
Structures lost: 0  
Cost: \$0.55 m

## **Lost Lakes fire**

Started **July 8**, 20 miles west of Yampa.  
Acres burned: 5,538  
Cause: Lightning  
Cost: \$0.7 m

## **Burn Canyon fire**

Started **July 9**, about six miles southwest of Norwood in the Uncompahgre National Forest.  
Acres burned: 31,300  
Cause: Lightning  
Injuries: 2  
Cost: \$5.75 m

## **Steuben fire**

Started **July 9**, about 10 miles west of Gunnison on Bureau of Land Management property and in the Gunnison National Forest.  
Acres burned: 693  
Cause: Lightning  
Cost: \$0.84 m

## **Mt. Zirkel Complex fire**

The complex consists of the Burn Ridge and Hinman fires. The Hinman Fire started **July 12**, 25 miles north of Steamboat Springs. The Burn Ridge Fire started August 12 in the same area.  
Acres burned: 31,016  
Cause: Lightning  
Injuries: 14  
Cost: \$13.3 m



*(Continued on page 5)*

# 2002 Wildfire SEASON in COLORADO



*(Continued from page 4)*

## **East Marble fire**

Started **July 14**, one mile south of McElmo Canyon on the Ute Mountain Indian Reservation southwest of Cortez.

Acres burned: 366

Cause: Lightning

Structures lost: 1 outbuilding

Cost: \$0.26 m

## **Green Creek fire**

Started **July 14**, 15 miles southeast of Steamboat Springs.

Acres burned: 4,400

Cause: Lightning

Injuries: 1

Cost: \$3.04 m

## **Big Elk fire**

Started **July 17**, near Pinewood Springs.

Acres burned: 4,413

Cause: Ignited by a Jeep with mechanical problems.

Structures lost: 1 unoccupied cabin

Injuries: 3

Deaths: 3

Cost: \$4.15 m

## **Big Fish fire**

Started **July 19**, 34 miles southwest of Steamboat Springs.

Acres burned: 17,056

Cause: Lightning

Structures lost: Trappers Lake Lodge, seven cabins and a barn.

Cost: \$1.9 m

## **Long Mesa fire**

Started **July 29** in the Mesa Verde National Park.

Acres burned: 2,601

Cause: Lightning

Structures lost: Three homes and four outbuildings.

Injuries: 4

Cost: \$1.25 m

## **North Barcus fire**

Started **July 30**, 20 miles east of Rangely.

Acres burned: 6,000

Cause: Lightning

Cost: \$0.11 m

## **Panorama fire**

Started **July 31**, northeast of Carbondale.

Acres burned: 1,700

Cause: Human

Structures lost: Four homes

Cost: \$0.4 m

## **Cherry Creek fire**

Started **August 12** in the Southern Ute Reservation between Cherry Creek and Red Mesa near Durango.

Acres burned: 1,335

Injuries: 1

Cost: \$0.56 m

## **Shaff #2 fire**

Started **August 16**, 4 miles north of Cascade.

Acres burned: 556

Cause: Lightning

Cost: \$0.44 m

## **Thompson Creek fire**

Started **September 5**, six miles Southwest of Carbondale.

Acres burned: 171

Cause: Lightning

Cost: \$0.62 m

This is a humbling list and doesn't include every fire this season. It also doesn't include the stories of losses suffered by the victims of the fires — or the incredible cooperation witnessed across community and county boundaries, fire districts, volunteer organizations, and local, state, and federal agencies.

Firefighters were successful in suppressing 99 percent of all fires during initial attack this season. Of the more than 68,000 fires reported in the nation, only 609 escaped to become large.

Colorado saw a few of those.

*Photo by Steve Smith,  
Rocky Mountain News,  
at the Hayman fire.*



# WESTY HEADS EAST FOR DISASTER TRAINING

by Bob Wold, COEM Plans, Training, and Local Programs Section Chief

Top staff from the City of Westminster pulled up stakes for a week this fall to participate in an intensive training program designed to improve community disaster preparedness. Mayor Ed Moss, Council Member Elmer Hicks, City Manager Brent McFall, Assistant City Manager Steve Smithers and another 50 upper- and mid-level managers from the city followed Emergency Manager Mike Reddy to a remote FEMA training facility in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western Virginia for the September 16-20 training event.



FEMA's Phil McDonald welcomes Brent McFall and Elmer Hicks.

The Integrated Emergency Management Course (IEMC) is the premier course in the FEMA training program and each state is granted only one community slot per year. Communities are selected through a competitive application process, which requires a broad commitment by top staff to travel to Mount Weather, Virginia and participate in a series of rigorous exercises that evaluate local emergency plans and capabilities. Previous communities from Colorado that have completed the course include Arapahoe County, Douglas County, El Paso County and Jefferson County. Larimer County has been accepted for the IEMC in March 2003 and, by special exception, a second course offering to the state will be filled by the City of Colorado Springs next summer.

In addition to elected and appointed officials, city employees representing police, fire, public works, finance, general services, human resources, information systems, community development, and parks and recreation traveled to Mount Weather. Representatives of outside organizations that would support Westminster in the event of a disaster – American Red Cross, Colorado Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (COVOAD), Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Colorado OEM,

Tri-County Health, St. Anthony Hospital, FEMA Region VIII, Xcel Energy, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, and Adams and Jefferson County Schools – participated in the training at the City's invitation. Several neighboring jurisdictions and key mutual aid partners also attended the course, including Jefferson County, North Metro Fire Rescue District, Adams-Jefferson Hazardous Materials Authority, and the Cities of Arvada, Thornton and Northglenn.

The IEMC immerses public officials in a series of exercises designed to simulate realistic crisis conditions and requiring that participants implement plans and make critical decisions in a high-stress environment. In addition to the practical exercises, a number of other training methodologies are used, including small-group planning sessions and classroom lectures that familiarize students with the roles of the various emergency services disciplines.

Policy and media issues are highlighted through the use of broadcast media technology and with the help of professional news reporters that utilize videotape and live interviews to expand the scenario and give local officials practical experience in front of the cameras. All instructional methods are intended to challenge public officials to examine emergency policies and plans, to identify needed improvements, and to take corrective actions prior to the occurrence of a real disaster.

