Division of Emergency Management

2009 Annual Report

"Failure is not an option"
Mission Statement

- Working together to ensure that Florida is prepared to respond to emergencies, recover from them, and mitigate against their impacts.

Standing Orders
1. Establish Communications with Areas Impacted
2. Search, Secure and Stabilize
3. Meet Basic Human needs of Survivors
   - Medical
   - Water
   - Food
   - Shelter
   - Emergency Fuel
4. Restore Critical Infrastructure
5. Open Schools/Local Businesses

Primary Mission

Secure
Search
72
Stabilized

Disaster Response
- Cost Effective
- Mistake Free
- Fast
- (Pick One)

Emergency Management Principles
- Comprehensive
- Progressive
- Risk-Driven
- Integrated
- Collaborative
- Coordinated
- Flexible
- Professional
A Message from the Leadership Team

At the Division of Emergency Management, we know that disasters can strike anywhere and anytime in Florida. Operating under this premise, the Division worked diligently in 2009 to ensure that Florida was prepared to respond to emergencies, recover from them, and mitigate against their impact. Each day this past year, warehouses were stocked; emergency drills were run; preparedness classes were taught; and communications were kept open in preparation for an event that every Florida resident hoped would never come.

But disasters did strike this year. Throughout every emergency, though, the Division successfully coordinated with federal, county, and municipal officials to provide an effective response to the dangers faced by our state’s residents. Under the direction of Governor Charlie Crist, the Division activated the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) to manage major flooding events in North Florida, the devastating tornadoes that struck Volusia County, the emergencies created by Tropical Storm Claudette and Hurricane Ida, and the H1N1 Swine Flu Pandemic. We are proud to say that the Division’s efficient and effective response capabilities validated our reputation as one of America’s premier emergency management agencies.

Yet the Division’s responsibilities did not end when the immediate threat to human life and property dissipated. We also performed vital emergency preparatory activities on behalf of the people of Florida. Though the Division strived in years past to dispel disaster-related complacency through programs such as Get a Plan!, 2009 was the first year that a special emphasis was placed upon preparing our state’s children for potential disasters. The hallmark achievements of this ground-breaking accomplishment included Governor Crist’s declaration of August as “Kids Get a Plan Month” and the launch of kidsgetaplan.com, an interactive web site that provides children the opportunity to build their own disaster supply kit and learn about what they should do if they are faced with an emergency. Furthermore, the Division received a successful Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) reaccreditation, making Florida one of only two states to receive the highly prestigious honor.

2009 also saw unprecedented achievements in the fields of disaster recovery and mitigation. The Division closed out hundreds of project worksheets, the basic unit of disaster claims, and entirely finished the financial recovery process for two of the most costly storms in Florida’s history. In conjunction with the Florida Recovery Office, the joint Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Division headquarters for relief and mitigation efforts for the 2004 and 2005 hurricane seasons, the Division distributed over $383 million in state and federal recovery funds and an additional $50,470,603 in mitigation grants.

Thanks to the commitment of the Governor, Legislature, and people of Florida to effective disaster-related preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation activities, Florida’s emergency management infrastructure has never been so strong. However, the unceasing threat of disaster to Florida’s families and businesses requires the Division to maintain vigilance in all aspects of the emergency management protocol. We will not rest on the laurels of 2009. Truly, at the Division of Emergency Management, “Failure is not an option!”
In 1969, the Florida Legislature created the Division of Emergency Management to serve as the state’s primary catastrophic incident command agency. Since the Division’s inception, Florida’s emergency managers have developed an incomparable national reputation for their long record of response and recovery accomplishments. The Division’s unparalleled mission execution history and high self-imposed standards enabled Florida to obtain full accreditation status from the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) in September 2003. Florida was the first state to achieve the highest level of EMAP recognition, and later continued its trailblazing efforts by demonstrating through an expert-peer review process Florida’s compliance with all federal mandates and directives.

Though the Division is administered through the Department of Community Affairs, Section 20.18 (2) (a) of the Florida Statutes states that the Division’s executive leadership reports directly to the Governor on all matters concerning the agency’s purview. By law, the Division coordinates the state’s disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation programs with each of Florida’s sixty-seven counties. Furthermore, the Division acts on the Governor’s behalf as a liaison to all pertinent federal governmental Departments and agencies relating to disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.

