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Real Issues. Real Solutions.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR Section Happenings!

By Gary Ludwig, MS, EMT-P



As usual, the EMS Section continues on a myriad of different projects and missions to represent you and fire-based EMS.

First, I would like to congratulate Division Chief Norris Croom in his selection by the executive board to fill the unexpired term of Chief Bruce Moeller as director-at-large. Norris had some stiff competition from six others who expressed interest in the position. The decision was difficult for the executive board because of the quality and caliber of those expressing interest, but in the end, Norris was selected because of his passion for fire-based EMS, his work ethic, his commitment to the EMS Section working on past projects and his writing abilities. One of Norris' main responsibilities will be to write the EMS column that appears in the IAFC's newsletter, *On Scene*.

I would like to thank Chief Bruce Moeller, who leaves the director-at-large position to assume the duties of city manager of Sunrise, Fla. Bruce brought many attributes and qualities to the board. His cerebral intellect and grasp of situations always earned the

executive board's respect when he had a discussion point. Bruce, thanks again for the time you served the EMS Section!

The program for Fire-Rescue Med '09 has been finalized and the brochure is now out; you should have received a copy in the mail already. We're also beginning to market the conference and you should start seeing more in the coming months. This will be our 12th year in Las Vegas, and as usual, there are plenty of exciting lectures and sessions. We had a great year with attendance in 2008 and we're hoping for an even better year in 2009.

We were delighted to hear that Congress passed legislation to reauthorize the U.S. Fire Administration. What's significant this time is that the reauthorization allows the U.S. Fire Administrator to coordinate EMS-related activities with federal, state and local government agencies and the National Fire Academy to teach classes in advanced EMS training. The USFA was never authorized in the past for anything beyond fire suppression and fire prevention. We worked to get the EMS language into the reauthorization bill. We will be working with those at the USFA and the National Fire Academy to ensure EMS issues are addressed.

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Evidence-Based Practice Guidelines in EMS

The EMS Section, along with the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) Office of EMS and members of the research, medical, fire and EMS community, is actively involved in the consideration of evidence-based practice guidelines.

Since many of the practices being reviewed directly impact field operations, it's important that those affected take an active role in the participation of the development of any new practices. As medicine changes and becomes based more on evidence-based practice, EMS

will also be impacted. In the end, it will be the patients who will benefit from improved practices. The information below is from the NHTSA Office of EMS and explains recent efforts.

All EMS systems, from field providers to state EMS directors, are committed to providing an efficient system of effective care to acutely ill and injured patients. However, today there is no well-accepted process for determining what constitutes effective care or an efficient system. For too long, the pro-

vision of out-of-hospital care has been driven more by what we think is right than what we know is.

The challenge facing EMS today is to transform from practices based on tradition and expert opinion to practices based on guidelines and protocols that have been developed through thoughtful and systematic examination of scientific evidence and data.

While parts of medicine have developed evidence-based guidelines for specific conditions (such as traumatic

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TREASURER'S REPORT

REPORT FOR 2008

AS OF 9/30/2008

EMS SECTION: ACCOUNT 605

CARRYOVER FROM PREVIOUS YEARS	\$ 307,675
INCOME MEMBERSHIP DUES + (MAILING LIST)	\$ 17,260
AFFILIATE DUES	\$ 50
OTHER INCOME	\$ 0
TOTAL SECTION EXPENSES	\$ 87,520
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$ 237,465

2007 FIRE-RESCUE MED CONFERENCE: ACCOUNT 810

TOTAL INCOME	\$ 363,997
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 223,168
NET ASSESTS	\$ 140,829

TOTAL ASSESTS (ACCOUNTS 605 / 810) \$ 378,294

Submitted by: Rob Brown
EMS Section Treasurer

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The IAFC EMS Section promotes fire-based EMS by providing a forum for addressing fire-service EMS issues, providing guidance and direction to the IAFC board and membership on fire-service EMS issues and representing fire-based EMS issues before the federal government and other EMS interest groups.

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Contact Chief David Becker, Ret., via email at dsbeckermo@msn.com.



Letter from the Chair continued from page 1

As some of you may know, the EMS Section has applied to have a seat on the board of directors for the Commission on the Accreditation of EMS programs. Part of the process for approval is that each national organization currently represented on the board must vote to allow the IAFC EMS Section to also have a seat. As of September, most of the organizations represented on the board have voted positively, with about four organizations still needing to vote. We hope to have approval in early 2009.