Months of advance planning work go into making an IEMC a successful event.

*(Continued on page 7)*



Emergency Manager Mike Reddy facilitates a planning session.

# WESTY HEADS EAST FOR DISASTER TRAINING

*(Continued from page 6)*



*Public safety officials discuss tactics during the response exercise.*

**W**estminster's emergency manager and other city staff worked closely with FEMA planners to customize exercise scenarios based on actual land features, development patterns, demographics and other characteristics of the city. Digital photographs and GIS maps of the community were used to enhance exercise play and maximize realism.

Completion of the IEMC is a proud achievement for any community, sending a strong message to citizens that leadership, public safety professionals, and other elements of local government are dedicated to the cause of making their community a safer place to live. Congratulations to Westminster and to all of the communities in the state that have affirmed their commitment to a high standard of community preparedness.



*Mike Reddy, Brent McFall, Elmer Hicks, Jim Cloud and Steve Smithers.*

# LET THE PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION PLANNING BEGIN!



*by Marilyn Gally, COEM Hazard Mitigation Officer*

**W**ith the implementation of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, FEMA headquarters now requires local and state governments interested in using potential mitigation funds for projects have a FEMA-approved mitigation plan in place to receive funds. We realize these new rules put an additional burden on local governments and will work with you in developing your plans if you're interested in working on projects using mitigation funds.

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) provides up to 75% federal funds for cost effective mitigation projects designed to reduce or eliminate long-term risk from natural hazards. Some examples of projects include acquisition of property in hazardous areas; relocation of structures out of hazardous areas; floodproofing structures; retrofitting structures as protect against wildfire, earthquakes, and wind; vegetation management and stabilization; stormwater management; flood control measures; warning systems as a component of a planned, adopted, and exercised Risk Reduction Plan; and generators. If you're thinking of a project and are not sure if it would qualify for HMGP funds, please call and we'll work through it with you. Keep in mind — projects already in progress will not qualify. Regulations for HMGP are published in 44 CFR Part 205, Subpart N.

I commend all of the local communities that are willing to rise to the new planning challenge. We don't know what the future of the available mitigation funding will look like, but we have high hopes that when and if it does become available in large quantities, we will be as competitive, if not more so, than other states and territories.

**"The marvel of all history is the patience with which men and women submit to burdens unnecessarily laid upon them by their governments."**

**—William H. Borah, U.S. Senator (1865 - 1940)**

# CEMA Updates

by Steve Douglas, CEMA President

The annual Colorado Emergency Management Association (CEMA) meeting was held this year in conjunction with the 6th annual Colorado Mitigation & Wildfire conference in Longmont September 26th. Generally it is held in conjunction with the annual Governor's conference on Emergency Management, but due to Colorado's extensive and intense 2002 fire season, the conference was postponed until 2003.

About 20 CEMA members were able to attend the annual meeting. Board members present were Steve Douglas, President (Pueblo County Emergency Management); Margie Martinez, Vice President (Weld County Emergency Management); Jo Ann Stone, Secretary (Gunnison County Emergency Management); and Clyde Anderson, Treasurer (Moffat County Emergency Management).

Committee reports were made for Legislative, Membership, DOJ Steering, Scholarship, Certification and EMS. From the committee reports came a discussion leading to a consensus that more work was needed to enhance membership communication on issues impacting emergency management in Colorado. A commitment was made by the Board and other members present to work toward that goal. One suggestion was to have the membership meet more than once a year and so it was voted that CEMA's general meetings would become semi-annual on a trial basis. Board members will continue to meet quarterly. All members are welcome to attend the quarterly board meetings. Members also voted to have one primary and up to two alternates for each committee so CEMA representation is guaranteed when emergency management issues arise that impact the state. One exception may be the state EMS committee, because it appears alternates are not allowed on that committee.

Two actions were taken regarding the CEMA certification process. First, members voted to adopt changes in the process giving credit for life experience and requiring a portion of that experience be in Colorado. Second, members voted to change the Certification Committee's status from a special to a standing committee. The amended certification requirements have been posted on the CEMA web page at <http://www.dola.state.co.us/oem/Cema/CEMA.htm>. Speaking of certification, a big congratulations goes out to Kim Steigelmeier (City and County of Denver Emergency Management) for completing her emergency manager "gold" certification this year! Cindy Mohat (Pitkin County Emergency Management) led the way in the process and was awarded the gold certificate in 2001. Cindy challenged all CEMA Board members to go through the certification process.

We acknowledge the challenge and encourage all CEMA members to seek certification status. This volunteer certification program was established to, among other things, provide a clearly visible set of career goals for emergency management professionals, promote continued training and illustrate levels of professional accomplishment.

This year's President's award went to Polly White for her outstanding efforts to enhance information flow during a tough period that included disasters like 9/11, drought, and wildfire.

Elections were held. Clyde Anderson was elected Treasurer. (He'd taken on the Treasurer's responsibilities in June, completing the unexpired term of Kay Martinez, who moved out of state.) I was re-elected President. While I appreciate the vote of confidence, I also recognize improved communication is essential for the effectiveness of CEMA and pledge to do my part.

I encourage CEMA members to remember our mission. The organization only works when each member takes an active role and shares information, issues, and concerns with the rest of the group. The use of e-mail and information posted to a web site has made information sharing easier, but sometimes there is no good substitute for one-to-one discussions conducted face-to-face or over the telephone. However we accomplish it, we can do our respective and collective jobs better by working together.

Our next meeting will be during the 2003 Governor's Conference on Emergency Management February 4 and 5. For information on the conference, go to <http://www.dola.state.co.us/oem/>. I look forward to seeing everyone there. In the meantime, be safe, productive and enjoy yourself in the process!

## Some Disaster Trivia

**On July 6, 1944, an intense fire consumed the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus in Hartford, Connecticut. Eighty-seven hundred people, almost all women and children, were in the Big Top when the fire broke out and 168 people died. The fire was so hot and burned so quickly that not one person died of asphyxiation. Those who died were either burned to death or trampled in the panic to flee. It was one of America's worst catastrophes, but also one of the least documented. Even at the time it occurred, the fire did not receive much press, because it happened during the same period when Germany was bombing England and American eyes were focused on war.**



# NORTHEAST COLORADO EMERGENCY MANAGER SPOTLIGHT

by Kevin Kurelich, COEM Northeast Regional Planner



**W**ashington County, located in Northeastern Colorado where the air is unpolluted, is a major grain and livestock producing area. It is primarily dryland farming and cattle country. Washington County has a number of oil and gas wells which contribute to the local economy and allow the county government and school districts to assess one of the lower tax mill levies in the state.

