



OEM

Bulletin NJ

Office of Emergency Management - Spring 2008



The Delaware River at Flood Stage

Mitigation 101

With flood season underway and hurricane season right around the corner, the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management would like to share the following valuable information to our respective audiences, especially those in flood prone communities.

Mitigation means taking action to reduce the risk of loss of life or property from a future hazardous event. There is no way to prevent natural disasters, but there are steps individuals and businesses can take to lessen damage and losses caused by them.

New Jersey has endured harsh storms resulting in major disaster declarations over the past few years stemming from severe flooding in some areas. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency man-

agement Agency (FEMA) and the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management (NJOEM) offer information for individuals and homeowners on measures that they can take to protect their home and family from such events. As the threat of flooding continues, we recommend that residents take actions to protect the lives of their loved ones, friends, neighbors, and property.

Simple measures taken before a disaster strikes may help residents protect their life and property. FEMA has produced a publication called, *Are you Ready? An In depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness*. It is offered in both English and Spanish and is FEMA's most comprehensive source on individual, family and community preparedness. It urges every

Letter from the Editor

Hello and welcome to the first 2008 edition of the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management's newsletter. As such, it is a pleasure to bring you NJOEM's highlights, programs and assorted info on a quarterly basis.

This quarterly newsletter will delve into issues ranging from cutting edge mitigation practices as well as some of the great community work that we do throughout the state. Regardless of the topic, this newsletter's goal is to accurately and effectively portray NJOEM while keeping true to the section's mitigation, response and recovery cornerstones and New Jersey State Police traditions of HONOR, DUTY and FIDELITY.

I invite all to enjoy and utilize the newsletter content for your benefit and the benefit of others. We've created this document for everyone and invite all to lend their feedback. We hope that you'll find the content relevant to your life and community, ultimately enlightening and preparing you in many ways for any emergency.

Thank you and enjoy!

Sincerely,

Nick Morici

Public Information Officer (PIO)



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Major Announcement



In 1995, an article was written in the NJOEM newsletter by then Trooper II Lance Oram (now Lt. Oram of our recovery Bureau) titled: "Have You Met." Ironically, the person featured in that article was, Trooper II, Jerome Hatfield, the same individual featured in today's article.

Thirteen years later, we reintroduce you to the same Jerome Hatfield but this time as Major Jerome Hatfield, Commanding Officer of the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management.

In early February of this year, Major Hatfield was promoted to his current rank and elevated from Executive to Commanding Officer of NJOEM. A graduate of the 103rd NJSP class and proud military veteran of the United States Army, Major Hatfield has served the New Jersey State Police for over 22 years in various ranks and units. Although, his experiences within the NJSP are very well diversified, the Major has worked with NJOEM since 1995, serving the section with pride and distinction.

Throughout his tenure with NJOEM, the Major has definitely worn many hats and worked with numerous local, county, state and federal organizations ranging from the smallest New Jersey municipalities to FEMA. Whether people inside or outside of the outfit know him as Major Hatfield or just "Jerome", their words about our new commanding officer are always the same: a proactive leader, true people person, skillful organizer, field expert, compelling speaker and most importantly an all around gentleman.

Major Hatfield's intensity, passion and desire to achieve emergency management greatness for the Garden State and the NJSP are certainly second to none. The section is looking forward to continuing its relationship with this cornerstone member of NJOEM and following his lead for years to come. On behalf of all of the entire NJOEM section and its esteemed partners; "Congratulations Major Hatfield. We wish you nothing but the best success in your new NJOEM journey as the new Commanding Officer, keep up the outstanding work and God Bless.

2008 NJOEM Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Update

PDM all hazard plans are currently being written in 17 of our 21 New Jersey Counties. To date, applications were submitted to FEMA for the following counties: Sussex, Warren, Hunterdon and Mercer. Upon FEMA approval, NJOEM will have 100% of all New Jersey counties eligible for FEMA funding, upon completion of their respective plans.

