



# SECURE & PREPARED

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### Special points of interest:

- As of October 3, HLSEM had received over 1,200 compliancy letters statewide. See article on page 2.
- Beginning October 2, a Regional State Liaison will be based out of Albia in an effort to provide one-on-one assistance in planning, training, and exercise to counties in Region 5. See article on page 3.
- On October 2, Des Moines County was officially recognized as StormReady. For more information, see article on page 4.
- Steve Zimmerman, chief of HLSEM's Preparedness Bureau is featured in the HLSEM Spotlight. See article on page 6.

**Please note that HLSEM's main office/24-hour contact phone number has changed to 515-725-3231.**

## State and Local Officials Exercise Pandemic Influenza Response

Nine Iowa counties and several state agencies completed a full-scale exercise on September 27, in which an estimated 300 participants responded to a simulated pandemic influenza. The Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (HLSEM) and the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) hosted the exercise.

"This exercise presents the perfect opportunity to test pandemic plans and coordination with state and local resources," said Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division Administrator David Miller. "This exercise is just one component of our continuing efforts to prepare and respond to any large-scale emergency event."

The exercise tested Strategic National Stockpile operations and coordination, the National Incident Management System, communicating with the public, Iowa's emergency communications systems, and surge capabilities in healthcare.

"The science of a pandemic changes everyday, but what doesn't change is ongoing planning and exercising for public health emergencies," said IDPH Director Mary Mincer Hansen, R.N., Ph.D. "By participating in exercises, we can build on successes and identify unanticipated needs in order to protect the health of Iowans."

The event was the second phase of a preparedness planning exercise that began in July and August examining possible responses to the human-to-human transmission of the H5N1 virus in Iowa. During the first stage, IDPH and HLSEM sponsored five tabletop exercises across the state.



At top, HLSEM Administrator Dave Miller, Adjutant General Ron Dardis, Dawn Wilson of the Governor's Office, and IDPH's Mary Jones discuss issues in the Executive Office of the State Emergency Operations Center during the pandemic exercise. Bottom, IDPH State Epidemiologist Patricia Quinlisk speaks with IDPH's Steve Mercer in the SEOC.

# Keeping Our Eye on the Ball

By HLSEM Administrator, David L. Miller



The fifth anniversary of the attack of September 11<sup>th</sup> has washed over us. It afforded us a moment to look back and reflect on what we've accomplished and I thank you all for your help in preparing our communities, expanding our existing tools and adding new capabilities to our response system.

But that moment has come and gone and now it's time to keep our eye on the ball and look forward. One of the driving forces we can't lose sight of can be summed up in this phrase – think multi-hazard.

We know there are domestic terrorist groups that operate in our state and we've had terrorism events in Iowa. Think back to the group that broke into and damaged the University of Iowa laboratory or to the multiple suspicious powder incidents we

continually face.

While the probability of a terrorism event is hard to gauge, we do know that we will face a major flooding event; tornadoes will touch down in our state and a major chemical spill will involve a coordinated response. While the grants management parts of our jobs and the focus on terrorism can dominate our work, it is important to remember that natural and human-made disasters will occur and we must continue to focus our attention on those types of hazards.

The good news is that many of the steps we take on the "terrorism" side easily transfer to help us respond to any event. Learning Incident Command, for example, will help responders understand their roles whenever they are called out. Improving communication channels, equipment and procedures will pay dividends at every disaster scene. Please look for those opportunities to leverage terrorism dollars and activities to help with the multi-hazard threats we face.

Thank you for your continued help. The attack of 9/11 taught us that we are all in this together and can only improve by working together.

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## NIMS for 2007

Congratulations to everyone on the hard work you all put forward for NIMS compliancy. HLSEM staff is still busy adding compliancy letters into the data base. As of October 3, we had received over 1,200 compliancy letters statewide. This number was reported to the NIMS Integration Center (NIC) and they were very impressed with Iowa. In fact, they consider Iowa one of the top performers in the nation.

HLSEM has not yet received any guidance for the FY07 compliancy, but were told we should have it within the next two weeks. Once we receive the guidance it will be made available to everyone.

HLSEM has added a temporary employee to assist with NIMS. Her name is Cathleen Atchison and she will slowly be taking over some of the responsibility for NIMS from David Hempen.

Remember that being NIMS compliant makes you eligible to apply for federal preparedness grants. So it's never too late to become NIMS compliant.

## HLSEM Pilots State Liaison Position in Region 5

Beginning October 2, a Regional State Liaison will be based out of Albia in an effort to provide one-on-one assistance in planning, training, and exercise to counties in Region 5. Jack Briggs, an exercise specialist with HLSEM, will serve in this capacity.