The town of Akron is the government seat, Akron means "high point" in Greek and was so named by the railroad as it was the highest point between Chicago and Denver. "Summit Springs," is the site of the last Indian Battle and Buffalo Bill would mention it in his Wild West Shows.

The weather in the county is quite arid and generally pretty open winters. Washington County is best known for its dry weather — as the expression goes, "When God called for 40 days and 40 nights of rain, Akron got a half inch." The county population is 5,205 (2000).

*Just recently, I caught up with George Severin, Washington County emergency manager, and asked him some questions in an effort to share a bit of personal and professional information about one emergency manager in my region with other Colorado emergency managers.*

**How long have you lived in the present area?** 61 years...

**How long in Colorado?** 69 years.

**Married?** Yes **Children?** Two daughters.

**Grandchildren?** One boy & one girl.

**Animals, pets?** Two extremely large Great Pyrenees dogs and numerous cats.

**Hobbies?** Raising Hair Sheep, farming, gardening and **GOLF**.

**Other passtimes?** I love the holidays and the birthdays in our family.

**How long have you been an emergency manager?** 14 years...

**What attracted you to the emergency management job assignment?** The county needed someone and it was a way to give something back to my community.

**What were you doing before your current position?** I had taught school for 30 years.

**Any formal emergency management training?** No formal training but have attended more than 50 classes or training sessions and I have over 30 certificates.

**Is your position full time?** Considered as full time.

**What do you perceive as the level of emergency management in your jurisdiction?** Designated position by the County Commissioners and aided by volunteer groups.

**How do you best describe your job/what you do as an 'emergency manager' to others?** I have dedicated much time to the eradication of hurricanes and typhoons in Washington County, and we haven't had any since I became the emergency manager. Informing and educating the citizens in my jurisdiction.

**How do you answer the question: "What do you do when there is no disaster or emergency going on?"** I work on plans, keeping them updated. Coordinating plans with other jurisdictions. Checking first responders and asking how I might help. There are always meetings and new things to learn. I keep busy all the time.

**Do you have any 'favorite' hazard, or favorite 'historical' hazard event?** When the Hall Grain Elevator burned down. The appreciation shown by them for what the Emergency Management Director could do for them was very satisfying.

*(Continued on page 10)*



# NORTHEAST COLORADO EMERGENCY MANAGER SPOTLIGHT



(Continued from page 9)

**What do you see as strengths in an emergency management program?** Ability to help first responders accomplish their tasks in an organized manner. **Weaknesses?** Pressure placed on volunteer first responders.

**What do you perceive as the greatest challenge/threat to Emergency Managers?** Bureaucracy and mandated programs that are not funded.

**For what hazard do you think citizens are best prepared and why?** Tornadoes, blizzards, and lightning because so much public education has been given to all levels and ages of people.

**Least prepared?** Terrorism

**What do you feel is the most helpful 'tool' for emergency managers?** Regional Planners and Regional meetings like the Northeast Colorado Emergency Management (NCEM) meetings.

**What was your most interesting disaster event and why?** (1) Coming back to Breckenridge from Fairplay, while riding in the vehicle driven by our Regional Planner. (2) The Prewitt Reservoir boat disaster with the Morgan County Emergency Manager and the Morgan County Search and Rescue Team. What a night!!!

**What do you feel is the most 'controversial' issue in emergency management?** Scope of emergency management and where it's going-numerous new issues being added to our programs.

**What hazard causes you to lose the most sleep?** Chemicals and how to deal with the situation in a farming community.

**What do you feel is the greatest threat/challenge to Colorado and its citizens?** Either Steve Enfante (Morgan County) or Roger Brown (Yuma County)....ha...nah, probably chemicals and terrorism.

**Favorite acronym?** BREAK

**What is your favorite ('hazard-related' if possible) music, art, or theater event?** The movie "Tornadoes"

**What is your favorite book?** "Little Big Man"

**What is your favorite type of music or song?** The golden oldies music.

**What is your favorite food?** Fried chicken, Severin's Mountain Alpine Sweet Lamb and Apple Sauce Cake.

**Name an accomplishment or success story of which you are very proud.** When the 5th Army General from Chicago asked me to go on inspection of the Supply Rooms at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. I had won Best Supply Room on Post—five straight times. As a result of this, I was given a higher rank by the General.

**Is there a little known fact about you of which you'd like to share with others?** (1) I'm past 70. (2) I don't play as much golf as people think I do. (3) My oldest daughter was 1st runner up two years in a row in the Miss Colorado Pageant.

**If you could travel/visit anywhere, where would it be and why?** Greece, because I have always been fascinated by Greek Mythology.

**Favorite Quote?** (1) Sockamenticoogliandi !!! (2) "Gotta go face Portia."

**Other Comments:** I really enjoy our monthly NCEM meetings. From the inception of the monthly meetings, I have missed only one. The meeting is the high time of the month for me. I feel, it is the life line of good regional planning and creates a family type feeling among jurisdictions. A willingness to help others....

Abraham Lincoln offered this timeless,  
usually unheeded,  
piece of advice to lawyers:

"Discourage litigation. Persuade your  
neighbor to compromise whenever you can.  
As a peacemaker, the lawyer has a superior  
opportunity of being a good man.  
There will still be business enough."

Lincoln received his license to practice law  
on September 9, 1836.



# Colorado Springs is FIREWISE

by Cathy Prudhomme, Firewise Program Coordinator, Colorado Springs Fire Department

**W**hat is “FireWise Colorado Springs?” FireWise Colorado Springs was developed through the fire department’s Wildland Risk Management Office. Program design includes risk management strategies, GIS, vegetation management and a customized FireWise message that is adapted specifically to the local topography, fuels, homes, zoning codes and ordinances. The program’s mission is to create awareness of the wildfire danger, deliver information to homeowners that will assist in reducing their risk, engage the public in taking an active role in creating a safer wildland environment and positively influence attitudes and behaviors.