With respect to PDM sub-grantees, NJOEM attends all monthly meetings for said parties statewide and in turn, offers guidance when necessary. NJOEM's main function is to oversee the emergency planning process and be available when needed to provide valuable input and useful feedback. NJOEM also attends public meetings associated with PDM funding. Throughout the entire PDM process, the local municipalities along with the Counties invite all affected citizens to ask questions as well as lend suggestions to assist in better preparing their community prior to any disaster. During these meetings, the public is also given the status of their community's PDM plan.

At present, the majority of New Jersey counties have dedicated personnel and a section on their Emergency Management Web site to educate and allow the public a front row view of what is going on with their county's PDM plan. As such, the public can examine meeting agenda's, working documents as well as the names and contact information of their community's participating PDM grant committee members. The local jurisdictions have also provided links to their parent County Web site in an attempt to better inform the public. In addition to the local meetings, forums, Web sites and public documents, a survey been circulated in most counties (surveys are County specific to hazards and their residents) to garner any added residential participation.

NJOEM strongly encourages all New Jersey Counties to create and present an All Hazards Mitigation Plan to FEMA. Counties are invited to utilize NJOEM services for plan review prior to FEMA submission. The Pre-Disaster Mitigation unit at NJOEM is dedicated to preparing and assisting all counties throughout New Jersey in a proactive attempt to obtain any/all FEMA grant monies that will help keep people and property safe from harm.



*Remember,
towns must have
an all hazards
plan to receive
federal funding.*

Mitigation 101 – April showers bring May flowers and sometime flooding in New Jersey *continued from page 1 >*

citizen to make a plan, make a kit and get informed. The book is free of charge by calling 1-800-480-2520 or on FEMA's web site at www.fema.gov. Below is a sample of some of the actions a person can take to protect themselves and their property:

- Develop and rehearse a family disaster plan—what to do if you are forced to leave home.
- Include a communications plan—how to contact each other if you become separated.
- When severe weather threatens, turn on your radio to a local station to stay informed of imminent danger.
- Put together emergency supplies, one set for your house and one for you car. Emergency kits should include food, water, a first aid kit, flashlights, a radio, and plenty of batteries. The kit in you car should also have flares and jumper cables.
- Know how to turn off your utilities, and keep the necessary tools at hand. Make sure other members of your family know how to do this also. If you turned off your gas, do not turn it back on yourself. Call the gas company.
- Make copies of vital documents, such as wills, birth certificates, financial records, insurance policies and credit card numbers. Keep the originals in a safe deposit box.
- Make a detailed inventory of your personal belongings, home or an apartment,

garage and surrounding property, with photographs or videotape. Store it in a safe place.

When living in an area subject to flooding, the following steps can be taken to help protect a home from the next flood:

- Elevate the furnace, water heater and electrical panels in the home.
- Install “check valves” in sewer traps to prevent flood water from backing up into the home.
- Purchase flood insurance to protect your financial future. Typical homeowners insurance doesn't cover flooding losses.
- Construct protection barriers to stop floodwater from entering the home.
- Find out where your community stores and distributes sandbags and how to use them.
- Develop a flood response plan based on your flood protection level, local warning procedures, and the amount of warning time you will have to respond before the flood comes.
- Be prepared to care for your animals in the event of an evacuation.
- Know and rehearse your evacuation route.

Additionally, NJOEM has been working diligently to assist communities and residents throughout the state to reduce or even in some cases eliminate their losses due to flooding. Currently, the NJOEM mitigation

unit is conducting a statewide Severe Repetitive Loss home buyout program.

So what does this mean for NJ Residents?

Municipalities with an Approved Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) plan in New Jersey that have experienced Severe Repetitive Loss (SRL)* due to recurring flood issues could be eligible to qualify for SRL assistance. Municipalities that wish to submit a FMA plan for approval are strongly encouraged to do so.

Please note that the NJOEM mitigation unit is available to guide and review all FMA plans for the total benefit of the municipality and its residents. By utilizing NJOEM during this process, municipalities will be proactively preparing for their respective FMA plan's ultimate review and approval by FEMA. And more importantly safeguarding their residents!

At present, more than a dozen New Jersey municipalities have created an FMA plan as well as filed for FMA plan approval. Currently they are under NJOEM review and advisement. To date, NJOEM has assisted Atlantic City and Wayne, NJ in this SRL quest via a voluntary home buyout program. Most notably, the Hoffman Grove section of Wayne began a buyout project which resulted in over 30 homeowners receiving relocation compensation for their homes via federal grant monies.

