



DEMHS NEWS



Basic PIO Courses taught in preparation for Advanced PIO Course in Vermont in April

The first in a series of two-day Basic Public Information Officer courses was recently held at the state emergency operations center in Waterbury. G0290 is a mandatory prerequisite for entry into the Advanced PIO course being held in Vermont this coming April.

More than two-dozen participants from state and local government and response agencies reviewed topics ranging from media relations, to press release writing, to on-camera interviews. The course includes time for practice exercises for all of the concepts learned, including an interview that was recorded and provided to the student.

A final exercise tested the ability of attendees to pull all of their new skills together, including drafting of press releases and a mock press conference.

The Advanced PIO course builds on these skills. In April the advanced version will be taught in Vermont for the first time. This is an incredible opportunity for Vermont responders and others who encounter the press to build their skills without travelling to the national training center in Maryland.

The Advanced PIO will take place April 17-21 at the VTrans Training Center in Berlin. For complete details visit



Photo by Prescott Nadeau

<http://demhs.vermont.gov/content/10388-advanced-public-information-officer-berlin-vt>.

The required Basic PIO prerequisite will be taught again in the new year before the Advanced class. Details on those are being worked out, but keep an eye on our training calendar at <http://demhs.vermont.gov/calendar> for future offerings. If your agency has multiple people who wish to take the basic class, or if a number of responders in your area are interested, please contact us at dps.emhstraining@vermont.gov to inquire about scheduling your own training.

DEMHS staffing changes

Richard Cogliano has been named DEMHS Regional Emergency Management Program Coordinator for southern Vermont. Rich will provide guidance to local governments, state agencies, regional agencies, and non-profit partner agencies to develop plans to respond and recover from the effects of catastrophic events and disasters.

Sara Small has left her position as Homeland Security Program Manager. A replacement for Sara will be announced shortly. In the meantime, for questions regarding the Homeland Security Grant Program you should call Jessica Stolz at 800-347-0488.

More than 17,000 Vermonters are registered for Vermont Alert
This tool is available and free to communities to notify townspeople of emergency incidents. For more information and to request a training contact Randy Bronson at DEMHS at: randall.bronson@vermont.gov



Vermont EOC responder assists in Hurricane Matthew recovery

A Vermont state employee who is a fixture in the state Emergency Operations Center during activations recently lent his expertise to victims of Hurricane Matthew. Vermont Individual Assistance Program officer Bob Costantino from the Vermont Agency of Human Services deployed to Georgia on a mission under Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).

Costantino deployed to Georgia after twenty 20 counties in that state received Public Assistance (PA) disaster declarations and 10 received Individual Assistance (IA) declarations. Bob assisted Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMHSA) with their response and recovery, in coordination with the Georgia IA Program Officer and FEMA IA staff at the Joint Field Office in Savannah.

The deployment also included field work – visiting and assisting at FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC); accompanying FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaisons (VAL) in meetings with county Emergency Management Directors and COADs. Nearly 20,000 Georgians have applied for Individual Assistance grants to rebuild property damaged in the rain, wind, and floods.

The Emergency Management Assistance Compact is the nation's state to state mutual aid system. After Tropical Storm Irene Vermont requested and was assisted by responders from around the United States. EMAC missions are paid for by states requesting support.

Vermont School Safety Conference

The Department of Public Safety and the Agency of Education hosted the annual Vermont School Safety Training Conference on December 8th. More than 150 school executive leaders, members of Vermont's first response community, mental health providers, and school crisis planning team members attended the event.

The event featured the Vermont School Boards Insurance Trust sponsored behavioral threat assessment training provided by SIGMA Threat Management Associates. The all day conference was for public and independent schools focused on preventing school violence, by providing a comprehensive training curriculum for those individuals that will actively participate in local school, district, or supervisory union threat assessment teams.

Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security Director Christopher Herrick addressed the conference on the importance of emergency planning. He pointed out the importance of all stakeholders working as one.

"Together we make up the school public safety team in Vermont," Herrick said. "It's one of our most important jobs, and it wouldn't be as effective without the involvement of the whole community – so thank-you for your participation and dedication."

From the School Safety Survey that was sent out in October, 63% of those surveyed reported that senior school leadership doesn't have training in the Incident Command

System. ICS is the basic framework for the management of any emergency response – ensuring coordination among all responding to an incident.

"The percentage of leadership without the training can be excused, as most said they weren't aware of the concept or availability of training," Herrick said. "I'm here to personally invite you to one of our many ICS trainings, we host them throughout the state, and ICS-100 is also available on-line."

The event was coordinated by the Vermont School Safety Center. Established in 2016, the Vermont School Safety Center is a collaborative effort between Vermont's Department of Public Safety and Agency of Education. This state agency partnership is designed to enhance the level of emergency preparedness in Vermont's pre K-12 schools, utilizing state, regional and federal school safety partners to identify and share best practices and emerging trends.



Rob Evans, Vermont School Safety Liaison

Training Dates and Notes

FEMA Training Requirements

The Emergency Management Institute (EMI) uses the FEMA Student Identification (SID) number when accepting Independent Study (IS) final exams. You can register FEMA SID today at: <https://cdp.dhs.gov/femasid>. Follow the directions below to apply for and obtain an SID number:

Step 1: Go to <https://cdp.dhs.gov/femasid>

Step 2: Click on the “Need a FEMA SID” button on the right side of the screen.

