



AEMA QUARTERLY NEWS LETTER

August 3, 2015

ALABAMA'S COORDINATING AGENCY FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, AND RECOVERY.



THE DIRECTOR AEMA's Art Faulkner

The heart of hurricane season is just around the corner. I hope the ongoing heatwave is not transferred to the water temperature in the gulf. This could make for an interesting couple of months. What a year it has been! Our agency has once again been thoroughly tested with three weeks of consecutive winter weather systems in the middle of two significant events in our state. I am very proud of how everyone worked together to make the 2015 Inauguration and the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Movement's month long celebration successful. The month of May brought a full scale hurricane exercise with our federal, state, and local

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partners. I would like to thank each of you for your efforts, our success, and the tremendous team work that was beyond the normal.

All that said, our work is never done. Alabama's threats, hazards and risks mandate that we are always ready and cannot let our guard down. We must continue our preparation, response and long term recovery efforts. The pride within you and your desire to keep our citizens safe is what sparks your professionalism and willingness to get the job done.

Governor Bentley continues to fight for funding of this agency and all the agencies that support our mission. I will

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also do everything in my power to maintain funding to carry out our responsibilities to our citizens and first responders across the state. While achieving this may be a very difficult task, I believe that our citizen's safety and welfare depends on it.

Lastly, I want to recognize other AEMA partners. Our success would not be possible

without the help of the agencies that carry out the State's Emergency Operations Plan. They are all the best in the country. Our local EMAs are the group at the tip of all disasters and emergencies. Their dedication and professionalism makes it easier for us to support the response. We must continue planning,

outreach to the citizens, education of the community and preparing to respond, and recovering from disasters. I encourage everyone to remain committed. AEMA stands ready.

AEMA EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Norma Muir

-What is your title?

-Building Custodian I

-How long have you been at the agency?

-I've been here just over 1 year in May.

-Which disaster challenged you the most personally? Why?

-When I came I had just missed the winter weather disaster in Birmingham. These past 2 winter weather events were very challenging. When you are here for 12 hours at a time and people are running around all over the place, it helps keep you on your toes. There's a lot of moving parts when you are setting up for each meal. Running up and down the stairs a lot is tiring

-When you aren't at AEMA, what do you do in your free time?

-I love to go shopping! I also enjoy yardwork at home and visiting with friends and family.

-What is one trait that people would be surprised to learn about you?

-I'm a Christian! I attend church regularly and I really do enjoy it!





CUSEC: HOW IT HELPS US STAY ON OUR TOES

A quick look at Earthquake Preparedness

With earthquakes becoming more common in the southeast U.S., it's evident that preparation should be a priority to everyone.

The Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA), along with the Central United States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC), is taking every opportunity possible to educate citizens on earthquake preparedness.

The Central United States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC) was established in 1983 with funding support from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. CUSEC's primary mission is, "... the reduction of deaths, injuries, property damage and economic losses resulting from earthquakes in the Central United States." CUSEC is a partnership of the federal government and the eight states most affected by earthquakes in the central United States. Those states are: Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee.

CUSEC serves as a "coordinating hub" for the region, performing the critical role of coordinating the multi-state efforts of the central region. Its coordinating role is largely facilitative and not as the primary implementer of emergency management functions which is the responsibility of each individual state.

On October 15, 2015 CUSEC and AEMA, along with citizens and state agencies from across the country will take part in The Great Shakeout. We all must be better prepared for major earthquakes, and practice how to protect ourselves when they happen. The purpose of the Shake Out is to help people and organizations do both. You could be anywhere when an earthquake strikes: at home, at work, at school or even on vacation. AEMA Director Art Faulkner said, "As CUSEC Board Chairman I am proud to represent such an outstanding organization committed to educating the public in our eight state area

about the potential of earthquakes in the Central United States". "Our goal is to raise awareness that earthquakes are not just a problem for the western United States".

CUSEC sponsors the "Great Shakeout" where millions of people worldwide will practice earthquake safety by "Drop, Cover, and Hold-on". The event will take place on October 15, 2015 at 10:15 a.m."

