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Thank you. It is a high honor for me to address the Association this afternoon and I appreciate the opportunity to represent FEMA at the National Emergency Management Association's Annual Conference. I also want to pass along to you our apologies that Administrator Paulison could not be here today – he has been called to Capitol Hill to speak on behalf of FEMA's budget. If the Chief were here, I know the first thing he would do would be to thank Ken Murphy for the hard work he has put in leading this organization, and express his enthusiasm for Nancy Dragani, who will be taking the helm in September. I feel the same way as he does, and owe them both my gratitude for their assistance and support the past year.

When Administrator Paulison spoke to NEMA's Annual Conference last October, he set out a "Declaration of Inter-Dependence" and stressed that we must work together to provide the highest level of service to our nation. None of us can nor should do this alone. Since last Fall, I have seen our organizations work constructively, openly and honestly together to serve the emergency management community. FEMA will always be open to your thoughts and advice. While I am again sorry that Administrator Paulison could not be here to echo these words, I can tell you that FEMA's commitment to building partnerships is as strong as ever.

Today, FEMA's senior leaders meet regularly with your leadership, and we make sure to keep a line of communication open at all times. We're fortunate to work with people like Ken and Nancy who are willing to take my 9 PM phone calls on a particular issue. We are making progress in building "engaged partnerships," recognizing that FEMA and NEMA each have an important role to play in keeping our communities safe, and helping them in times of need.

With the spirit of keeping the communications lines open, the Administrator sent me here to speak on behalf of his goals for the Agency, particularly our efforts for the upcoming Hurricane Season and our continuity plans for the upcoming Administration transition. I know the Administrator is appreciative of our collaboration thus far and is especially focused on our shared work together. So, let's begin with a look at what's on tap in 2008.

Here in Washington, the year starts with the budget. The President's budget of \$9.7 billion is the largest allocation FEMA has ever received. Much of this goes to state and local grants which provide States with key assistance and valuable resources every day. In fact, nearly a quarter of FEMA's budget – roughly \$2.2 billion – will go to state and local grants. Another \$1.9 billion will go to mitigation projects. And the Disaster Relief Fund will receive another \$1.9 billion. When all is said and done, this is a huge commitment to FEMA's efforts on the ground.

Over the past five years FEMA and DHS have provided over \$23.8 billion for state and local projects through our disaster grant programs and an

additional \$2.5 billion in fire fighter grants. With more than \$26 billion provided to our partners across state and local government and involving non-profit and private sector elements, we have provided grants that are directly helping to improve our nation's preparedness for any disaster.

While the bulk of our resources are focused on our efforts to help you and our fellow Americans on the ground, the budget also includes close to \$1 billion for FEMA. In fiscal year '08 we focused new resources on our operational capabilities. In '09, we will strengthen our internal business processes with a focus on three key areas.

First, FEMA is committed to improving our Information & Technology capabilities. A strengthened IT system will allow us to serve more people quicker in times of need. It also makes us better able to track our activities, expenditures, and resources so that we can be more accountable to the American people.

Second, FEMA is working to strengthen its Basic Infrastructure. As many of you know, FEMA committed to hiring the best and the brightest emergency management professionals. Administrator Paulison places high expectations the agency's performance and we are dedicated and focused on meeting those expectations by providing our personnel with the tools necessary for them to do their jobs.

And third, FEMA is continuing to improve Core Capabilities. FEMA is renewing its commitment to our team by providing additional training for existing staff. We are asking much more of our people today than we did in the past, but Administrator Paulison is committed to building up FEMA to be as strong as it possibly can be.

These budget priorities are a clear indication that the Department is putting its money where its mouth is. This year we will bring the resources to bear to make the "New FEMA" vision a reality.

As you know, FEMA has used its resources over the past two years to expand our capabilities for responding to disasters, with an emphasis on hurricane preparedness. Over the last two years, Americans have been blessed with relatively minor hurricane activity in the United States, and we have taken advantage of this opportunity to implement new programs and reforms that have made our Nation better prepared than ever to respond when the next big storm comes our way.

On the ground, we are stronger with our new Incident Management Assistance Teams – or IMATs. Each IMAT is composed of 15 full-time professionals who are specially trained and designated to be the first federal responders on the ground when an incident occurs. Teams will have the capability to establish an effective federal presence that can support the state within 12-hours of notification, coordinate federal activities and provide initial situational awareness. Teams will be self sufficient for a minimum of 48-hours to bolster scarce local resources. Two regional IMATs and one of the three national IMATs will be fully operational for this upcoming hurricane season.

Last year, FEMA implemented a new Gap Analysis program as well. We engaged each of the hurricane impact states and territories in a focused effort to identify strengths and weaknesses. As many of you know, this is another example of where FEMA and NEMA have collaborated to better understand and fill capability gaps, develop mitigation strategies, and ensure successful response and recovery operations.

As a result, FEMA stands ready to allocate commodities and enlist the assistance of other departments and agencies as needed to ensure a strong response to your call for assistance. And, as a result of our joint planning, we can anticipate your needs and be more able to quickly provide support.

FEMA also recognizes that communities need to build resiliency through ongoing gap analysis and strategic application of government and non-governmental resources. We appreciate your support for the Citizen Corps program and the goal to bring government and community leaders together

for all-hazards planning, public education and training, and volunteer support.

As Deputy Administrator for the National Preparedness Directorate, and as a former Homeland Security Advisor in the State of Maryland, I am extremely pleased to highlight the release the new National Response Framework. On that note I want to thank Tim Manning, Ken Murphy, Nancy Dragani, and Albert Ashwood for their leadership and input into the drafting of the NRF.