NJOEM's overall flood mitigation goal is to continually protect life, protect property, promote a sustainable economy and increase public preparedness through a variety of multifaceted efforts on a daily basis.

For more information on disaster recovery and the preparedness step necessary prior to an event, please log on to the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management (NJOEM) disaster Web site at www.ready.nj.gov or visit FEMA's Web site at www.fema.gov.

*Severe Repetitive Loss Program

The Severe Repetitive Loss (SRL) grant program was authorized by the Bunning-Bereuter-Blumenauer Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2004, which amended the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 to provide funding to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to severe repetitive loss (SRL) structures insured under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

The definition of severe repetitive loss as applied to this program was established in section 1361A of the National Flood Insurance Act, as amended (NFIA), 42 U.S.C. 4102a. An SRL property is defined as a residential property that is covered under an NFIP flood insurance policy and:

- (a) That has at least four NFIP claim payments (including building and contents) over \$5,000 each, and the cumulative amount of such claims payments exceeds \$20,000; or
- (b) For which at least two separate claims payments (building payments only) have been made with the cumulative amount of the building portion of such claims exceeding the market value of the building.

For both (a) and (b) above, at least two of the referenced claims must have occurred within any ten-year period, and must be greater than 10 days apart. - www.fema.gov/government/grant/srl/index.shtml

Hurricane Preparedness...

Never too Soon!

As we say goodbye to winter weather and enter the summer months, the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management partakes in its annual preparation for a historically busy season... Hurricane Season.

Hurricane season normally runs from June 1 through November 30 – or even beyond, as the world saw during the record-setting 2005 season. The peak potential for Hurricane and Tropical Storm activity in New Jersey runs from mid-August through the end of October.

The combination of warm ocean water, humid air and consistent winds contributes to the formation of “tropical cyclones” – low-pressure systems of circulating winds, clouds and thunderstorms – over the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico.

As they gain strength, these cyclones are classified as Tropical Depressions, Tropical Storms or Hurricanes. The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale rates Hurricane strengths, from Category 1 to Category 5.

Most of these storms remain over the ocean without affecting the U.S. coastline.

When they approach land, Tropical Storms and Hurricanes can be extremely deadly and destructive – even as far north as New Jersey, and even when they do not make landfall here. For example:

- **Hurricane Ivan** made landfall on the barrier islands of Alabama on September 16, 2004. The storm was downgraded to Tropical Depression Ivan by the time it reached the Delmarva Peninsula and caused up to six inches of rain in parts of New Jersey. Ivan caused significant property damage in communities along the Delaware River.
- **Hurricane Isabel** made landfall on the Outer Banks of North Carolina on September 18, 2003. Isabel produced storm-surges of 2-4 feet above normal tide levels along Maryland, Delaware and New Jer-

sey shorelines. Of the 16 deaths directly attributed to Isabel, one was in New Jersey. Isabel caused significant property damage in Central New Jersey.

- **Tropical Storm Floyd** skirted the New Jersey Coast on September 16, 1999. The storm deluged the Garden State with up to 14 inches of rain. Of the 57 deaths directly attributed to Floyd, six were in New Jersey. Floyd caused widespread property damage across the entire Garden State.

With that said, does NJOEM know what’s in store for 2008? The truth is, hurricanes like all weather events are only predictable to an extent. Programs such as Doppler Radar, Storm Tracker, and Earth Watch will hit the nail on the head more times than most, but they still can’t read Mother Nature’s mind. Many times I’m asked by reporters, who call during an impending weather event, to predict or speculate on what the weather will do or what’s going to happen. My answer to their question is always as follows: “At NJOEM we don’t predict or speculate, we plan, prepare and ready our state for all events of any magnitude through awareness, communication and teamwork.”

This statement is truly the way of NJOEM. We are committed and dedicated to planning and preparing for all storms during hurricane season and beyond. From a minor shower to a tree bending, torrential wind ridden vortex, NJOEM is ready. For us, it doesn’t start on June 1st and end on November 30th. Instead it is an ongoing process that is detailed, studied and enhanced regularly for the benefit of our state residents and visitors.