Step 3: Follow the instructions and provide the necessary information to create your account.

Step 4: You will receive an email with your SID number. You should save this number in a secure location.

Training Opportunities

All training related questions and registrations should be e-mailed to DPS.EMHSTraining@vermont.gov.

For a complete list of upcoming responder training visit <http://demhs.vermont.gov/calendar>

December 15: DisasterLan for State Support Functions, Department of Public Safety, State Emergency Operations Center, Waterbury, <http://demhs.vermont.gov/content/disasterlan-state-support-functions-waterbury-3>

February 9: ICS 100—Introduction to the Incident Command System, Townshend Town Hall, Townshend, <http://demhs.vermont.gov/content/ics-100-introduction-incident-command-system-townshend>

February 14-15: ICS 200—ICS for Single Resources & Initial Action Incidents, Vermont Department of Health, 108 Cherry

Street, Burlington, <http://demhs.vermont.gov/content/ics-200-ics-single-resources-initial-action-incidents-burlington>

April 11-12: ICS 200—ICS for Single Resources & Initial Action Incidents, Vermont Department of Health, 108 Cherry Street, Burlington, <http://demhs.vermont.gov/content/ics-200-ics-single-resources-initial-action-incidents-burlington-0>

March 13–15: Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program, Burlington, <http://demhs.vermont.gov/content/homeland-security-exercise-and-evaluation-program-burlington>

March 21 & 22: ICS 400—Advanced Incident Command System, VTrans Training Center, Berlin, <http://demhs.vermont.gov/content/ics-400-advanced-incident-command-system-berlin>

April 17–21: L0388—Advanced Public Information Officer, VTrans Training Center, Berlin, <http://demhs.vermont.gov/content/l0388-advanced-public-information-officer-berlin-vt>

June 6–8: Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program, Vermont Fire Academy, Pittsford, <http://demhs.vermont.gov/content/homeland-security-exercise-and-evaluation-program-pittsford>

June 21 & 22: ICS 400—Advanced Incident Command System, Vermont State Police Barracks, Westminster, <http://demhs.vermont.gov/content/ics-400-advanced-incident-command-system-westminster>

#WinterReadyVT—Follow resources on social media

Winter is getting closer in Vermont, in fact snow has already fallen in a number of areas. As you head through the season keep in mind and on your computer bookmarks social media resources for important information:

DEMHS:
Facebook—<https://www.facebook.com/vermontemergencymanagement>
Twitter—<https://twitter.com/vemvt>

VTrans:
Facebook—<https://www.facebook.com/VTransontheroad/>
Twitter—<https://twitter.com/511VT>

National Weather Service:
BTV Facebook—<https://www.facebook.com/NWSBurlington/>
Albany Facebook—<https://www.facebook.com/NWSAlbany/>
Burlington Twitter—<https://twitter.com/NWSBurlington>
Albany Twitter—<https://twitter.com/NWSBurlington>

Building resilience on Vermont's roads

In December 2015, the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) launched a project to develop and apply new methods that integrate river science with transportation planning, engineering, and decision making in order to improve the resilience of the transportation network to damage and disruptions caused by flooding. A resilient transportation system will continue to function, or could be restored quickly, when stressed by a flood.

The project is employing a risk management approach which combines the probability of an event occurring with the consequences. A high risk location is a road segment, bridge or culvert that is likely to be damaged by a flood (the event). The resulting disruption to the transportation system will have a significant, negative impact on travel, emergency access, and the economy (the consequence).

This effort will provide tools to help planners and engineers identify high risk locations and to develop alternative solutions from a watershed and transportation network perspective. For example, options to improve the flood resilience of a road segment with an undersized bridge could include a new bridge with a longer span, improving a local road to provide an alternate route if the bridge is damaged, modifications to the river channel, or reestablishing the river's connection to a floodplain and conserving the underlying land.

The Vermont Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security is one of many supporting state agencies in this effort. A \$230,000 federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program sub-grant from DEMHS earmarked to work on specific projects for the 2018 State Hazard Mitigation Plan paid for a portion of this work. The remainder of the funding came from Federal Highway Administration State Planning and Research Program and the state transportation fund.

While the threat caused by flooding and extreme weather is real and should be addressed proactively, it must be kept in perspective and balanced with all of the other transportation needs VTrans has to address. Therefore, a key outcome of this project will be a method to incorporate transportation flood resilience into the VTrans project prioritization system, in addition to informing the State Hazard Mitigation Plan 2018 update.

The methods and tools will be piloted in the three study watersheds which include the Upper White River, the North Branch of the Deerfield River and Whetstone Brook. There will be several public meetings to gather feedback on results and recommendations. The front-end of the project will be a "Resilience Ap" for use by planners and engineers and the scope of work also includes instructional guides and training.

Article by Joe Segale, VTrans Policy, Planning and Research Bureau Director.



River Road in Middlesex is an example of how mitigation builds resiliency into Vermont's transportation system. In the past, the road flooded regularly during the spring months when the Winooski River ran high (left). Raising the level of the road (right) helps keep it out of floodwaters, and reduces long-term costs as repairs aren't needed nearly as often.