I know that a large portion of the approximately 5,700 comments that FEMA received on the NRF base document, and the 5,000 comments on the supporting annexes were made possible by the committed NEMA membership, and each of you that participated deserve a lot credit and praise for your efforts. On behalf of Secretary Chertoff, Administrator Paulison, I want to thank NEMA for your support.

And, with that, I want to offer to you that FEMA has already embarked on the next step: implementation.

Training is critical to the implementation of the NRF in the NIMS environment. While the NRF provides the Framework for response, it must be clearly understood and rehearsed at the Federal, State, Tribal, and local levels; and by private sector and non-governmental partners as well. All our stakeholders need to know how the Nation's response structure works and their roles and responsibilities within that structure. Each audience requires a different level of understanding or ability to work within the *NRF*.

Personnel who have a specific role in the national response or who are part of the Federal response require more detailed, position-specific training.

Training and exercises will follow a logical progression from general awareness to advanced operational skill building, and it is our joint responsibility to see this through.

NEMA has offered considerable feedback on how to implement this training program, and your advice has driven FEMA's planning. This summer our Emergency Management Institute will offer a course focused on the NRF for State Directors and Federal Coordinating Officers. The instructors will

include FCOs and focus on your questions and concerns. We appreciate your input into this class, and other areas where we can work more closely in day-to-day, pre-need relationships.

When Hurricane Season ends this year, NEMA members should be ensured that FEMA is committed to maintaining an elevated level of readiness while undergoing a change of Administrations.

Accordingly, and I have heard some of you at the committee meetings mention this as a potential concern, FEMA is currently developing a robust transition plan. Our initial focus has been on filling the career deputy slots with experienced and qualified people who will be ready to “hold down the fort” until the next President chooses their leadership team for FEMA.

In general, there are two overarching objectives that FEMA needs to prepare for. First, we need to assess our staff and plan for the succession of both political and exiting career personnel to ensure there are no voids in the Agency’s leadership. Second, we need to ensure that the new leadership

fully understands the goals and operations of our programs, specifically our critical functions necessary to safeguard life and property, as well as new initiatives to make the Agency more responsive and forward-leaning.

In succession planning there is a potential for leadership voids to arise due to retirement, exiting political appointees, or other reasons. Along with our colleagues at the Department, we are currently analyzing the continuity of several critical positions. We have identified personnel to backfill exiting critical positions if necessary. And Administrator Paulison recently named one of our career Regional Administrators, Nancy Ward of Region 9, to serve as our Senior Career Transition Officer to help facilitate the transition for FEMA senior leadership and potentially serve as Acting Administrator in the event that no Administrator exists. *(ask if Nancy is in Audience)*

We will also focus on a smooth knowledge transfer. We are currently working with each of the FEMA components and the Regions to develop simple, useful, and uniform means to transfer knowledge, experiences, and lessons learned to the new leadership. We will provide actionable guidance

on the workings of critical functions such as the disaster declaration process, activation of the NRCC, grant processes and other activities that our stakeholders depend upon. We will provide overviews of procurement, budget, facility, and other infrastructure requirements. We will provide an understanding of major improvements underway to form the ‘New FEMA’ such as building robust regions, establishing Incident Management Assistance Teams, and integrating disparate processes.

This is what FEMA is doing. Now I’d like to take a few minutes to discuss what FEMA and NEMA can do together.

Our efforts together should focus on three key areas: preparedness capability assessment initiatives; planning and exercises; and regional response and resource management.

Together, FEMA and NEMA must prepare our nation, our states, and our communities to be ready when disaster strikes. We look forward to working directly with many of you as we undertake this year’s Gap Analysis, develop

a national Emergency Management Accreditation Program, improve our Target Capabilities List Initiative, and modernize our planning.

Together, FEMA and NEMA must make sure that the NRF is not another document on a shelf, but is a useful and valued tool in coordinating disaster response. In particular, we are looking for your leadership in a national effort to modernize our plans to address any incident, natural or man-made. Modernization begins with training for planners across the country, at all levels of government, on planning. All too frequently they are not given the tools they need to develop effective, integrated plans. We must build on the training by identifying and the tools necessary to aid these planners.

As part of this initiative, we must work together to develop an Integrated Planning System built on a planning process that is consistent across all levels of government, to ensure coordination during planning and interoperability during implementation. This planning process, highlighted in the NRF and soon to be released in more detail with NEMA's assistance, is a great step forward in modernizing planning.

We will continue to work with NEMA to obtain your advice and input on the IPS, the Comprehensive Preparedness Guides, and other related initiatives as each moves toward completion and implementation.

Together, FEMA and NEMA must lead a national effort to modernize our plans and exercise them vigorously. This includes close coordination when developing our operations, evacuation, and catastrophic plans – and then using these joint plans in our exercises, particularly our evolving Radiological Emergency Preparedness Exercise Scenarios.

Together, FEMA and NEMA must coordinate on the ground and build close regional ties. We propose ESF-6 regional conferences, a National Logistics Forum with regional workshops, and a robust EMAC system. Our new Incident Management Assistance Teams will be part of this strengthened process – training and coordinating activities before disaster strikes, and as our first feet on the ground when a disaster occurs.

This type of close working relationship will also help us to better communicate our message during a crisis, so that responders can speak with one voice while responding to an event.

We have taken the first steps in this process. Our regular meetings and calls are evidence of this progress. As the Administrator said last fall, we are inter-dependant. We rise and fall together. For the sake of those we serve, we must continue to rise together and build a stronger emergency management system that Americans can be proud of.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.