Additionally, constant dialogue with NJ county offices of emergency management, the National Weather Service as well as state and federal partners proactively allows NJOEM not only to receive and deliver timely information to the public but more importantly respond to all scenarios statewide.

Regardless of the forecast, NJOEM always strongly encourages all residents to plan and prepare. At times, the weather might be unknown but your family’s emergency plan should never be a guessing game!



*Get a Kit,
Make a Plan,
Stay Informed
and Know Your
Evac Routes.*

New Jersey Citizen Corps "Volunteers Making A Difference"

New Jersey Citizen Corps provides opportunity for citizen volunteers to become active and involved in homeland security and emergency management activities designed to make individuals, their families and their communities safer, stronger and better prepared to deal with a terrorist attack or a natural disaster. Citizen Corps offers five (5) core programs:

- Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)
- Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)
- Neighborhood Watch (NW)
- Volunteers in Police Services (VIPS)
- Fire Corps (FC)

Citizen Corps programs and activities are coordinated by a network of Councils established to facilitate the growth and development of the programs. Thanks to the support of the County and Local Offices of Emergency Management, New Jersey was the first state to achieve 100% coverage of its citizenry by a network of Councils statewide. We currently have more Councils (192) than any other state in the nation; this number continues to grow. Townships across the state are encouraged to register their Local Emergency Planning Committee as their Local Citizen Corps Council by going to www.citizen corps.gov and registering their council.

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)

New Jersey has more CERT teams (390) registered on the Citizen Corps national Web site than any other state in the nation. We received an award for our dramatic success at the 2006 National CERT Conference held in Los Angeles, California. Today, over 10,000 New Jersey citizens have completed the standard FEMA 20 hour training curriculum, been organized into teams, uniformed and equipped as a resource available to support first responders and other community needs as re-

quired. The training program trains people in the neighborhoods, the workplace and schools in basic disaster response skills such as fire suppression, urban search and rescue, and medical operations. The training is designed to make our citizenry more prepared and able to respond to disasters across our state. Our CERT training and program development is supported by our County Emergency Management Offices. Each of the twenty-one (21) counties in the state has assigned a specific CERT Coordinator to oversee and coordinate program development and volunteer recruitment activities. All CERT volunteers who complete the training program are supplied with an equipment pack which includes the following: ID vest, hard hat, baseball cap, flashlight, protective eye goggles, dust masks, work gloves, rain poncho, T shirt, whistle, emergency 4 in 1 tool and carry bag. Interested individuals can contact their County or Local Office of Emergency Management for more information on how to volunteer to be a part of CERT or call 1-877-CERT-411. Please visit the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management Web site at www.ready.nj.gov for more information.

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

The Medical Reserve Corps coordinates volunteer health professionals, as well as other citizens with an interest in health issues, to provide ongoing support for community public health needs and resources during large scale emergencies, such as assisting emergency response teams, providing care to victims with less serious injuries, and removing other burdens that inhibit the effectiveness of physicians and nurses. New Jersey has established 26 Medical Reserve Corps programs statewide. A statewide Web site www.njmrc.com has been established to support volunteer recruitment and participation into the appropriate venue team.

A CERT Team in Training



Neighborhood Watch (NW)

We live in a different world than we did before September 11, 2001. We are more aware of our vulnerabilities, more appreciative of our freedoms, and more understanding that we have a personal responsibility for the safety of our families, our neighbors and our nation. But we also know that we can take action now to help protect our families, help reduce the impact an emergency has on our lives, and help deal with the chaos if an incident does occur. The Neighborhood Watch Program is a highly successful effort that has been in existence for more than thirty years in cities and counties across America. It provides a unique infrastructure that brings together local officials, law enforcement and citizens to protect our communities.

