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The Director's Chair

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recently named DEM Coordinator Sherry Capers to its Building Resilience in Diverse Communities Advisory Board. The panel is tasked with developing ways to engage faith-based organizations and other community groups to assist local, state and federal government agencies during disasters.

Standing Prepared

By Curtis Sommerhoff

A new fiscal year has begun, another hurricane season has ended and 2010 is just days away. The tropics were once again good to us leaving Hurricane Wilma in 2005 as the last significant weather event to impact our region.

As the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) enters a new year financially and organizationally leaner than in the recent past, we stand prepared to do more with less as we have been charged. No emergency management program within DEM is entirely going away. Our approach to accomplishing our mission has simply been modified, and we remain firm in our resolve to address the community's needs.

When looking back at other things from 2005, I could not help but notice that our DEM table of organization and budget for that year is comparable to what we have today. It was with those similar resources that we weathered the

busiest Atlantic hurricane season to date; brought in \$5 million in grants through the Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS); installed shutters on the 1,000th home as part of the Residential Shuttering Program; developed the Domestic Preparedness Strategy; replaced EOC computers; and completed 100 critical facility vulnerability assessments. Not too bad.

What we have going for us today that we didn't have then is the experience that comes from doing all those things. Doing more with less is a greater challenge for those who have never had to work with less to begin with. Which brings to mind something else that occurred that year; during a Turkey Point exercise our incident management application crashed. We immediately went to the paper system that had served the department well all those years at the old bunker, and we didn't miss a beat - a fine example of quick

thinking and innovation trumping technology. We adjusted, and that's what we will be doing again only on a bit larger scale; of course, what we have before us is no exercise.

Another thing that has been forged over the years that will serve us well going forward is the relationships we have developed with our partner agencies. The emergency management programs that have been formed within many of our cities, colleges and universities are first rate. They did not exist a few years ago and were formed because of the realized importance of what emergency managers bring to the table. Whether that will be enough to fill the gaps of less community outreach, public information and EOC direction and control will be something we are watching carefully.

DEM Hosts StormZone Exercises in EOC

By Roslyn Viterbo



Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Alvarez (left) chats with Epiphany students Giana Bali (center) and Juliana Bacallao (right) during a StormZone exercise on Thursday, Nov. 5, 2009 at the Miami-Dade County Emergency Operations Center.

It's good to start them young; that's how the DEM feels about disaster preparedness. It's also why the DEM has tailored presentations and acquired materials appropriate for school age children. A unique component of our youth preparedness campaign is the StormZone program. Miami-Dade Emergency Management has been an active sponsor and participant in this program for many years.

StormZone is an educational program designed specifically for middle and high school students. Proby and Associates, Inc, a local marketing and communications firm, owns and operates the program that provides an FCAT-

compliant curriculum to teachers at no charge.

During the coursework, students learn about the science of hurricanes. The students also receive a Family Hurricane Preparedness Plan; which they can take home and share with their families, giving them an active role in the family's preparedness activities.

Now here comes our favorite part. Every year, following the completion of the coursework, DEM hosts a simulated Emergency Operations Center (EOC) hurricane activation. The students facilitate the response and recovery efforts for a pre-scripted scenario serving in real-life EOC positions.

See StormZone on Page 2

DEM Employee Profile



Jaime Hernandez

EM Specialist
October 2009 – Present

Public Information Officer
June 2007 – October 2009

After his graduation from FIU in 2000, where he earned his Bachelor's Degree in print journalism, Jaime started working for the prestigious Associated Press in Miami. He continued working in this field, honing his craft with the South Florida Sun-Sentinel and the Miami Daily Business Review. As an investigative reporter, Jaime covered such top stories as the 2004 Broward Sheriff's Office crime statistics reporting scandal and the Sept. 11th attacks on the World Trade Center.

Jaime began his career in Emergency Management in June 2007 as DEM's Public Information Officer. He immediately spearheaded a public relations campaign to assure that the public was made aware of the Department's products and services. Jaime was also instrumental in the implementation of the Miami-Dade Alerts System, a no-charge system that provides subscribers with alerts impending or occurring hazardous situations.

More recently, Jaime started a new career more embedded in Emergency Management when he accepted the position of EM Specialist. A major responsibility of this position was assuring that the Emergency Operations Center was fully operational at all times.

Jaime is now returning to his first love (other than his lovely family) – print media. He has been offered and accepted the position of Editor-in-Chief for the Seminole Tribe of Florida's newspaper, the Seminole Tribune.

Jaime, thanks for all you have done for this Department and best of luck in your new endeavor.

StormZone continued from Page 1

DEM staff is on hand to answer questions and guide the students through the appropriate decisions and actions.

DEM hosted two StormZone programs this year. The first took place on Thursday, Oct. 15th when 40 ninth-grade students from Coral Gables Senior High entered the EOC. They received a briefing, just like during an actual activation, and functioned in their assigned roles from the onset

DEM Takes All-Hazards Approach With Evacuation Planning *by Matthew Shpiner*

A study by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission found that large-scale evacuations (more than 1,000 people) in the United States occur approximately every two to three weeks.