As usual, members of our executive board and members of the section who

serve as liaisons continue to represent us and network with other national EMS organizations. In the last half of this year, we will be at meetings with NAEMT, ACEP, AAA, NASEMSO, plus others.

There are a ton of other things happening in the EMS Section; in fact, too many to list. But you'll continue to see what's happening in the section in our monthly e-newsletter. If I or any of the executive officers can help you in any way, please don't hesitate to contact us.



Div. Chief Norris Croom

Member Profile

NEW DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE LOOKS FORWARD TO FURTHERING SECTION GOALS

Division Chief Norris Croom, Castle Rock (Colo.) Fire & Rescue Department

By Courtney McCain

Colorado's Norris Croom III was selected to fill the position recently vacated by Bruce Moeller, who left the fire service to accept the city manager's responsibilities in Sunrise, Fla.

An EMS section member since 1998, Croom said his focus as director-at-large will be to focus on the section's current aims, while keeping a wary eye on what the future might bring.

"I'm focusing on how to further our goals," Croom said. "What is the impact of the aging Baby Boomer generation going to be on fire-based EMS agencies? Department are looking at losing people in the midst of the budget crunch, when we need them more than ever. My goal is to help members address those issues.

"The IAFC is based on service," Croom said. "You can't forward your own agenda and listen to the needs of the membership at the same time. We're here for the membership."

A multifaceted technician who has gathered multiple certifications, credentials and degrees since he began as a volunteer firefighter in 1986, Croom has spent the past six years as division chief of operations with the Castle Rock Fire and Rescue Department in Colorado.

Croom was a member of the first group of Chief Medical Officers designated by the Centers of Public Safety Excellence in May 2008. He holds an associate's degree in fire science technology and is completing the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program.

Croom grew up predominately in North Carolina; his father was in the U.S. army and his family moved often. By 1985, a sinking economy led the family to Colorado for stable work, though Croom remained in North Carolina until he graduated from high school the following year.

After Croom moved to the mountains,

he worked odd jobs in the Castle Rock area and hadn't given much thought to a firefighting career until a local apartment complex burned to the ground. "The newspaper had an article about the fire, and at the end of the article there was a paragraph asking for more volunteers for the fire department," Croom said.

Intrigued, Croom joined the department in 1986, then became an EMT the following year.

"Even after I went through EMT school, I still didn't know what I wanted to do," he said. He considered following his father into the military, worked in the computer industry, worked at an area golf course. His EMT certification snared more work, and he gained valuable experience working in nearby Denver for several private EMS agencies, one of which put him through paramedic school. Croom credits that transition from providing basic to advanced care as the turning point for him to focus on fire/EMS as a career.

As Croom's resume grew, so did Castle Rock and its fire department. The city is located less than 20 miles south of the Denver area and has grown considerably since 1986. Croom was the first paid firefighter/paramedic there. Today, the agency employs 60 people and is an all-hazards department offering ALS first-response and transport. Of the department's 3,600 responses, more than 65 percent are EMS-related.

Castle Rock's 75-mile service area includes a cross-section of Colorado, from suburban spillover to the rugged Rampart foothills that guarantee more than an hour of ground transport time to the nearest hospital. Castle Rock served as the northern ICP for the notorious Hayman fire in 2002.

"From an EMS standard, I've never tried to specialize," Croom said. "Here in Castle

Rock, we run very diverse calls, and we really need to specialize in everything. In fire-based EMS, everything you do plays to the other side of your department. I trained to be a well-rounded firefighter and medic, to be able to take care of whatever came my way."

Croom currently is president of both the Douglas County (Colo.) Fire Chiefs Association and the Emergency Telephone Service Authority (E-911). In addition to his paramedic certification, Croom also is a hazardous materials technician, Fire Instructor I, Fire Officer III, Wildland Incident Commander Type 4 and a Terrorism Liaison Officer (TLO).

As a TLO, he serves as a program coordinator and is the fire service liaison for the Colorado Information Analysis Center (CIAC), the state's fusion center that provides analysis for Homeland Security. Croom hopes his involvement with the CIAC will lead to more information sharing between fire/EMS personnel and law enforcement personnel.

"The fire and EMS services should be involved with (intelligence and terrorism prevention), and I'm going to continue to work on that relationship," Croom said. "If there are different agencies contributing and reporting, patterns can be put together that otherwise might be missed."