The Division is intrinsically involved with the state’s planning and response capabilities to both natural and man-induced disasters. Florida’s agency devoted to emergency management prepares and implements a statewide Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and conducts extensive exercises to test state and county responses to events ranging from floods, wildfires and hurricanes to incidents involving pandemics, terrorism, and radiological disease. The Division, however, does not cease to operate after the initial disaster response closes. Agency-wide initiatives to prepare for future events, assist with the recovery efforts of prior emergency incidents, and mitigate against future catastrophic impacts continues daily.

“Florida’s landscape makes her vulnerable to hurricanes, and I strongly urge Floridians to prepare in anticipation of a potential storm. Taking the necessary precautions now by making a plan and stocking up on necessary supplies will ensure our people are ready in case disaster strikes.”

Governor Charlie Crist
The Division’s preparedness efforts seek to reduce long-term risks to human life and property from disasters by formulating and implementing new and innovative strategies. The Division oversees a variety of emergency preparedness functions within the state, including: hazmat and nuclear oversight, Community Right to Know Act implementation, Continuity of Operations and Continuity of Government planning, the review of county Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans, and the training of state and community emergency managers.

**Kids Weather Survival Week**

February 1-7, 2009 marked the Division’s of Emergency Management Kids Weather Survival Week. The annual public awareness campaign included various activities sponsored by five Radio Disney stations, the American Red Cross, the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes, the Florida Association of Broadcasters, the Florida Emergency Preparedness Association, the Florida Department of Education and the Midland Radio Corporation. Fourth and fifth graders in all 67 counties were invited to participate in a statewide poster contest, and high school students were encouraged to enter into a statewide essay contest.

**Kids Get A Plan Month**

Governor Crist proclaimed August, 2009 “Kids Get A Plan Month.” The announcement gave the Division and county emergency managers a platform to teach young, school-aged children about the importance of storm, flood, and fire safety. When coupled with the innovative web site www.KidsGetAPlan.com, the initiative demonstrably helped to prepare Floridians for future catastrophic events.
Reaccreditation

In March, 2009, Florida was the first state to receive full reaccreditation from the Emergency Management Accreditation Program. Florida became the first state to receive full accreditation through EMAP in September 2003. The EMAP reaccreditation process evaluated and found the Florida emergency management program compliant with all 63 national standards. The EMAP procedure is a voluntary national process for local and state emergency management programs. The programs are accredited for a term of five years and must report ongoing compliance to all national standards annually.

2009 Current Issues in Emergency Management

“Strengthening the Team”

The 2009 Current Issues in Emergency Management sessions provided an overview of various topics of interest to Emergency Managers throughout the State of Florida. The agenda was broad in scope, with Divisional presentations covering the following topics:

- Legislative and External Affairs Discussions
- Hazmat and Department of Homeland Security
- Flood Climatology and Forecast Resources
- Recovery and Mitigation
- Finance and Logistics
- El Niño 2009-2010
- Technological Security Challenges
- FEMA updates

2009 Director’s Forum

In order to foster a greater sense of community within Florida’s emergency management community, the Division invited every county EM director to the State Logistics Response Center for issue development and team building activities. 58 directors, including a representative of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, met with the Division’s executive leadership to discuss county and municipal problems, issues, and successes. This meeting marked the first time that nearly all county emergency management personnel and state leadership met at a single event.
Annual Homeland Security Exercise

On August 12, the Florida Cabinet, state agency heads, law enforcement and emergency management officials conducted the seventh annual homeland security tabletop exercise at the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). The exercise is an annual drill where the Governor and top state officials respond to mock domestic security threats. The scenario of the training exercise involved the discovery of materials which could lead to the creation of an Improvised Nuclear Device in the Tampa Bay area. The primary objective was to give the state’s top executives and staff an opportunity to engage in policy-level discussions with federal and local officials to test information sharing and to ascertain the best practices in coordinating their response plans and recovery roles with partner agencies.

Governor’s Annual Statewide Hurricane Exercise

State agencies, executive and legislative officials, and State Emergency Response Team members convened at the SEOC from May 28 to June 3 to conduct Florida’s Annual Statewide Hurricane Exercise. “Hurricane Suiter,” the event focus of the exercise, is the 2009 version of the 1929 Great Miami Hurricane, an event deemed comparable to the powerful storms that hit Florida in 2004 and 2005. State, federal, and local partners tested catastrophic plans, identified and rectified weak points in the state’s disaster-response mechanisms, and learned to utilize newly acquired technologies and capabilities. All 18 Emergency Support Functions and 67 county emergency management agencies participated in the five-day event.