The New Jersey Neighborhood Watch Program will provide the opportunity for citizens to partner with members of the law enforcement and emergency management communities for mutual benefit. Our program takes the basic concepts of crime prevention and adds the topics of disaster preparedness and terrorism awareness to the curriculum. Working in partnership with the New Jersey Chiefs of Police Association and the County Sheriffs Association this program is being promoted throughout the state.

more >

New Jersey Citizen Corps "Volunteers Making A Difference"

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More information can be obtained by visiting the Web site www.usaonwatch.org.

Volunteers In Police Services (VIPS)

The VIPS Program provides support for resource constrained police departments by incorporating civilian volunteers so that law enforcement professionals have more time for front line duty. Volunteer's roles range from part time occasional clerical tasks to full time volunteer work. Additional duties are assigned and developed by the local law enforcement agencies to meet their specific requirements and needs. For more information visit www.policevolunteers.org.

Fire Corps

Fire Corps promotes the use of citizen advocates to enhance the capacity of resource constrained fire and rescue departments at all levels: volunteer, combination, and career. Fire Corps volunteers can assist local fire departments in a range of activities including fire safety outreach, youth programs and administrative support. For more information visit www.firecorps.org.

In conclusion, the success of NJ Citizen Corps is due in large part to the partnerships we have established with our Emergency Management Partners and the many citizens of this state that have volunteered. Without their help and support, the NJ Citizen Corps program would not be the National Model that it is today. More information can be obtained by contacting your County or Local Office of Emergency Management or by visiting the Citizen Corps Web site at www.citizen corps.gov or the NJOEM Web site at www.ready.nj.gov. If you have any questions on NJ Citizen Corps please contact Mr. Howard Butt at 609-963-6995 \ or Lt. Joe Geleta at 609-963-6964.

Mercer County Animal Rescue Trailer Eases Residents' Concerns In Potential Evacuations

- by Pete Daly, Mercer County PIO

In late 2006, an opportunity arose for the Mercer County Office of Emergency Management to think outside the box.

Hundreds of homes along the Delaware River and its tributaries had been damaged by an unprecedented occurrence, three major floods of the river within a very brief time period. After 55 years of relative calm, floodwaters erupted from the river's banks in September 2004, April 2005 and June 2006.

The County's cooperation with its towns on evacuations and the swift response by its OEM team to affected areas helped mitigate some of the damage. No flood-related deaths occurred, and few injuries were reported, despite 1,500 evacuations in Trenton alone. Storm damage in Mercer totaled about \$7.8 million, with \$6.5 million of that damage sustained by private homes spread across all 13 municipalities.

The OEM response—especially considering no one could draw on personal experience due to the absence of such widespread and powerful flooding of the Delaware in the half-century before—was an almost universal success.

But as with any fast-moving disaster response, operational problems were exposed. Among them was a unique evacuation challenge that was both longstanding and difficult to address: how to get residents who refuse to leave their pets behind to evacuate efficiently and cooperate with authorities.

While this might be viewed as a small obstacle on first glance, the fate of their pets is a real consideration of many residents. Their refusal to leave their home because they will be leaving a pet behind

could have deadly consequences. Media reports following the Hurricane Katrina illustrated this point, and referenced residents in and around New Orleans who became trapped in their homes or worse because of their unwillingness to leave a pet.

The problem existed on a much lesser scale during the flooding in Mercer County in 2004, 2005, and 2006, but remained an unresolved issue with potential consequences should a larger incident occur.

Nationwide surveys within the last six years show almost half of New Jersey residents own a pet. With the 2006 U.S. Census estimate calculating the state has more than 8.7 million residents, that means more than 4 million residents share their home with a pet of some kind.

And so near the end of 2006, with the window to utilize that year's U.S. Department of Homeland Security funding closing, Mercer County seized an opportunity to fund a "backup" project.

Mercer County OEM used \$55,000 in federal funding to purchase a fully mobile animal rescue trailer, which was received in July 2007.

The trailer, a modified animal adoption trailer, can temporarily house up to 43 animals in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency.

The trailer measures 8 feet wide by 24 feet long and contains 38 individual compartments for animals, which can be expanded to accommodate more if necessary. It's equipped with a 30-gallon fresh water holding tank, heating and air conditioning, a built-in generator, lighting, and a fully-insulated interior, among other amenities.