Art Faulkner was elected by the CUSEC Board of Directors at the January board meeting to serve as the new Chairman. Director Faulkner will serve a two year term. His appointment as chairman comes at a critical point in the earthquake program in that Director Faulkner has stepped up to become the lead state nationally in championing the program. Last year as part of the National Earthquake Program Managers meeting, he requested that a position paper be written by the state earthquake program managers outlining the

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program. That paper was later adopted by NEMA. NEMA is now working on the establishment of an earthquake focused subcommittee as a result. Director Faulkner followed that request up by recently meeting attending this year's program managers meeting and again asserting himself as a strong supporter of the

program. Director Faulkner's leadership is an extension of the importance CUSEC places on the earthquake program.

According to Art Faulkner "regardless of the disaster preparation is the key to survival in any crisis, however earthquakes are the least expected by many thereby the least prepared for".

According to Mr. Faulkner,

"traditionally there is very little if any early warning signs for earthquakes so once a plan is created practice it so that you are familiar with it in the event of a real earthquake". Faulkner added "we want everyone to be familiar with Stop, Cover, and Hold On in order to improve their chances of survival". You can sign up at shakeout.org

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2015 UPCOMING EVENTS

-Monday August 10

-SEOC visit from Senator Jeff Sessions

-Tuesday August 11

-Hope Board Meeting, Birmingham AL

-Wednesday Aug, 19

-ACCA Convention Orange Beach, AL

-Wednesday, September 9-Thursday September, 10

-CUSEC Meeting

-Monday September 28-Wednesday September 30

-NEMA Conference

-Monday October 12-Wednesday October 14

-NENA 9-1-1 Conference

-Wednesday November 18

-State Winter Weather Exercise

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AEMA NEW HIRES AND RETIRES

New hires since 1-1-15

Ricky Adams
Amber Cardwell
Jeff Smitherman
Todd Greeson

Retired since 1-1-15

Richard Cartwright
Linda Egger



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TRAINING: IMPORTANT INS AND OUTS OF THE EOC

Training and preparation, two water stones that keep the Emergency Management blade sharp and poised for action. With a number of different weather scenarios and exercises each year, AEMA is constantly working to improve the effectiveness of its employees.

At the beginning of 2015, we were met with 3 serious winter weather activations that tested our preparedness and ability to respond to citizens in times of need. AEMA's Robert Thomas, the Operation's Branch Section Chief, plays a vital role in all



activations as the "chef" who maintains the floor or "skillet" as he likes to call it. "The winter weather events were difficult and we prepared well as a team and responded correctly. The agency as a whole did a fantastic job meeting the challenges head on and working to the best of their ability. We pride ourselves on training and it shows," he said. Throughout his career Mr. Thomas has learned the seriousness of disaster activations and how important training exercise are to the AEMA family. When asked about his main responsibilities during a disaster exercise, he said, "For exercises I facilitate and coordinate all activities in reference to all disasters. I try my hardest to implement integral procedures and protocols to assist and train personnel. During real disasters it's important for people to implement the training. Whether it's a state disaster or a presidential disaster, it's important for me to facilitate between the governing bodies and the AEMA facility."

Thomas, as well as Executive Operations Officer Jeff Byard, try to use the exercises as a learning experience. Some folks take an opportunity to brush up on facets of their job that they are having trouble with, and others like to take on new and exciting tasks for the future. When asked about challenges presented in exercises, Mr. Byard said,

"Movement of staff and resources. Maintaining accurate situational awareness. Managing expectations" are the most difficult. (Kelli's part). Even with all the challenges an exercise provides, it's important for the EMA family, as well as everyone involved in the exercise, to keep a level head

and remember why they are participating. Mr. Thomas sees the importance in keeping everyone on the floor calm and collected. When asked about the atmosphere and the most important part of the exercise he said, "Maintaining a positive attitude. Everyone on the floor needs to stay professional and keep morale high so tasks can be completed to the best of our ability."

During both an activation and an exercise, the Emergency Operations Center Floor is full of representatives from state agencies, local and county EMAs, and partners from FEMA. "Any activation takes a team effort" Mr. Byard says. "The staff at AEMA did a tremendous job as they always do, however the key to our success is the long standing partnership we have developed with our state, private, and non-private partners. It truly takes the full time working with a unity of effort to be successful." As you might have guessed, it's easy for things to get hectic and out of control.

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Mr. Thomas likes to keep the mood on the floor fun, but serious. He believes the most important thing to keep in mind when participating in an exercise or working through a disaster in real time

is, "Maintaining a positive attitude. Everyone on the floor needs to stay professional and keep morale high so tasks can be completed to the best of our ability."

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AEMA in Photos!