Addition of Persons with Disabilities Module on Official Web Site

2009 saw the addition of a persons with disabilities module on the Division’s official web site, floridadisaster.org. The section of the web site is completely accessible for persons with visual disabilities, and provides accessible links to shelter data, preparedness tools, creating a disaster plan, and information for caregivers.
“Failure is not an option.”

The Division’s response units are tasked with providing swift, effective action after a catastrophic incident. During activations of the SERT, the Division response staff is responsible for assisting the Governor, the State Coordinating Officer, and the Federal Coordinating Officer lead Florida’s complex interagency relief effort. Though there are different administrative entities within the Division responsible for various functions during “blue sky” conditions, all members of the SERT intimately collaborate during activations, allowing the state to support local response actions.

The State Emergency Response Team’s Five Standing Orders

1. Establish communications with impacted areas
2. Search, secure, and stabilize impacted areas
3. Meet the basic human needs of survivors
   a. Medical
   b. Water
   c. Food
   d. Shelter
   e. Emergency fuel
4. Restore critical infrastructure
5. Reopen schools and local businesses

2009 North Florida Flooding

The (SEOC) in Tallahassee activated to a Level 1, or full activation, in response to the flooding conditions in the Panhandle and Big Bend regions of the state. All 18 Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) reported in to follow the flood threat along the Suwannee River and support recovery operations in the Panhandle. Heavy rainfall over the Florida panhandle and its adjacent river basins in southern Alabama and Georgia resulted in several rivers rising above flood stage this week across northern Florida. The Ochlockonee River along the Leon/Gadsden County border near Havana rose above flood stage. Further west, minor flooding occurred along portions of the Escambia, Blackwater and Shoal Rivers.
Volunteer agencies including the American Red Cross and The Salvation Army act quickly to release critical supplies and organize shelters in North Florida. Florida’s many volunteer organizations and state agencies supported those affected by rising flood waters.

U.S. Highway 90 at the Suwannee River bridge (Madison and Suwannee County line) closed to all traffic due to high water and flood conditions.

Received Presidential Declarations for the following counties:

**H1N1 Swine Flu Pandemic**

From May 1-22, the SEOC was placed on a level 2 activation to support the efforts to combat the spread of the H1N1 virus. Though the Florida Department of Health was the lead administrative agency for this emergency, the Division successfully facilitated a dialogue between county, municipal, state, and federal officials over proper viral-response procedures. The Division also coordinated a weekly conference call that included local emergency managers, health officials, the State Surgeon General, and the DEM Interim Director.

**2009 Volusia County Flooding**

On May 17, a complex storm system circulated off of the eastern Florida coast. The system caused drastic flooding after receiving 10–20 inches of overall rain. The storm system was also responsible for a damaging tornado in Seminole County. The heavy rains caused an estimated $50 million worth of damage to the state’s potato crops, devastating several some farm-based businesses. The SERT oversaw disaster recovery efforts and successfully advocated for a Presidential Declaration of Disaster. State and local emergency management officials opened two Essential Services Centers after the disaster.

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**Essential Services Centers (ESC’s)**

ESC’s are established in close proximity to disaster-affected communities, and can provide survivors with disaster assistance information and data on applicable state grant programs. Some of the other services available to disaster survivors include the ability to:

- Discuss residents’ disaster related needs
- Obtain information about disaster related programs
- Learn about mitigation measures for the rebuilding process that can reduce or eliminate the risk of future loss
- Receive crisis counseling
- Express needs and concerns with the federal and state emergency response and recovery process
- Reacquire lost documentation such as identification, drivers licenses, and other public records
2009 Volusia County Tornadoes

In May, 2009, several devastating tornadoes made landfall in Volusia County. The SERT acted quickly to assist and coordinate local and federal resources in affected areas.

Governor Crist requested and obtained for Florida a Small Business Administration Loan qualification for applicants in Volusia County.

2009 Hurricane/Tropical Storm Ida

The SEOC activated to level one status as a result of Tropical Storm Ida on November 10th, 2009. The storm approached Florida as a Category 2 Hurricane, but powerful wind shear and a timely cold front dissipated the storm’s destructive power and intensity. It made landfall in Dauphin Island, Alabama at 6 am on November 12, causing little damage to Florida’s socioeconomic infrastructure.