### When did it start?

A core advisory group was established in February 2000 to provide stakeholders an opportunity to interact and express concerns. Stakeholders consisted of representatives from City & County Government, Colorado Springs Utilities, U.S. Forest Service-Pikes Peak Ranger District, Colorado State Forest Service, Division of Natural Resources and local fire protection agencies. Following the group meetings, three public meetings were held in the third and fourth quarters of 2000 to present results of the preliminary risk evaluations and gather citizen input. During 2000, Colorado Springs Fire Department staff performed 44,329 wildfire hazard risk evaluations on homes identified in the city’s area of study.

### History

Following receipt of a 2001 grant from FEMA/U.S. Fire Administration the Wildland Risk Management office was able to move forward with program development.

Using the wildfire hazard risk evaluation data collected in 2000, along with additional data assessment items gathered through the use of GIS, the data was processed through the WHINFOE model and wildfire risk ratings were established for homes identified within the city’s wildland-urban interface.

An intensive wildfire mitigation plan was formally delivered to the Colorado Springs City Council in March 2002.

### Current status

The FireWise interactive web site (<http://csfd.springsgov.com>) has more than 44,000 wildfire risk evaluations by parcel and was released to the public June 12, 2002. Homeowners now have access to their individual wildfire risk parcel rating and are encouraged to also view ratings for the overall neighborhood.

Vegetation management techniques are available on the site and when the suggested work is completed the FireWise office can be contacted to schedule a new evaluation.

Since May 2002, FireWise Colorado Springs has been presented to more than six hundred individual homeowners through neighborhood/homeowner’s association groups, civic organizations, and public venues.

### Future Goals and Objectives

Future goals and objectives include:

- Continuing work with homeowners to develop attitude changes and behavior modification through FireWise activities
- Multispectral Imagery of assets at risk and adjacency to natural fuels
- Vegetation management activities at the neighborhood level
- Prescription fuels reduction
- Preservation easement negotiations
- Intra-agency planning with Colorado Springs Utilities and city parks and open space
- Collaborate with local builders and the Home Builder’s Association to assist with developing a FireWise home in the 2003 HBA Parade of Homes
- Develop FireWise seminars for area landscapers, nurseries, etc.
- Recognize neighborhood FireWise Champions.

## Mark your calendars...



**Governor’s Annual  
Emergency Management  
Conference  
February 4 - 5, 2003  
Denver, Colorado**

**Go to  
[www.dola.co.us/oem/](http://www.dola.co.us/oem/)  
for more information**

# AMERICAN RED CROSS ORGANIZES COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS DAYS

This year's dramatic wildfire season has created excellent teachable moments for lessons in community wildfire preparedness. The American Red Cross has been working in partnership with other agencies to take advantage of the public's heightened awareness in order to encourage neighborhoods in wildland urban interface areas to take action in order to survive wildfire with a minimum of losses.

The first of several Community Wildfire Preparedness Days was organized by the Western Colorado Chapter of the American Red Cross and held on April 30 at Vega State Park about 35 miles east of Grand Junction. More than 60 residents of two communities neighboring the park attended a workshop where they learned about disaster preparedness, fire behavior, and steps they can take to make their homes and communities safer from wildfire. The lessons, taught by representatives of the Plateau Valley Fire Department and Bureau of Land Management, were followed by tours of neighborhood home sites.

Typically, a group of neighbors walked with representatives from the fire department, BLM, and Red Cross from home to home. At each place characteristics of the structure and landscape that could be adapted to better survive fire were pointed out.

Things that made them vulnerable to damage from fire were also pointed out and mitigation options discussed. Residents were encouraged to make their own suggestions from what they had learned. They were also encouraged to discuss wildfire protection planning as a community wide project. The Fire Department and the American Red Cross will follow up to maintain the momentum.

Home Depot donated tool kits to be distributed by the American Red Cross to residents to help them get started on fire mitigation projects around their homes. The kits include a shovel, rake, garden hose, and other tools. The kits were transported to the site in Home Depot trailers pulled by UPS tractors driven by teamsters who donated their time. UPS also donated storage space for kits that will be distributed at other Community Wildfire Preparedness Days.

The American Red Cross was supported in the workshop by the Plateau Valley Fire Department, Bureau of Land Management, Colorado State Forest Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency, US Forest Service, Colorado State Parks, Mesa County Sheriff, and Mesa County Office of Emergency Management. Other Community Wildfire Preparedness Days will be held in the summer and fall.

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## SATERN AT WORK DURING FIRE SEASON

*by Jon R. Wallace, KC5OEB*

With the help of hundreds of amateur radio operators and ARES/RACES teams from around the state, and under the leadership of The Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (SATERN), The Salvation Army's Intermountain Division carried out extensive disaster relief activities in Colorado during the summer of 2002 while monitoring and providing assistance elsewhere in the states of Utah, Montana, and Wyoming. This was in response to the worst fire season on record.

Gene McGahey, AL7GQ, of Denver, and Tony Stephen, KE6JZF, from Chino, California, provided The Salvation Army State Incident Commander (and Divisional SATERN Coordinator) Jon Wallace, KC5OEB, shadow communications at all times. Dave Baysinger, WG0N, provided technical and repeater expertise and his YL, Rita, N0UEW, served as the South Hayman fire regional coordinator.

National Net Director Jim Adams, WA0LSB, assisted with equipment, networking contacts, and coordination of volunteer efforts.

Following the Big Elk fire near Estes Park, amateur radio operators provided 4x4 vehicles, volunteers, and communications for an extensive pastoral care outreach. More than two hundred families were provided with communications through the mobile units maintained in this difficult mountain terrain.

Hundreds of volunteer hours were provided to keep eleven emergency canteens and a Texas Baptist kitchen operating at seven simultaneous fires. Salvation Army personnel and equipment were dispatched from across the United States and SATERN units in Kansas, California, Nebraska, and Texas were placed on standby. SATERN National Headquarters in Chicago provided vital contact assistance and consultation.

# TWO HAZARD CONFERENCES THIS YEAR PROVED TO BE VERY SUCCESSFUL

Attendees were very positive about the two hazard conferences held this year in Colorado. Participant numbers were high, the mood was jovial, and the lessons learned were relevant.