It is towed using a Ford F250 diesel pickup truck operated by OEM and can be deployed



The Mercer County Animal Rescue Trailer.

to any disaster-affected area quickly, expediting the evacuation process by alleviating residents' fears for their pet.

"While we are concerned about the lives of animals, human life is obviously our first priority," Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes said when OEM received the rescue trailer in 2007. "This can help give residents the peace of mind that their pets will be cared for and facilitate the evacuation process in an emergency."

Personnel to operate the trailer in an emergency was another crucial element of the purchase.

During the September 2004 flood, a multitude of pets were kept in portable cages outside an emergency shelter in West Trenton. The arrangement was less than desirable—supplies for the animals were being purchased from pet stores during the emergency on an as-needed basis and no specific personnel were designated for the task of caring for the animals, according to Mercer County OEM Coordinator Dean Raymond.

Raymond said once staff from the County's Wildlife Center volunteered to operate a rescue trailer, the purchase through federal funding could be made.

"Everybody knew that pets, in terms of evacuation, were an issue before our floods and before Hurricane Katrina," Raymond said. "It was a recognized issue, but there were other priorities for our funding. But I would say because we watched for opportunities to fund secondary or backup projects, and because Katrina brought this issue to the forefront to people not normally involved in emergency planning, the public understood the problem and supported the purchase."

Pete Daly is the Deputy Director of Communications for Mercer County.

Join us for the 2008 New Jersey Emergency Preparedness Conference

Tropicana Casino Resort
Atlantic City, New Jersey

May 5th – 9th, 2008

May 5 - 7, 2008 Pre-Conference Training Opportunities

May 7, 2008 Golf Outing

May 8 - 9, 2008 Conference & Exhibits

The New Jersey Emergency Preparedness Conference will be held May 5th-9th, 2008 at the Tropicana Casino Resort in Atlantic City, New Jersey. We cordially invite you to participate in this conference.

The 2008 conference is expected to draw over 1800 emergency planning and response professionals (both public and private sector) from the Mid-Atlantic region.

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- Details are available on the web site www.njepa.org
- Sponsorships and exhibit spaces are still available!

N J E P A
New Jersey Emergency Preparedness Association

New Jersey Register Ready

This is the first in a series of articles on emergency planning for persons with special needs. This month we focus on the definition of “special needs,” identifying what it means to emergency managers and individuals who are especially vulnerable when disaster strikes. In future articles we will examine planning tools and ways to establish strategic partnerships with organizations which can help you successfully integrate special needs planning into your emergency management program.

One of the first challenges emergency management officials encounter when trying to launch a special needs preparedness capability is trying to understand exactly what is meant by the term “special needs.” There is a natural tendency to want to categorize people as “having” or “not having” a special need, but looking at the issue from a functional perspective aids in understanding the issues and helps with planning.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s National Response Framework “...a function-based definition of special needs reflects the capabilities of the individual, not the condition, label or medical diagnosis.” Simply put, emergency planners should be more concerned about whether a person has the capability to evacuate, take shelter or follow other emergency orders on their own, rather than whether the level of capability is affected by a chronic illness, injury or disability at birth. A functional approach to disability takes into account how well a person can perform “activities of daily living”, e.g., eating, bathing, dressing, grooming, work, homemaking, etc.

The NRF outlines functional areas which should be addressed in planning.

1. Maintaining independence - Individuals requiring support to be independent in daily activities may lose this support during an emergency or a disaster. This support may include supplies, durable medical equipment, attendants, caregivers or pro-

grams such as Meals-on-Wheels. Many individuals with disabilities and older adults live independently in the community; their support systems are reduced or fail completely when disaster strikes. For example, public transportation impacts whether caregivers can visit and adverse weather conditions impact home meal delivery.

2. Communication - Some individuals have limitations that interfere with the receipt of and response to disaster-related information, and will need that information provided in methods they can understand and use in order to comply with emergency orders. They may not be able to hear verbal announcements, see directional signs, or understand how to get assistance all because of hearing, vision, speech, cognitive, or intellectual limitations, and/or limited English proficiency.