For the first time in Division of Emergency Management history, ESF 14 utilized Web 2.0 technology to ascertain disaster-related information on impacted sites. The data collected through residents’ Twitter feeds, local news sources’ website updates, and internet pictures provided SERT personnel vital data on the happenings in affected areas. This proactive data acquisition permitted the various logistical and human services sections to enhance their response capabilities and efforts, and provided the SERT’s executive leadership with the information they needed to make effective decisions on behalf of the people of Florida.

The Gubernatorial Fellows Program, Class V visited the SEOC during the Tropical Storm Ida activation in order to understand the Division’s role during activations. The Fellows received a briefing, observed the Governor’s media availability, and spoke with members of the Florida National Guard.
Response Accomplishments

- Enhanced the State Logistical Response Center’s inventory and distribution mechanisms
- Created resource allocation algorithms that have been adopted by FEMA and the American Red Cross
- Developed logistical training courses that have been adopted by other comparable agencies throughout the nation. POP course has been designated a national model
- First agency to utilize a software system that managed the comprehensive resource network
- Made great strides in the improvement of the Division’s satellite communications technology
- Oversaw a two year surge in statewide shelter capacity of 157,704
- Developed distinct plans to eliminate the statewide emergency shelter deficit by 2011
- Finished the contracting process for twenty four emergency operations centers and thirty-two public shelters in accordance with HB 7121
- Oversaw the construction of a security perimeter around the State Emergency Operations Center
- Assisted in developing and successfully participated in a Continuing Operations Procedure to Camp Blanding
- Oversaw Incident Command System training for domestic preparedness
- Wrote Florida’s comprehensive, state-wide domestic preparedness report

Fire Management Assistance Grant for the Martin County Fire Complex

Florida received a FEMA Fire Management Assistance Grant on May 12, permitting the use of federal funds to reimburse response costs to fight the Martin County Complex Fire in Martin County. The fire grew to over 1,400 acres, threatened 520 residences, and displaced 1,000 residents. Federal fire management assistance covers seventy-five percent of eligible fire response costs such as field camps; equipment use, repair, and replacement; tools, materials and, supplies; and other mobilization and demobilization activities.
Often times, the effects of natural and man induced disasters can cripple a community’s socioeconomic infrastructure. Statistically, if a community does not receive significant external assistance from state and federal entities, houses are lost, businesses close, families leave, and communities die. To counteract this historical trend, the Division's Bureau of Recovery assists county and municipal efforts to rebuild local infrastructure through state and federal grants. The Bureau coordinates with local, state and federal agencies to inform residents and businesses of disaster-recovery programs that are available to assist them reestablish themselves in their respective communities.

**2009 Recovery Disbursement Breakdown**

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<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>$377,000,889.11</td>
<td>Post 2004 disaster claims</td>
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<td>$438,044.41</td>
<td>Pre 2004 disaster claims</td>
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<td>$5,683,362.54</td>
<td>Fire Management Assistance Grants (FMAG)</td>
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<td>$383,122,296.06</td>
<td>Total of all payments</td>
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**2009 Volusia County Flooding**

Breakdown of disaster assistance approved for homeowners and renters:

- $4,417,833 was disbursed for housing expenses, including temporary rental assistance, home repair costs and assistance toward replacing destroyed homes (part of IHP).
- $1,192,534 was approved for Other Needs Assistance (part of IHP) to cover expenses and serious needs caused by the disaster (e.g., medical, dental, funeral, personal property, transportation, moving and storage and other related expenses).
- 3,454 home inspections to confirm disaster damage have been completed.
- Teams of state and FEMA Community Response field specialists have distributed thousands of flyers to help identify and assist disaster survivors. In the course of explaining the recovery process, they have visited 11,014 residences, 1,153 businesses and numerous community-based organizations, schools and houses of worship.
- 3,926 visits were made to the two state/FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs).

The Florida Recovery Office (FRO) is a joint long-term recovery office in Lake Mary, Florida that is jointly administered by the Division and FEMA. The FRO was created after the devastating 2004 hurricane season, in which five named storms made landfall on Florida: Tropical Storm Bonnie, Hurricane Charley, Hurricane Francis, Hurricane Ivan, and Hurricane Jean. These events caused billions of dollars worth of damage throughout the state, and created a logistical quagmire for implementing the Public Assistance and Individual Assistance Programs, respectively. As a result of Florida’s unprecedented challenges, federal and state emergency management officials developed a plan of action to open up a separate office in Central Florida to coordinate Damage Assessment Teams and to disburse quickly federal assistance grants to affected residents and county and municipal governments.