The Region 5 State Liaison is a state employee, funded and deployed by the HLSEM. The intent of this liaison is to foster a cohesive partnership between the home office in Johnston and our customers in the field, the county emergency management coordinators. The liaison will provide as much one-on-one service as budget and time will allow in the areas of planning, training and exercise. The Region 5 Liaison will live in the assigned Region. In the case of Region 5, Monroe County, City of Albia.

The State Liaison will provide assistance in the response and recovery areas only to the extent determined necessary by HLSEM. This will be specific to situations that are deemed necessary to provide immediate feedback of communications and technical assistance between the field element and the State Emergency Operations Center.

### **Areas that are seen as direct missions of the Region 5 State Liaison are:**

- Technical assistance in exercise development and execution.
- Technical assistance in planning, and immediate review of plans. The Region 5 State Liaison will not supersede the Region 5 planner as noted on the most current planning map.
- Technical assistance in training development and delivery in conjunction with the training staff of the county and HLSEM.
- Advisor to new county emergency management coordinators.

The Region 5 State Liaison is not responsible for writing individual county exercises, plans or development of associated training. Rather, this person will provide guidance and technical assistance directed at showing a county how the local government can accomplish these tasks effectively. The liaison will work with all counties in their assigned region.

Contact information for the Region 5 State Liaison is:

Jack Briggs, Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management, 103 S. Clinton St. - Suite 2, Albia, IA 52531, Phone: 641-932-2949, FAX: 641-932-2114, e-mail: [Jack.briggs@iowa.gov](mailto:Jack.briggs@iowa.gov).

The liaison will visit each county in the specified region at least once a quarter and most likely more often. The regional liaison will be expected to be fully briefed by the state office on the status of each county's plans, training, and exercise status prior to each visit. It is seen as probable that liaison services will be needed in extreme cases of actual events occurring within a region. Such services will be coordinated through the HLSEM duty officer, who will in turn be in contact with appropriate division management staff.

The deployment of the Region 5 State Liaison is a pilot test for six months and depending on its success and support at several levels will continue or be terminated after the pilot period.

## Des Moines County is *StormReady*

On October 2, Des Moines County was officially recognized as *StormReady*. To receive this recognition, Des Moines County had to meet the following criteria: establish a 24-hour warning point and emergency operation center, have more than one way to receive severe weather forecasts and warnings to alert the public, have a system to monitor local weather conditions, promote the importance of public readiness through community educational programs, and have a hazardous weather plan that includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises.



Burlington City Council members Bill Ell, Mike Campbell, Garry Thomas, Tim Scott, Mayor Mike Edwards, Des Moines County Emergency Management Coordinator Gina Hardin, and Donna Dubberke (WCM) and Stephan Kuhl (MIC) from the National Weather Service in Davenport celebrate being *StormReady*.

Many community partners helped make the county's weather program a reality. "No one office by itself can provide citizens of a

county the type of severe weather information they need," said Des Moines County Emergency Management Coordinator Gina Hardin. "We rely heavily on volunteers from the local fire departments, SKYWARN spotters, Amateur Radio Club volunteers, trained National Weather Service spotters, local law enforcement agencies, and the general public to provide us the ground truth information about what the weather conditions are at any given location. Also, without the Burlington Police Department giving the SKYWARN organization a place to operate their Weather Operation Center, this program would not be a reality."

Donna Dubberke, warning coordination meteorologist from the National Weather Service Office in Davenport added, "*StormReady* is not storm proof. Participation on the *StormReady* program shows that the leadership of this community is committed to helping people stay informed so they can protect themselves from very real dangers of severe weather."

The *StormReady* recognition is valid for three years, at which time Des Moines County can apply for recertification. Des Moines County is one of only six counties in Iowa and one of 592 counties in the United States that have earned this recognition. For more information on the *StormReady* program visit <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/dvn/stormready/index.php>.

## Congress Approves Pet Evacuation Bill

The House and the Senate have approved the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2005 (H.R. 3858). The bill amends the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to require the director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to ensure that state and local emergency preparedness operational plans address the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals following a major disaster or emergency. There is no funding provided to state and local governments to produce these plans. The bill has been presented to the President for signature.

## COOP/COG Work Moves Forward

In early 2004, HLSEM staff met with state government officials to discuss the development of Continuity of Operations and Continuity of Government plans (COOP/COG) for the State of Iowa. COOP is the planning initiative of organizations to ensure the continued operations of essential services during a wide range of potential emergencies. COG is the planning initiative to ensure the continuation or reconstitution of government's ability to carry out its constitutional responsibilities.