In South Florida, hurricanes have been the most frequently encountered hazard requiring large-scale evacuations. Evacuation planning provides a means of addressing critical policy and operational issues prior to an incident occurring. Past Miami-Dade County evacuation plans have centered on hurricanes and selected other hazards which have historically had the greatest impact on the area. However, with the dynamic nature of threats and hazards today, Miami-Dade DEM is transitioning to an all-hazards approach to evacuation planning.

The Miami-Dade County All-Hazards Evacuation Plan now separates evacuations into two categories: advance notice and no-notice incidents. Advance notice incidents, such as hurricanes, provide decision makers the ability to methodically analyze the potential threat and develop a calculated response based on the anticipated risk to life safety. On the other hand, no-notice emergencies

provide a significantly more challenging situation. Safe and rapid evacuation in response to these types of incidents or disasters hinge upon an efficient decision making process at the field command or EOC level. Miami-Dade County's plan also defines the specific roles, responsibilities, and strategies which are expected to be consistent regardless of the type of incident, or location of occurrence. Defining these integral elements support the application of the plan in response to any hazard, natural or man-made, no-notice or advance notice.

Although dichotomous in nature, advance and no-notice evacuations both require a systematic decision making process and a common understanding of the roles and responsibilities among stakeholders.

The Miami-Dade County All-Hazards Evacuation Plan assists with conceptualizing the evacuation process through incorporation and discussion of the critical elements necessary to effect a successful evacuation. By developing an all-hazards evacuation plan, Miami-Dade County continues to display its progressive approach and commitment to the safety of its residents and visitors through disaster planning.

through the departure of tropical storm force winds. Student's serving in the role of reporters attended the press conference at the end of the scenario and questioned the Mayor on the activities that took place.

Next came Hurricane Margaret, a whirlwind of excitement and anticipation as teachers from Epiphany Catholic School escorted 85 sixth-grade students and approximately 50 of their parents into the EOC on Thursday, Nov. 5th. Given the number of students one might have expected chaos. Not so, these sixth graders were anxious to learn more about the weather and to

took their roles very seriously. As an added bonus, Miami-Dade County's Mayor Carlos Alvarez, who was in the building, came by and spoke with students.

In addition to learning all about severe weather and the importance of preparing for disasters, the students get a better perspective on how their local government and disaster agencies prepare for and effect response and recovery operations.

Any teachers interested in learning more about the StormZone program or perhaps participating should visit the Web site at <http://www.stormzone.us/>.

Upcoming Trainings

Emergency Management Training



Jan. 19-21
 Mass Fatalities Incident Response Course (G-386)
 Miami-Dade County EOC
 Doral, Fla.
 8:30 a.m.- 5 p.m.

Jan. 19-21
 EMS-Operational and Planning for WMD Incidents (PER211)
 Palm Beach Safe School Institute
 1790 NW Spanish River Blvd.
 Boca Raton, Fla. 33431
 8:30 a.m.- 5 p.m.
 E-mail chd06Post@doh.state.fl.us or call 954-762-3874 to register.

Jan. 22-24
 CERT Train-the-Trainer
 University of Miami
 E-mail cert@miamidade.gov to register.

For more information on upcoming EM courses, click [here](#) for state-sponsored training and [here](#) for Urban Area Security Initiative-sponsored training.

Dates to Remember



Jan. 8 - Citizen Corps Council Meeting
Jan. 31 - NFL Pro Bowl in Miami
Feb. 7 - Super Bowl XLIV in Miami



Department of Emergency Management

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www.miamidade.gov/oem

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 Special Needs: **305-513-7700**
 TDD: **305-468-5402**

DEM Mission Statement

Our mission is to lessen the impact of disasters and potential catastrophic incidents by meeting the needs of our community through planning, response and coordination of information and resources.

Photo Gallery



DEM Director Curtis Sommerhoff (right) and Deputy Director Jonathan Lord (left) present Geographic Information Systems coordinator Soheila Ajabshir with the Florida Division of Emergency Management's 2009 Innovator of the Year Award.



It is standing room only in the Miami-Dade Emergency Operations Center for the StormZone exercise featuring students from Epiphany Catholic School on Nov. 5, 2009.

Did You Know?

The Miami-Dade County Health Department has administered nearly 36,000 H1N1 (swine flu) vaccines through early December.



Carlos Alvarez
 Mayor

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Citizen Corps Busy Tackling Crime, H1N1 by Anjila Lebsock

October and November were busy months for the Miami-Dade County Citizen Corps Council.

Citizens' Crime Watch of Miami-Dade County partnered with the National Crime Prevention Council, the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the National Sheriffs' Association to organize and participate in Celebrate Safe Communities, a new initiative designed to bring law enforcement and residents together.

During the month, block parties, safety events, Halloween parties, and marches around their neighborhoods were held to bring attention to crime prevention through awareness of their neighborhoods.

On Veteran's Day in November, dozens of Medical Reserve Corps volunteers participated in an H1N1 (swine flu) vaccination campaign at Barry University. Thanks to their hard work and dedication, Barry University immunized approximately 300 people, including students, professors, and other university staff members. The campaign will continue until all members of this community interested in getting the H1N1 vaccine are immunized.

Comments about *Activate!* Send an E-mail to eoc@miamidade.gov. Be sure to include Newsletter-Activate in the subject line.