Croom has attended every Fire-Rescue Med conference since 1999, serving on program planning committees since then. He also was a member of the host committee for the Fire-Rescue International conferences hosted by Denver in 2005 and 2008.

Even before he was selected as director-at-large for the EMS Section, Croom's reputation as a balanced technician and chief officer has already led to consulting

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In the Spotlight

EMS Management of Mass Evacuations

By Courtney McCain

Rescue personnel train often for mass-casualty incidents (MCIs) or other sudden surges in patient loads. Recent hurricanes and tornadoes have granted real-world practice with incident command, proving its effectiveness in disaster management.

But those events also reinforced the next steps in preparedness. Supporting agencies that are vital to disaster management continue to misunderstand the incident command structure, and emergency personnel are looking for realistic ways to educate them before the next Big One strikes.

“When ICS is used, it works really well,” said Lt. Jim Logan, with Memphis Fire Department (MFD) and a veteran of multiple disaster deployments. “But if people aren’t familiar with how they fit into the plan, it causes confusion, and there’s also a big difference in how patients are managed during a disaster. Without ICS, it would be a mess.”

Ancillary agencies often unfamiliar with ICS

Emergency preparedness plans vary between agencies, based on local and state operational structures. Some departments serve as the command structure for evacuee-related operations. Other departments have little contact with evacuees, deferring instead of other area entities that call on fire/EMS in an emergency support role only.

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) has aided that effort by consolidating expectations into a tiered training program. Rescue agencies adhere to NIMS guidelines in their daily operations, so they have little difficulty applying NIMS in a mass-casualty situation.

But personnel with ancillary agencies—hospitals, public health and charitable organizations, to name a few—don’t often have opportunities to use NIMS or to in-

terface with rescuers via the incident command structure that is standard operating procedure in MCIs. Disaster drills are often the only chance for support personnel to practice rarely used procedures.

The result, played through this year by a busy storm season, is a sharp reminder to fire and EOC chiefs that planning only goes so far.

“If NIMS and ICS isn’t practiced on a daily basis, it won’t work,” Logan said. “Public health and other agencies are trained in NIMS, but they don’t use it regularly. They’re familiar with how things operate, but they don’t know where they fit into the process.”

That basic process has changed little since Hurricane Katrina in 2005 illuminated the need for a more streamlined system. But the details of each multilayered operation have been altered exponentially and continue to change with each briefing and technological availability.

Gustav tested new evacuee plans

In the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, Gulf Coast areas ratcheted up their evacuation plans and poured millions of dollars into highway contraflow gates, emergency and backup communications equipment and preparedness programs for the general public and public-safety personnel.

Those agencies got their opportunity to practice the new modalities when Hurricane Gustav struck Louisiana in early September of 2008. Many New Orleans, La., (NOLA) residents who didn’t want a repeat of their Katrina experience gladly accepted the evacuation option several days before the storm made landfall.

More than 6,000 NOLA evacuees were sent to Tennessee. Of those evacuees, more than half stayed in the Memphis area.

“We’d had interaction with Katrina’s victims before, so we knew that some of these people would have special needs,” said Logan, incident commander for the sheltering operations in Memphis. “There are patients who need dialysis, they might have pharmaceutical needs and they’ve been on a train for 12 hours.”

Evacuees first arrived in Memphis by train at the central Amtrak station, then were bused to an Air National Guard base and from there were taken to various shelters, depending on their specific needs. Their initial arrival in downtown Memphis was not without first-time snafus.

“We altered our plan of action (based on what happened with the first train),” Logan said. That train’s passengers disembarked en masse as soon as the train came to a halt. A bottleneck quickly formed behind an information input station that proved more time-consuming than anticipated. The first group of evacuees was still being processed when a second train arrived. But by then, intake personnel with MFD limited the haphazard exiting and instead guided evacuees into more orderly lines.

“And here was one lesson learned: Don’t have multiple points of processing,” Logan said. “It seemed like it would have worked well to do things that way, but it didn’t work out. We’re in the process now of tweaking the plan, so we’ll be doing tracking on the buses while they’re en route to the shelters to save time.

“It’s not perfect, but it went well,” Logan said. “Generally, the (evacuees) were very appreciative. Something to remember with evacuees is that they have their lives in their hands because they’ve left their homes. Everything they have left is with them.”