Last year, Colorado was invited by the Western States Seismic Policy Council (WSSPC) to host the annual conference. Along with the WSSPC board and staff, the Colorado Geological Survey and the Colorado Office of Emergency Management worked toward forming an agenda both timely and exciting for the Mile High City. The conference, titled "Earthquake Risk: From Awareness to Action" occurred from September 15th through the 18th, with operations headquartered at the Brown Palace Hotel in Denver. Off-site highlights included field trips to Rocky Mountain National Park and the National Earthquake Information Center in Golden. Over 100 people participated in the activities.



The sixth annual Colorado Mitigation and Wildfire Conference was staged in Longmont again this year at the Raintree Plaza facility. The conference, held from September 27th through the 29th, brought in over 225 participants from Colorado and 13 other states.



Some of the parking lot demonstrations were downright exciting. This is one of a vendor showing how shingles treated with his product (low flames on the far left) compared to those untreated or factory-treated. Another vendor used his foam product to douse the flames.



As usual, three carefully selected group activities, including field trips, were provided on Sunday. The success of this conference relies heavily on the dedication and commitment of the committee and staff from local, state, and federal agencies. Agencies involved this year were Boulder Fire, Boulder County Land Use, Jefferson County Emergency Management and the Sheriff's Office, Eagle County Emergency Management, Colorado Springs Emergency Management, Colorado State Forest Service, and the state Office of Emergency Management, Rocky Mountain Arsenal, and the U.S. Forest Service.

*The Fiddlin' Forresters perform at the vendor social.*



# RESPONSE AFTER ACTION REPORT ON THE PENTAGON ATTACK

by Kerry Kimble, Counter Terrorism Planner, Office of Preparedness, Security, and Fire Safety

It has been over a year since the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon occurred. During this time, response and recovery operations have taken place in the form of crime-scene investigation, debris removal, and rebuilding. One of the critical activities that has also taken place has been the review of the response procedures and actions at the scene.

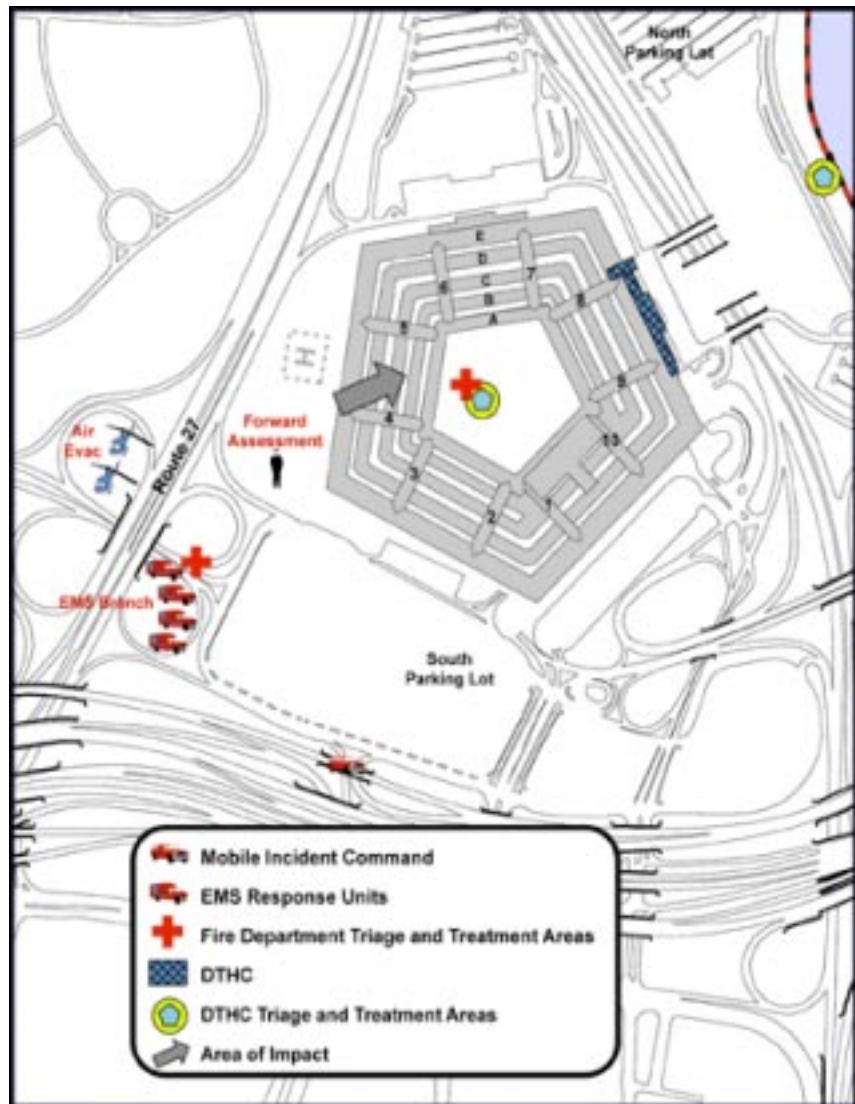
Several different organizations are conducting interviews with first responders and the Incident/Unified Command Staff, and reviewing all of the associated documentation. The Titan Systems Corporation published one of the most recent reports for Arlington County (the home of the Pentagon) and the surrounding jurisdictions. The report's premise was that this "was a major fire and rescue operation within the broader context of a terrorist attack."

The report provides a timeline on when response assets arrived on the scene and an explanation of why some of the key decisions were made, along with some of the problems that were encountered. The document does not just highlight the problems, it also highlights the successes. The report is divided into four sections that discuss several of the response disciplines in detail. The major areas were: Fire; Hospitals and Clinics; Law Enforcement; and Emergency Management and the Emergency Operations Center. A total of 235 recommendations are contained within the report, many of which could be applicable to Colorado. A few examples of these recommendations are:

- "There should be a regional review of response plans to identify, agree on and institutionalize communications channels to be used by all area responders and hospitals to ensure complete communications."
- "Emergency contacts lists must be updated and should include all supporting organizations, even those that are not part of the county government."
- "Joint training and exercise programs should be developed and institutionalized to regularly test mutual-aid arrangements."

