December has been a month filled with holiday cheer for the DEM staff. The festivities kicked off with the annual Holiday Luncheon. The delicious smell of macaroni and cheese, casseroles, fresh bread, turkey, and let’s not forget the array of desserts, filled the EOC for a few hours on December 12. Thanks to the entire staff we all were able to enjoy great food amongst even better company. A special thank you goes to the group who took time out to plan and organize the event; kudos.

A special thank you to Chef Chuck Hagan for once again providing the delicious turkeys and hams.

Also spreading the holiday cheer was a festive group who went suite to suite singing Christmas Carols earlier this month. The bunch, adorned with Santa hats and song lyrics in tow, did a great job in singing the Holiday songs we have grown up with and come to love.

Sam Walters has been named DEM Employee of the Month for November. Sam has worked for the division for six years and spends most of his days on duty in the State Watch Office. Let’s applaud Sam on his accomplishment and get to know him a little better. Continue reading to find out some interesting facts about the employee of the month.

What is your favorite sport? My favorite sport is college football. GO NOLES!!!

What was your first job? My first job was bagging groceries at Publix.

If you could go on vacation anywhere in the world, where would you go? I would love to go visit St. Andrews, Scotland. It’s the home of golf and I’d love to be able to play that course one day.

What experience made you a stronger person? My service in the Army and all the training that I went through made me a stronger person.

What is your favorite quote? “I love you more than all the ice cream in the world”. (My son Caleb Walters)

What story does your family always tell about you? On my 3rd birthday I locked my mom in the bathroom and locked my dad outside and then proceeded to paint our kitchen with my chocolate birthday cake. I don’t think my parents were amused when they had to sing Happy Birthday to me a little later that day.
Emergency Management Internship Program

Experience coupled with education is the key to eliminating barriers to success. DEM is doing just that for many young students and pre-professionals through the current internship program. Internship placements within DEM provide hands-on experience for students with an interest in emergency management.

The program supplements classroom theory with practical application and professional guidance. Monique Carby, DEM’s Internship Coordinator, has helped to formalize the process of bringing in students eager to learn about the field. The Division is branching out and drawing in students from across the state to allow for program growth and further establishment.

In order to identify eligible internship opportunities Monique is working with Division Bureaus, Counties, and other organizations to gather information about existing projects. The information is then organized into projects and students from various backgrounds are selected and then placed into the project based on their core interests and experience.

To get started, students can visit www.floridadisaster.org/interns for an overview of the program and details on how to apply. If a bureau is interested in obtaining a student intern, please contact the internship coordinator, Monique Carby at Monique.Carby@em.myflorida.com to submit an intern request.

Welcome to DEM
Jennifer Hinson, Senior Attorney

What is your prior experience?
Private practice insurance defense work for 5 years. Two years at Dept. of Health as a prosecutor for the Board of Medicine. Two years at the Florida Medical Association as Regulatory Affairs Counsel and lobbyist. And three years at Ausley & McMullen.

What was your favorite food as a child? As an adult?
CHEESE PIZZA! Always!

If you could meet anyone, living or dead, who would it be?
Elvis.

What was your first job?
Waitress at Marie Livingston’s.

What experience made you a stronger person?
Motherhood!!!
DEM and Radio Disney Team Up to Prepare Floridians

On Saturday, December 8, DEM’s Office of External Affairs participated in the Winter Holiday Concert hosted by Radio Disney in Celebration, Florida. The event was attended by thousands of Florida residents, hailing from many different parts of the state. Several local and statewide organizations also attended the five hour concert and outreach event.

The External Affairs team passed out over a thousand preparedness brochures and children’s books during the concert to people of all ages and nationalities. Through this event, we were able to reach some of the state’s most vulnerable populations - minorities and the elderly. Spanish language safety materials are a great tool for these individuals and their families.

The biggest hit amongst young Floridians wasn’t the books, pens, or even the bracelets, it was the set of tornado tubes. Tornado tubes made of 2-liter soda bottles, colored water and glitter, simulate a tornado. Kids of all ages had a blast shaking and spinning the tubes, watching the mini tornados form in their hands.

The event proved a success as the team was able to interact with residents and promote the necessity of proper planning and preparation for disasters.

COOP/COG Training Workshop

The Division hosted a Continuity of Government/Continuity of Operations Workshop and Training in Orlando, Florida December 3 – 6, 2012. The four day workshop was attended by participants from both the public and private sectors. The purpose of the workshop was to provide training as well as a forum to share best practices in the area of continuity planning.

Guest presenters included Josh Garcia, Emergency Management Coordinator for the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo tribe in Texas; Deborah Antley, North Carolina Enterprise IT Risk Management Specialist; and Daniel McCune, Associate VP of Safety from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Additionally, Mike Jones, Chief of Security for Bay County Schools, presented on planning considerations for active shooter scenarios from his real life experience during the 2010 Bay District School Board Shooting Incident.
DEM Hosts Management Academy

Week one of DEM Management Academy took place December 3-7 at Wakulla Springs State Park near Tallahassee. About 20 of the Division’s managers, supervisors and rising leaders attended the academy. At the opening of the week, Director Koon emphasized the importance of strong leadership and the value in continuing education.

Each morning began with a team building exercise from beach ball to brain teasers, and was followed by a day of interactive instruction. Topics focused on management styles, crucial conversations, effective communication, personnel issues and situational leadership. The second week of the management academy will take place...

The Safety Corner

Winter is when people begin using their fireplace, electric heaters, and burn candles. Although they help keep us warm during the holidays, they also bring about several safety issues. Your first priority is to keep you family safe during the winter months. The following are a few helpful reminders.

- Keep fireplaces clean. Remove all debris, decorations, or anything flammable from the area surrounding the hearth.
- Always use a metal mesh screen with fireplaces that do not have a glass door.
- Never use flammable liquids to start a fire.
- Never burn cardboard or trash in your fireplace.
- Allow ashes to cool before disposing of them.
- Install proper smoke alarms and test them monthly.
- To protect the outside of the home, stack firewood at least 30 ft away and remove all surrounding debris.

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DEM Director Bryan Koon, along with members of the South Florida Water Management District travelled to The Netherlands from November 17-23. The American Delegation was invited to participate in the FLOODrisk 2012 conference in Rotterdam where they discussed water control issues and emergency management. The Dutch face similar water issues as those seen in South Florida.

Director Koon participated in meetings with several Dutch government officials, local water management boards, and members of the Australian Delegation attending the conference.

The Netherlands is 60 percent below sea level which makes them vulnerable to flooding. Although Director Koon missed Thanksgiving with his family, he had the opportunity to sample local cuisine, including Stroopwaffles and Dutch beer, learn about Sinterklaas (holiday tradition) and see the phenomenal bicycling system throughout the nation.
December Wrap Up