3. Transportation - Individuals who cannot drive or who do not have a vehicle may require transportation support for successful evacuation. This support may include accessible vehicles (e.g., lift-equipped or vehicles suitable for transporting individ-

uals who use oxygen) or information about how and where to access mass transportation during an evacuation.

4. Supervision - Before, during, and after an emergency, individuals may lose the support of caregivers, family, or friends or may be unable to cope in a new environment. Examples are persons who have dementia, Alzheimer’s, autism or psychiatric conditions such as schizophrenia or intense anxiety. If separated from their caregivers, young children may be unable to identify themselves; and when in danger, they may lack the cognitive ability to assess the situation and react appropriately.

5. Medical care - Individuals who are not self-sufficient or who do not have adequate support from caregivers, family, or friends may need assistance with: managing unstable, terminal or contagious conditions that require observation and ongoing treatment; managing intravenous therapy, tube feeding, and vital signs; receiving dialysis, oxygen, and suction administration; managing wounds; and operating power dependent equipment to



Addressing special needs issues enhances response in the event of an emergency

Burlington County To Pilot Creation Of 'Incident Support Team'

- by David Wyche, Burlington County PIO

sustain life. These individuals require support of trained medical professionals.

Trying to address these functional needs may at first seem overwhelming for many emergency management officials. Building a "special" or "functional" needs planning capability requires out-of-the-box thinking. Questions will arise concerning continuation of social services, accessible shelters, evacuation assistance, medications and other functional needs.

Addressing these issues may require a regional approach to staffing and resources. Leaders from the disability community can and should be brought to the emergency planning table as resources, and not viewed as "...passive receivers of assistance." And there is some responsibility placed on the individual – whenever possible, persons with special needs should develop a personal disaster plan and exhaust their personal resources first, then look elsewhere for aid. Social service and community health care providers are strategic partners; the contribution of the skills, knowledge and abilities should not be diminished during the planning process.

Modifications and adaptations to disaster plans which are made for special needs populations have proven to benefit everyone in the community. The NJOEM supports collaborative approaches to functional needs preparedness and affirms the findings outlined the 2005 National Organization on Disability report that, "...emergency planning must embrace the value that everyone should survive, or when adverse conditions occur, they will not."

For more information on special needs planning, contact Mary Goepfert, NJOEM Field Training Unit at 609-584-5000 ext. 5117 or lppgoepm@gw.njsp.org

Helpful Resources:

NJOEM Special Needs Advisory Council - www.ready.nj.gov/plan/special-needs-njsnap.html

Special Needs Resources for the Emergency Management and Emergency Response Community - www.ready.nj.gov/plan/special-needs.html



IST will be able to assist in those efforts, saving time, property & possibly lives.

Burlington County, through its Office of Emergency Management, will be the first county in New Jersey to establish an Incident Support Team (IST) that will be available to any Incident Commander during a large scale, complex or long-term disaster.

"Burlington County is proud to pilot this initiative in New Jersey as we continue to lead the way in preparation for disasters," Freeholder Director Aubrey A. Fenton said. "We have made public safety of our citizens a priority, and this is an opportunity to add another level of protection not only for our residents but to support our emergency responders."

The IST is designed for highly trained personnel to be on-call for any incident in Burlington County, or possibly adjacent county, to respond and assist in various areas of incident management, including resources, facilities, planning, logistics and safety.

Supported by the New Jersey State Police Office of Emergency Management, the Burlington County IST members will receive additional training that focuses on their area of response.

For instance, last May, a fire that burned 17,250 acres of Pinelands in Burlington, Ocean and Atlantic counties required equipment from 14 fire companies, more than 1,000 responders – including 600 firemen – to battle the blaze for more than a week. Approximately 6,000 residents were evacuated and nearly 2,500 homes affected.

The IST is designed that all or part of its team could respond in an event like that to assist where needed. The Resources Unit would be able to assist in identifying, requesting and deploying equipment that would be necessary.

"In the case of the Pinelands fire, helicopters, bulldozers and various fire equipment was used throughout the week to bring the fire under control. The IST will be able to assist in those efforts, saving time, property and possibly lives," Freeholder Fenton said.

Training for IST personnel is being scheduled and the Team will be functional as soon as all are trained, hopefully by 2009.