In March 2005, Governor Vilsack signed Executive Order 40, requiring all State of Iowa Executive Branch agencies to collaborate with HLSEM on the development of COOP/COG plans. The primary focus of this Executive Order was to ensure the State's ability to deliver essential services under any circumstances. The plans were to address three main areas:

- Succession to office and emergency delegation of authority in accordance with applicable law
- Safekeeping of essential resources, facilities and records
- Establishment of emergency operations procedures

In the Fall of 2006, HLSEM's COOP/COG work continues. Many of the Executive Branch plans have been developed and work is focusing on the use of a tool to more easily update and access data contained in the actual plans. HLSEM also encourages and supports the Judicial and Legislative Branches in their COOP/COG planning activities. In addition, HLSEM's COOP/COG work is bridging the private-public sector divide, addressing mutual continuity planning concerns.

Ken Brink has been the Project Manager for COOP/COG. As this work moves forward, Ken will be passing on the project management duties to Stu Turner. Stu has previously worked on Critical Asset Protection Plan (CAPP), National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) activities, which have been shifted to the newly developed Threat Information and Infrastructure Protection Program (TIIP).

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## Iowa's USAR Team Receives Letter of Appreciation

The Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division recently received a letter from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives extending appreciation to members of the Iowa Task Force 1 Urban Search and Rescue Team. The team assisted the DOJ investigation of the June 12 explosion at the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant in Middletown Iowa.

"The explosion killed two plant employees and caused major structural damage to the surrounding buildings," said Joseph Riehl, Chief, Arson and Explosives Programs Division for the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. "The Task-Force 1 members assisted our Midwest National Response Team in conducting a safety assessment and used special video equipment to let us see into the collapsed area. Their assistance helped ensure the safety of our personnel at the site."

"Please extend my appreciation to team members Dan Dall, Rick Halleran, Cory Archer, and Brian Giachino for their assistance," added Riehl.

**Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management Division**

A Division of the Department of Public Defense

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**HLSEM Mission**

Lead, coordinate, and support homeland security and emergency management functions in order to establish sustainable communities and ensure economic opportunities for Iowa and its citizens.

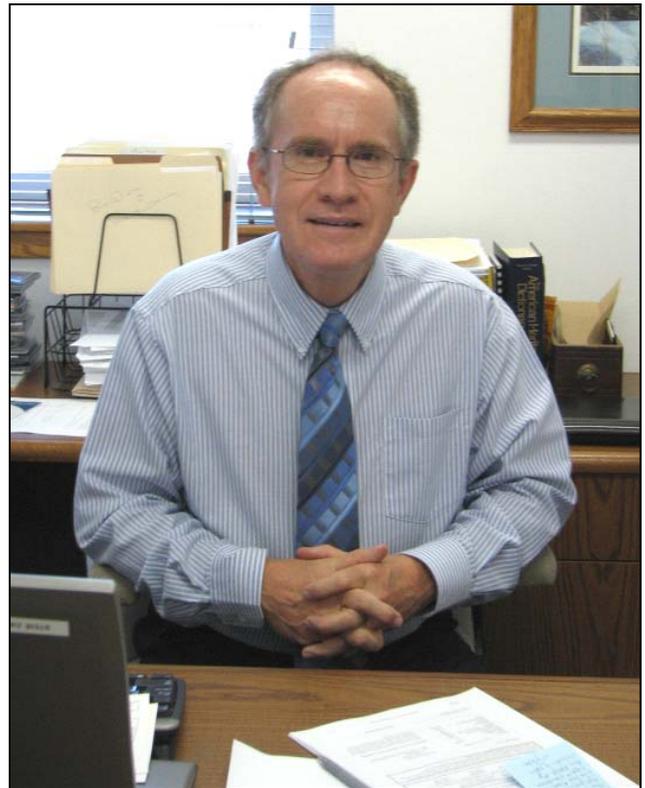
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## HLSEM Spotlight: Steve Zimmerman

Steve Zimmerman, chief of HLSEM's Preparedness Bureau, first joined the Division in 1988 as the exercise training officer. Since that time, he worked for the nuclear power plant and hazard materials emergency preparedness (HMEP) programs, and finally as the state's hazard mitigation officer before being promoted to bureau chief in 1999.

Prior to HLSEM, Steve worked for the Iowa Department of Public Safety (DPS) as a dispatcher in Atlantic and Des Moines. He has also worked as a corporate pilot and a flight instructor and while with DPS trained State Patrol pilots.



Steve earned his Associate of Science degree from Iowa Western Community College and his Bachelor of Science in business from Upper Iowa University.

On July 4<sup>th</sup> of this year, Steve married wife Robin, who has three children and two grandchildren. Steve and Robin, whom he describes as a "wonderful and beautiful woman," love to travel and spend time together landscaping. In addition, when he's not in the office, he enjoys woodworking, Westerns, and hunting with his chocolate Labrador, Lexi.

## Personnel Highlights

Paul Sadler will temporarily serve as the HLSEM Planner for District 3, as Curt Sullivan has now joined the Threat Information and Infrastructure Protection Program.

Cathleen Atchison has joined HLSEM as a temporary employee. She will be assisting with NIMS implementation and compliancy initiatives.