Logan said evacuees were grateful for the improvements that had been made since Katrina, and Logan was especially impressed by how well the emergency

agencies from the Memphis area worked together during the entire operation, guided by the ICS principles that many of them use during every shift, disaster or not. That familiarity with ICS made the difference, Logan said.

“For the intake, we had private and public sector EMS working perfectly together,” Logan said. “They just plugged themselves in. We had more than six different agencies filling a lot of gaps with the intake and shelters.”

EMS not sheltered from freelancing

Once evacuees were placed in shelters geared toward their specific needs, everything seemed to be going well, according to Logan. Two special-needs shelters were established for evacuees needing additional monitoring.

“We were sensitive to the wishes of evacuees needing dialysis who didn’t want to be separated from their families, so we allowed those families to stay together,” he said.

Then the bottom fell out. Evacuees and shelter staff began calling 911 for everything from emergent conditions to chronic complaints from evacuees. “They were eating our ambulances up,” Logan said. “We were getting calls from people on cell phones inside the shelters and nurses in the shelters for non-emergent issues, and it spread like wildfire.”

Memphis’ ambulance availability reached critical levels within hours, and the state EOC put in a frantic call to MFD management.

age.” Hundreds from MFD helped, including 42 fire academy recruits, who got their first taste of ICS by going through the real thing as part of their core training.

If medics at the shelters determined that transport was necessary, the request for either urgent or non-urgent transport was radioed through the Regional Medical Communications Center (RMCC). Less urgent patients rode metro bus shuttles that were in place per prearranged city protocol, also coordinated through the RMCC. By utilizing the RMCC instead of the city’s 911 dispatch, Memphis avoided a potential system gridlock.

Still, the issue raised frustrations for an evacuation and sheltering system that otherwise worked well in its first litmus test since Katrina, Logan said. Evacuees were in town for one week before being cleared to return to New Orleans. Some evacuees decided that leaving NOLA twice was more than enough and have opted not to return to Louisiana.

Memphis is actively developing drills that would involve those ancillary agencies and personnel to help them become operationally familiar with ICS. The city is also working on streamlining the patient tracking system, which had been only partially deployed before Gustav’s arrival, Logan said.

Taking a direct hit a different way

While New Orleans was spared a direct hit from Gustav, its neighbor Baton Rouge took the brunt of the storm.

“Katrina was a natural wake-up, and 9-11 was a terrorism wake-up,” said Howard Ward, PIO for the city of

Baton Rouge Fire Department. “Everyone took a different look at how things should be handled. As a result, we were better prepared for this.”

The city of Baton Rouge was skirted on

both sides by both Katrina and Rita in 2005 and received a fair share of evacuees from both storms. With the state capitol, administrative offices and staff in the Baton Rouge, it also served as a convenient location to process emergency certification for thousands of rescuers who converged on Louisiana after Katrina struck.

This year, Baton Rouge took a direct hit from Hurricane Gustav, the first major hurricane to threaten the Gulf Coast since 2005. The storm knocked out power out at almost all of Baton Rouge’s fire stations.

“It was very tasking on the firefighters,” Ward said. “We still saw the regular number of calls. Through all of this, though, we didn’t rely on (personnel) from any outside departments to ride out trucks.”

Per their city’s organizational structure, Baton Rouge fire personnel have little contact with evacuees, but instead are staged in an assistance role for agencies that are directly handling those operations. That hands-off approach is hardly unique to Baton Rouge. Fire personnel in Miami also utilize a similar plan, deferring evacuee operations to the Office of Emergency Management.

Dual hurricane similarities

Among the similarities between the 2005 and 2008 Gulf hurricane seasons, a second hurricane made landfall barely two weeks after Gustav. As Hurricane Rita had done in 2005, Hurricane Ike took aim at Texas. But instead of veering away from major cities, Ike inundated Galveston and blew straight through downtown Houston.

But in contrast to 2005, when still-fresh news coverage from Katrina led many Texans to clog highways while evacuating from Rita, a sizeable number of residents along the coastal areas opted to remain in their homes. Southeast Texas had made considerable changes to its evacuation protocols since the days-long gridlock of 2005, adding contraflow gates to area highways and ratcheting up preparedness information.

But some still refused to leave, many citing their 2005 evacuation experience. Ul-

“We essentially built a second emergency medical system here in town.”