(Continued on page 15)

- "Fire departments must be equipped for sustained operations. Firefighters should not have to rely solely on breathing apparatus or other items taken from colleagues they replace."
- "Alert and notification systems should be regularly and randomly tested to ensure rosters are current and contact numbers are accurate so plans for recalling off-duty EMS staff can be implemented in an emergency."



# RESPONSE AFTER ACTION REPORT ON THE PENTAGON ATTACK

(Continued from page 14)

- “A regional medical disaster plan should include the designation of a clearinghouse hospital to coordinate communications between the incident site and supporting medical treatment centers.”
- “Regional mass casualty response plans should include area clinics and urgent care centers, which should also be included in exercises.”
- “Weapons of Mass Destruction incident response plans should accommodate the legitimate requirements to retrieve materials from the incident site.”

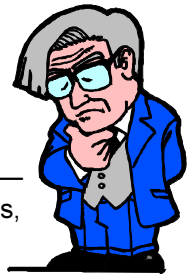
As the report points out, the training and skills possessed by the first responders served them well in a very large and complex situation, a situation that was not, initially, clearly defined and potentially threatened by unknown outside elements. In order to achieve those skills, personnel from all of the response disciplines constantly reviewed their contingency plans, jointly exercised those plans, conducted individual/team training, and continuously communicated with each other regarding capabilities.

The complete report “Arlington County: After Action Report on the Response to the September 11 Terrorist Attack on the Pentagon” can be reviewed on-line at [www.co.arlington.va.us/fire/edu/about/pdf/after\\_report.pdf](http://www.co.arlington.va.us/fire/edu/about/pdf/after_report.pdf).

**“On account of being a democracy and run by the people, we are the only nation in the world that has to keep a government four years, no matter what it does.”**

— Will Rogers (1879 - 1935)

# Disaster Trivia



**O**ur last trivia contest was a bust — between the drought and wildfires, disaster trivia certainly wasn’t a priority and not a single guess was submitted. Credit goes to Dave Sullivan, Denver Office of Emergency Management, for submitting the disaster. These were the hints...

*The death toll from this man-made disaster is reported at over 2,000. Nine thousand were injured, many permanently, and 6,000 were left homeless. Almost a thousand sustained eye injuries. Over fifteen hundred homes were totally destroyed and 12,000 were damaged. There was a blizzard that night after the disaster and many of the homeless froze to death. A relief committee was immediately initiated to provide clothing, money, and furniture and this committee existed for almost 59 years. Thirty million dollars worth of donations were managed by the relief committee. Improvements in medical treatment, social welfare, public health and hospital facilities, and security were all a result of this devastating disaster.*

## The disaster was the Halifax explosion of 1917...

**I**n December 1917, Halifax, Nova Scotia, was the hub of the Dominion of Canada. World War I had brought activity and prosperity to the port. Convoys of ships loaded with war supplies of food, munitions and troops gathered in Bedford Basin ready for the voyage to Europe with heavily-armed warships as escorts. Neutral vessels anchored in the harbour, their crews forbidden to land for fear any might supply information to the enemy. New railway lines and terminals were almost completed, made necessary to handle the extra pressure of traffic. The population was swollen with troops, some awaiting embarkation for Europe, some garrisoned there, their families, and people who had come to benefit from the plentiful employment.

At 7.30 a.m. on December 6, the French ship Mont Blanc left her anchorage outside the mouth of the harbour to join a convoy gathering in Bedford Basin. She was loaded with 2,300 tons of wet and dry picric acid, 200 tons of TNT, 10 tons of gun cotton and 35 tons of benzol, a highly explosive mixture.

(Continued on page 16)

# The Halifax Explosion

(Continued from page 15)

**A**t the same time the Norwegian vessel Imo, in ballast, set off from the Basin bound for New York to pick up a cargo of relief supplies for Belgium. At the entrance to the Narrows, after a series of ill-judged manoeuvres, the Imo struck the Mont Blanc on the bow. Although the collision was not severe, fire immediately broke out on board the Mont Blanc. The captain, pilot and crew, expecting the ship to blow up immediately, launched the lifeboats and took refuge on the Dartmouth shore.

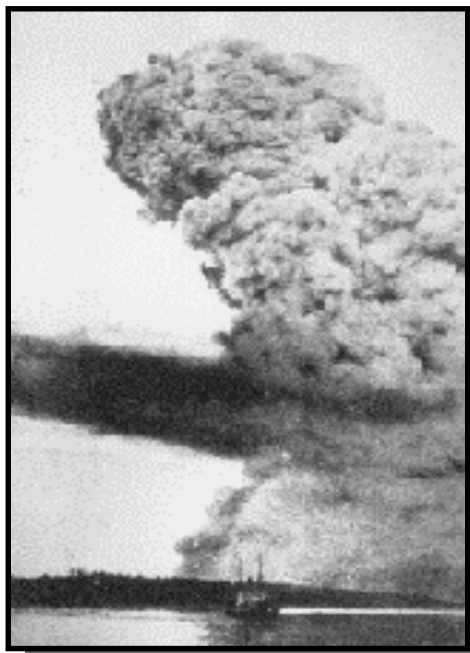
The ship burned for twenty minutes, drifting until it rested against Pier 6, in the Richmond district, the busy, industrial north end of Halifax. The spectacle was thrilling, and drew crowds of spectators, unaware of the danger.

Just before 9.05 a.m., the Mont Blanc exploded. Not one piece of her remained beside the dock where she had finished her voyage. Fragments rained on the surrounding area, crashing through buildings with enough force to embed them where they landed.

Churches, houses, schools, factories, docks and ships were destroyed in the swath of the blast. Children who had stopped on their way to school, workmen lining the windows, families in their homes, sailors in their ships, died instantly. Injuries were frightful, blindness from the splintering glass adding to the shock and bewilderment.

The captain, pilot and five Imo crew members were killed. All from the Mont Blanc survived, apart from one man who later died from his wounds.

Mercifully, rescue began quickly, with the thousands of well-disciplined troops and naval strength available. City officials speedily arranged for volunteer help: relief committees had been formed by the afternoon of the disaster. Word went out to the surrounding areas and they responded with commendable speed. Hospitals and places of shelter were soon overcrowded. All possible buildings—even ships in the harbour—were commandeered, and some of the injured and homeless sent by rail to other cities.