Recovery Programs Administered by the Division in 2009:

- Small Business Administration Loan Program
- Disaster Unemployment Assistance
- Farm Service Agency Loan Program
- Temporary Disaster Housing Programs
- Mortgage and Rental Assistance Program
- Minimal Repair Program
- Mobile Homes or Other Readily Fabricated Dwellings Program
- Other Needs Assistance Program
- Unmet Needs Assistance Program
- The Cora Brown Fund
- Federal Emergency Food Coupon Program
- Legal Assistance Program
- Income Tax Service Assistance

The Florida Recovery Office on Lake Mary
The Bureau of Mitigation serves as Florida's designated disaster-related risk reduction agent by implementing numerous federal and state mitigation programs that provide families and businesses funding and policy guidance. The Bureau strives to fortify Florida's infrastructure against the effects of future incidents of devastation. Since the early 1990's, the Bureau has led all comparable state governmental entities throughout the nation in such mitigation efforts, namely: strengthening building codes, building better flood drainage systems, and funding projects that enhance Florida's infrastructure's resistance to disasters. As a result of these unparalleled efforts, the Division is compliant with all federal regulations pertaining to disaster mitigation planning and procedures and has even received the federal government's highest mitigation designation for planning. This “Enhanced” recognition permits the state to receive regular Stafford Act funding, in addition to a 5% budgetary bonus of the overall federal disaster assistance appropriated for mitigation activities. As an added benefit, the enhanced standing permits the Division to self review its own mitigation procedures as well as those of the state's county and municipal governments. With the Division’s assistance and authority, all of Florida's sixty-seven counties received certified approval of their Local Mitigation Strategy, a necessary jurisdictional requirement to receive federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program funding.

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Section

- Prevented future losses of lives and damaged property due to disasters
- Implemented state and local hazard mitigation plans
- Enabled the implementation of mitigation measures during the immediate recovery from a disaster
- Provided funding for previously identified mitigation measures that benefit the disaster area

Florida’s National Flood Insurance Program

- Re-established the NFIP Office within the Division’s Mitigation Unit
- Cooperated with FEMA in the Joint Field office after Disaster 1831 flooding
- Assisting four new Florida communities to enroll in the Program
Non-Disaster Programs Section

State and federal Programs administered by the Non-Disaster Programs Section in 2009:

- Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program
- Flood Mitigation Assistance Program
- Residential Construction Mitigation Program
- Severe Repetitive Loss Program
- Repetitive Flood Claims Program

GATOR

The Geospatial Tool for Operations and Response is one of the most powerful operating systems for managing emergency situations in existence. GATOR, an internal development headed by the Information Management Section, provides SERT leadership with an enhanced situational awareness of the events occurring throughout the state during emergencies. Capabilities of the system include:

- Road Closures
- Satellite Mapping
- Live Maps
- Activated Emergency Operations Centers
- Current River Conditions
- Forecasted River Conditions
- Descriptions and Pictures of Real-time Events
- Severe Weather Forecasts
Social Media

In 2009, the Division began utilizing social media and mass communications for the first time. The technology assisted the SERT attain a heightened situational awareness and disseminate vital information to the public during emergencies.

FLSERTInfo: http://twitter.com/FLSERTinfo

General program and emergency information, news releases, interesting facts, videos and photos of current events involving the Division of Emergency Management and the State Emergency Response Team. Maintained by the Office of External Affairs.

FLSERTWeather: http://twitter.com/FLSERTWeather

The State Meteorological Support Unit retransmits significant severe weather alerts and statements issued by the National Weather Service and the National Hurricane Center that are specific to Florida. Additional information includes links to weather-related press releases and information on hazardous weather awareness in Florida.

FLStateWatch: http://twitter.com/FLStateWatch

24/7 daily feed from the Florida State Watch Office Operations Team in Tallahassee, FL. Breaking news and hazard alerts from all 67 counties in Florida.

http://flsertinfo.blogspot.com/

Day-to-day information on emergency management activities, statewide hazards, and other preparedness events throughout Florida and the United States. During disasters, the blog will be updated with the most current information on the disaster, related hazards, evacuations and other protective actions the Division and other agencies recommend.
TURN AROUND, DON’T DROWN

GET A PLAN!
FloridaDisaster.org
Facilities of
Division of Emergency Management

TALLAHASSEE HEADQUARTERS