“We essentially built a second emergency medical system here in town,” said Logan, who was incident commander for the shelter operations. “We put paramedics in each shelter, with primary kits, to provide tri-

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brain injury and ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction), there is currently no system-wide process to ensure that the out-of-hospital care administered by field providers reflects the current state of scientific evidence. There is a growing need for increased use of evidence to inform the education, protocols, scopes of practice, guidelines and medical direction of EMS systems.

On September 4–5, the Federal Interagency Committee on EMS (FICEMS) and the National EMS Advisory Council (NEMSAC) cosponsored a conference to begin defining a sustainable, national, consensus-based process for the development, implementation and revision of evidence-based guidelines for out-of-hospital emergency medical care.

EMS experts and international experts in evidence-based medicine met to provide input on how this process will:

- Be organized, operated and sustained
- Evaluate evidence and develop guidelines
- Translate evidence-based guidelines to field practice
- Ensure an ongoing method of reviewing and revising the guideline
- Integrate with other national EMS system development strategies, such as the National EMS Education Agenda (including the National EMS Scope of Practice Model and the National EMS Education Standards), National EMS Research Agenda, National EMS Information System, National EMS Quality Improvement/Performance strategies and others

The steering committee for this project will meet in December to synthesize the input from the conference and to draft a document containing a proposal for a process to develop EMS guidelines. This document will be reviewed by FICEMS and NEMSAC and then will be available for comment by the EMS community in 2009.

For more information on the conference, go to www.ems.gov.

Fire-Rescue Med 2009

Real Issues. Real Solutions.

Fire-Rescue Med is the conference for fire-based EMS leaders. You'll gain the tools you need to make a difference in your department, connect with key leaders to expand your EMS network and see first-hand the latest products and services to help you cut costs and increase efficiency.

Don't miss Dr. Henry C. Lee, Chief Emeritus, Connecticut State Police, as he presents two engaging general sessions on Wednesday, May 6:

- **General Session 5: Lessons Learned from High-Profile Cases** – There have been many cases involving movie stars, sport figures, politicians, government officials and the rich and famous. Those cases, because of the celebrity status of the victim or the suspect, often generate national and international attention.

Most police departments, judicial systems and even the public have started to realize the importance of crime-scene investigation, collection of physical evidence, examination of forensic evidence and reconstruction of the crime. If the investigation isn't handled correctly and objectively, society and the criminal justice system will suffer.

Many lessons can be learned from the investigation of high-profile cases, such as O. J. Simpson, JonBenet Ramsey, Laci Peterson, Kobe Bryan and Jayson Williams. Professionals in forensic science have to establish technical and ethical standards while maintaining objectivity and professionalism.

- **General Session 6: Sharing My Life Experience** – Dr. Lee is one of the world's foremost forensic scientists. His work has made him an icon in modern-day forensic sciences. He's been a prominent player in many of the most challenging cases of the last 40 years; Dr. Lee's testimony figured prominently in the O.J. Simpson trial and in convictions of the "Woodchipper" murderer. Dr. Lee has helped in the investigations of other famous crimes, such as the murder of JonBenet Ramsey, the 1993 suicide of White House Counsel Vincent Foster and the reinvestigation of the Kennedy assassination. This fascinating session will look back at many of the unique experiences Dr. Lee has been a part of and he'll leave attendees with important lessons to think about when arriving on any scene.

Other exciting topics being presented at the conference include Incident Rehab—Who is Taking Your Pulse and Why?; The Chief Medical Officer Designation Program; and A Case Study: Non-Emergency Transportation in a Fire-Based EMS System. For more on these and other popular sessions, visit www.iafc.org/frm.

Conference Dates: May 4–6
Preconference Workshops: May 2–4
The Orleans Hotel and Casino
Las Vegas, Nevada

**Sign up online or
see the full schedule:**
www.iafc.org/frm

positions outside his service area. In 1999, he helped the Kansas Board of EMS with selecting a new administrator and served as a reviewer for several service selection committees across Colorado. He has also authored articles on emergency preparedness and on intelligence and information sharing between agencies.

Croom's wife of 17 years, Jodi, is a Colorado native. They have three boys (Norris Croom IV is 12, Carson is 8 and Brogan is 7). "For the most part, our family

revolves around the boys," he said.

The younger Croom boys are involved with Tae Kwan Do, while the eldest enjoys acting. Croom helps out with community theater in a technical support role, another odd job that balances out the whole, he said..