News of the disaster reached Boston the same morning. That very night a train loaded with supplies, together with medical personnel and members of the Public Safety Committee, left for Halifax. Help poured in from all over Canada and many parts of the world, with the continuing generosity of Massachusetts

unforgettable. Each Christmas the huge tree that glitters in Prudential Plaza in Boston is a thank-you gift from the people of Nova Scotia.

The number of homes completely destroyed totaled 1,630, many by fires that quickly spread following the explosion; 12,000 houses were damaged; 6,000 people were left without shelter. Hardly a pane of glass in Halifax and Dartmouth was left intact.

The death toll rose to just over 1,900. About 250 bodies were never identified; many victims were never found. Twenty-five limbs had to be amputated; more than 250 eyes had to be removed; 37 people were left completely blind. Hospitals treated well over 4,000 cases, and private doctors hundreds more.

The Dominion Government appointed the Halifax Relief Commission on January 22, 1918.



(Continued on page 17)



# The Halifax Explosion

*(Continued from page 16)*

The Relief Commission handled pensions, claims for loss and damage, rehousing and the rehabilitation of explosion victims. It was disbanded only in June, 1976. Pensions are now paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

As a result of the tragedy, certain benefits accrued to the city. Medical treatment, social welfare, public health and hospital facilities increased and improved. Regulations relating to the harbour were tightened, making it as safe as human errors of judgment would permit. The Hydrostone development, built as relief housing, still stands, an early example of a very high standard of urban development.

The official enquiry opened less than a week after the explosion. The captain and pilot of the Mont Blanc and the naval commanding officer were charged with manslaughter and released on bail. Later the charges were dropped, because gross negligence causing death could not be proved against any one of them. In the Nova Scotia District of the Exchequer Court of Canada in April, 1918, the Mont Blanc was declared solely to blame for the disaster. In May, 1919, on appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, both ships were judged equally at fault. The Privy Council in London, at that time the ultimate authority, agreed with the Supreme Court's verdict.

Thus no blame was ever laid in the largest man-made explosion until the atomic age, when its effects were studied by Oppenheimer in calculating the strength of the bombs for Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Many gravestones, artifacts and monuments in the cities of Halifax and Dartmouth are reminders of the explosion. The most impressive is the Memorial Bell Tower on Fort Needham, overlooking the explosion site. Hanging there is a carillon of bells, donated in 1920 to the United Memorial Church, which was built to replace two churches destroyed in the explosion. The presentation was made by a young girl who had lost her entire family in the blast, her mother, father and four brothers and sisters. At 9 a.m. on December 6, every year, a service is held there in memory of the victims of the Explosion. The bells ring out and can be heard across the Narrows in north Dartmouth, all around Fort Needham, and in the areas devastated by the Halifax Explosion of 1917.

*(Information from the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic's Web Site.)*

# Another Trivia Quiz



This disaster took the lives of over 8,000 people and left 15,000 homeless. Over 3,500 buildings were destroyed and millions of dollars in damages were reported. Many more lives would have been lost had one man not tried to warn others of the impending danger. Martial law was instituted and 125 people were executed for looting during the disaster.

As a result of the disaster, what was considered the greatest engineering feat of the century took place over the next several years to mitigate against future disasters. The structure of government was also transformed and is still used today.

If you'd like to take a shot at guessing what this disaster was, you must name all of the following correctly:

- The **type** of disaster.
- The **location** of the disaster.
- The **year** the disaster occurred.

Email your answer to Polly White (polly.white@state.co.us) no later than **December 15, 2002**. Again, three prizes will be awarded for the correct answers. In the event that more than three correct answers are received, a random drawing will be held. Winners will be notified via email.

## Did You Know?

**Benjamin Franklin invented the lightning rod with a pointed tip in 1749 as a means of diverting a lightning strike harmlessly to earth. But King George III decreed that lightning rods on royal residences must have blunt ends. The king's decree was not based on science but on political pique — because Franklin was an advocate of independence from Great Britain. However, ol' George may've been on to something.**

**Charles Moore, a retired atmospheric physicist with the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, tested both types of lightning rod tips during seven summer thunderstorm seasons.**

**An article in New Scientist reports he found that the ones struck most frequently had blunt tips about 19 millimeters in diameter.**

# Colorado Emergency Planning Commission (CEPC) News

by Richard Bardsley, COEM

## CEPC Annual Conference

The Colorado Emergency Planning Commission (CEPC) hosted its Annual Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Conference in September at the Denver West Sheraton in Lakewood, Colorado. It was a huge success with over 130 attendees and 19 presenters. Topics ranged from LEPC activities throughout the state to special presentations on important subjects such as Homeland Security, the anthrax clean up in Washington DC, Colorado's fire season, passed and pending state and federal legislation, and a presentation on how to enhance individual and agency communication skills.

Planning for next year's conference will begin soon, so please forward ideas for presentations and locations for the conference. CEPC policy is the conference is held in the Denver Metro area one year and a location outside the Denver Metro area the following year. Locations where conferences have been held in the past are Mt. Crested Butte, Colorado Springs, Pueblo, and Glenwood Springs.

**Outreach Meetings...** The CEPC meets the first Thursday of every month at Camp George West, Bldg. 120, 15075 S. Golden Road, Golden, CO. We try to hold at least one meeting per quarter in a different location. October's meeting was held in Pueblo at the Sangre De Cristo Arts Center, on behalf of the Pueblo County LEPC. If your LEPC would like to host an outreach meeting in 2003, please contact any CEPC member.

**LEPC Assistance Visits...** The Jefferson County LEPC on behalf of the CEPC is still conducting LEPC assistance visits. These visits are without any cost to the LEPC and can assist an LEPC in any of its organization, planning, and training areas. Members of the Jefferson County LEPC are also available to address meetings with elected officials, citizen groups, or with other LEPCs in general. For help or assistance in this area, please contact Tim Gablehouse or Melanie Granberg at (303) 572-0050. The Colorado LEPC Handbook and other information is available at [www.gcglc.com/LEPC.htm](http://www.gcglc.com/LEPC.htm).

**Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Planning Grants...** This year's Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) planning grants from the US Department of Transportation have not been made by the CEPC yet. Very few applications for the

planning grant have been received. The suspense date for submission of an HMEP planning grant request was revised to October 30, 2002. For further information, questions or an application, please contact Richard Bardsley, CEPC Co-Chair at Colorado Office of Emergency Management (COEM) at (303) 273-1619.

**Mission...** The CEPC exists to implement the SARA/ Title III EPCRA legislation in Colorado and to support the Local Emergency Planning Committees. LEPCs and individuals should feel free to attend CEPC meetings, contact the CEPC for questions, or ask for assistance. The CEPC co-chairs are Susan Jones-Hard, CDPH&E at (303) 692-3019 and Richard Bardsley, COEM, (303) 273-1619.

## The Hazardous Weather Outlook

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

On October 1, 2002, the National Weather Service offices across the nation began issuing the Hazardous Weather Outlook. This outlook will be issued routinely early each day, and will be updated as necessary. The outlook will give the emergency manager the latest information on potential weather hazards for the next seven days. You can obtain the outlook from several sources, including NOAA Weather Radio, NWS internet sites, NOAA Weather Wire, and Climate Change Information Center (CCIC).

The outlook has three sections. A detailed day 1 section will provide you with the hazards to expect within the next 24 hours, and will emphasize any possible watches, warnings or advisories. The second section will be a statement on the potential activation of weather spotter networks. The third section will provide an overview of projected weather hazards for days 2 through 7.

In northeast Colorado, look for DENHWBOU. In southeast and south central Colorado you will find the information in DENHWOPUB. In extreme eastern Colorado, the outlook is issued as TOPHWGLD. The weather hazards for western Colorado will be provided in DENHWOGJT.

If you have any comments on the new Hazardous Weather Outlook, contact the Warning Coordination Meteorologist at your nearest National Weather Service Office.

# Who's in charge in the event a disaster takes the leaders?

This is a questions that came up after 9/11 and confounded some county commissioners. What if a disaster incapacitates the majority governing body of a jurisdiction? Our resident lawyer at COEM, David Holm, did some research and this is what he found.

The Board of County Commissioners is charged with managing the affairs of the county not otherwise vested in another county elected office, nor statutorily placed elsewhere. A quorum of two commissioners is required to transact business at "sessions," but there is some language to support that any surviving and competent county commissioner would have some capability and authority to conduct county business. This is by no means clear. In *Robbins v. Hoover*, 50 Colo. 610, 115 P.526 (1911) and *Skidmore v. O'Rourke*, 152 Colo. 470, 383 P.2d 473 (1963) the Colorado Supreme Court held that a Board of County Commissioners possesses the powers as conferred by the Constitution and statutes, and in addition, such implied powers as are reasonably necessary to the proper execution of the Board's express powers.

In the event of the death, resignation, disqualification or legal incapacity of any county commissioner, the Colorado Constitution at Article XIV, Section 9 provides that a vacancy committee, constituted by law, of the party of the former holder shall select by majority vote a replacement within 10 days. Should such an appointment not be made within 10 days of the vacancy, the Governor has a further 15 days to make such an appointment of a person from the same political party, if any, as the former holder. Not addressed is the question of what happens when an incumbent is not a member of a party, though the governor can still act after 10 days. There appears to be nothing restricting such a committee from acting immediately, but nothing requiring it either. The cleanest action would be for a vacancy committee to act quickly and appoint new commissioners.

Any other county office vacancies are filled by the county commissioners per Colorado Constitution at Article XIV, Section 9. Failing a vacancy committee acting swiftly, however, and in the absence of any sitting Board of County Commissioners, who is in charge of the county?

There does not appear to be any specific direct statutory or Constitutional provisions.

Colorado Revised Statute (C.R.S.) 30-10-302 provides that the commissioners may "establish rules and regulations to govern the transaction" of business by the Board. County commissioners often have appointed County managers to effect the day to day business of the County. This would imply the Commissioners make provisions for the continuity of government during such times as there may be no sitting, qualified Board.

C.R.S. 24-32-2107 provides:

*(8) Each local and interjurisdictional disaster agency shall prepare and keep current a local or interjurisdictional disaster emergency plan for its area.*

*(9) The local or interjurisdictional disaster agency, as the case may be, shall prepare and distribute to all appropriate officials in written form a clear and complete statement of the emergency responsibilities of all local agencies and officials and of the disaster chain of command.*

Based upon the above, it appears within the authority and responsibility of the Board of County Commissioners to provide for continuity of the county government during the period of time when there is an absence of a sitting, qualified, functioning Board of County Commissioners, by providing, either by Resolution or within the Local Emergency Operations Plan, a delegation of necessary authority and a chain of command for such delegation to continue essential county services to protect life and property during the interregnum. Such appointments could include existing county elected and appointed officials such as a single surviving Commissioner, the Sheriff, Clerk and Recorder, County Manager or County Emergency Coordinator, to serve until a Board is again qualified and sworn. Ideally such a plan/resolution would provide for depth in the event that the positions listed first are also vacant.

It's doubtful such actions would be held improper by a court of this state when implemented during a disaster emergency. These determinations should also be addressed with the jurisdiction's attorney.

If you have questions about this or need further information, please contact David Holm at (303) 273-1829.

## 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:

**Polly White**  
15075 S. Golden Road  
Golden, CO 80401-3979  
303.273-1860  
fax: 303.273-1795  
e-mail: [Polly.White@state.co.us](mailto:Polly.White@state.co.us)

*"Some days you're the dog;  
some days you're the  
hydrant."*

*--Unknown*

# BUSINESS (GOVERNMENT) CONTINUITY, Is Your Agency Ready?

*(Continued from page 1)*

I would urge you to keep in mind two critical underpinnings in developing your work contingency/business resumption plan. First, it should have an all hazard focus, and second, you should consider actions before the event, actions during the event, and actions after the event.



*Planners in temporary office after collapse of World Trade Center.*

Information which might assist you in your planning efforts can be found at the COEM website at [www.dola.state.co.us/oem/](http://www.dola.state.co.us/oem/).

**Colorado Office of EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**  
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**Golden, Colorado 80401-3979**

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