Courtney McCain has worked as a paramedic in Kansas and Texas. She works in Kansas City as a freelance writer focusing on public safety issues. Contact her at kems-news@everestkc.net.

timately, tens of thousands wound up in shelters throughout the southern Midwest, including in Austin, Tex., where 6,000 were bussed. Of those, more than 100 were special needs patients.

"We had an idea after Katrina and more so with Rita what we would be dealing with while handling Ike and the evacuees," said Acting Asst. Chief Ken Crooks, with Austin Fire. In Austin/Travis County, the EOC is overhead in disaster management, with fire and EMS serving in a supporting role alongside multiple other agencies.

Fire and EMS personnel shared similar frustrations about ancillary personnel not being used to ICS from an operational perspective.

"In the overall management of the event, we found we needed to stay more engaged than we had originally planned," Crooks said. "It does seem as if everyone is getting more familiar with NIMS and with ICS, but we were being relied on."

As more evacuees arrived, it became ap-

"An educated populace had an impact on the over overall effectiveness of the response and recovery networks."

parent that the general population of evacuees was quickly outgrowing their initial shelter, while the special needs population was less than expected, so the EOC opted for both groups to switch facilities. Special needs individuals were sent to buildings owned by the University of Texas, while the general population ultimately was housed at the Convention Center just east of downtown Austin.

"We had one company (four fire/rescue personnel) and one battalion chief roaming the floor of the Convention Center initially, during the special needs portion," Ward said. "When the general population got to the center, we were staffing with two to three companies and as many battalion chiefs. We were there to address issues that our medical director felt were important, issues surrounding large numbers of people in enclosed areas."

Establishing ICS and evacuation by Blackberry

Though it's difficult to predict exactly where tornadoes may strike, personnel in Stafford County, Va., received National Weather Service (NWS) notification on May 8, 2008, that a storm system heading their way would spawn powerful storms. Based on the ominous tone of that forecast, Stafford Fire and Rescue put their severe weather plan into action.

"Additional personnel were called back before the storms hit," said Asst. Fire Chief Gerald Jaskulski. "It was a decision made by the senior leadership of the county that we have extra resources beforehand."

The dire prediction proved correct. That evening, an F-2 strength tornado shredded more than 180 homes across the county. But thanks to the NWS, weather radios, the media and text messages, those in the path of the storm sought shelter well before the storm hit. Only one resident received injuries

(and they were relatively minor). And despite the painstaking task of picking through razor-sharp rubble

to search for victims, no rescuers sustained injuries.

The department balanced out their populace's relative lack of experience with tornadoes with a preparedness program that proved its worth.

"An educated populace had an impact on the over overall effectiveness of the response and recovery networks," Jaskulski said. "We do a lot of public education and stress the importance of accountability, of knowing where (friends and family) are, knowing their neighbors, having a meeting place."

In Stafford County, the EOC is also run by the fire/rescue department, with Chief Rob Brown as the

coordinating officer. When it became apparent that the county had sustained significant damage, the EOC office was opened up and operated for several hours until a mobile command unit could be set up. That trailer was borrowed from the FBI Academy, located in neighboring Quantico, Va.

"That prearranged partnership with the FBI is something we've established for mutual aid," Jaskulski said. "We're a smaller department, with 100 career firefighters and 250 volunteers. (Following the tornado strike,) we declared a local emergency, but never a state. It was handled with our own resources and with the partnership we'd already established."

More than 200 people were sheltered for 24 hours. Most of them were glad to leave the damaged area, since the immediate post-tornado weather deluged the already stunned residents.

"We had rain, hail and winds after the storm hit, so people needed to evacuate," Jaskulski said. School buses—another prearranged contingency for mass-transit in disasters—hailed more than 150 evacuees directly from the site to a nearby school, where the Red Cross gave them dry clothing, food and a place to sleep.

"The biggest thing we're learning is the importance of preparedness and relationships between agencies: local, state and federal government," Jaskulski said. "It's about relationship-building ahead of time. Setting up shelters and organizing everything we needed, all those things were done in 15 minutes with a Blackberry because we'd made arrangements and had those contingencies."

"But it's a two-way street," Jaskulski said, adding that Stafford County's unique arrangement with the FBI certainly works the other way around, should the Academy request additional resources. "Agencies need to be helping each other out."

"The biggest thing we're learning is the importance of preparedness, and relationships between agencies; local, state and federal government."



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