

May 2012 FEMA Monthly Update Webinar

Tuesday, May 1, 2012

3:00 p.m. – 4:10 p.m. EDT

Good afternoon everybody and welcome to FEMA's May 2012 monthly preparedness update. A few technical considerations before we get started. The audio for this webinar will be through your computer speakers so make sure the volume is turned up so you can sufficiently hear the presentations. This webinar is free and open to the public. Once all presentations are given we will open the webinar up to a question-and-answer session where you will be able to ask questions based on what you heard today. And of course this webinar, as with all of our webinars, is being recorded and will be posted on the Citizen Corps website within 48 hours of its close. With that, I would like to turn the call over to Chris Bernstein from ready.gov to get us started. Chris?

Thanks Steve and thank you all for joining us today. We have a really great webinar in store for you today. June 1st is the start of hurricane season which is a very large event for us at FEMA HQ and a really significant event for a lot of our partners at the state and local level. The entire call for this month will be devoted to hurricane season. What is going on at the local level, some best practices, research you might have not known about and to kick things off we are going to have Will Booher and Amy Godsey of the Florida division of emergency management to present on some activities Florida does to prepare in advance for hurricane season, to get the public engaged and to get the public aware. After we hear from Will, we will hear from Trenise Lyons from the great hurricane blowout, which is a great organization that works on hurricane preparedness and drills. After that we will hear from Cindy O'Neill Vitale from Fairfield, Connecticut who is a current member and was very active in the response to Hurricane Irene. I know I am very appreciative of that; my parents live 20 minutes from there. So thank you Cindy. Lastly we will hear from Karole Johns from disaster assistance about disaster assistance improvement programs and disaster assistance registration. So Will, why don't you take it away and thank you all for joining us.

Chris, first of all thank you very much for having us on the call. With June 1st approaching as Chris said, hurricane season is one of our biggest and busiest times of the year down here in Florida and is traditionally the most hurricane prone state. It's the time of year when we get the most press coverage and awareness amongst our citizens and businesses across the state of Florida regarding preparedness issues and we will go through some things that we do both year-round and specifically for hurricane season as part of our outreach program. As part of the call with me, I have Amy Godsey who is with the Florida division of emergency management and is also our state meteorologist and is key personnel here assists and does outreach for us so she will cover slides we go through as well. If we can go to the next slide please.

As you'll see this is our Get a Plan logo; that is our messaging theme that we use throughout the year here. This gets the majority of the attention during the hurricane season and around the page you will see the various subheadings that we use underneath the Get a Plan messaging program.

Outside of the Get a Plan, our primary messaging theme and we have our kids get a plan which is much of the same material and that get a plan which is encouraging our citizens and businesses across the state to form a disaster plan and let them know what needs to be in their supply kit and evacuation information routes and those things. We tailor it for the kids get a plan. We have some more material there. More cartoonish figures and we have games they can play. We also have specialized books that have been created for elementary through high school students that discuss various severe weather themes not all necessarily hurricane related but different themes of severe weather that we face here in Florida. In addition to that we also have the business plan side of Get a Plan. You will see our private-sector logo and the businesses in Florida can go to the Get a Plan website and create a disaster plan specifically tailored to their business and the needs of their business and the things they would need to know when they are preparing and responding to and recovering from a hurricane or other disaster in Florida. As part of that and a tangent we are also currently here in the state as we speak holding a private sector Preparedness Summit in Daytona that is ongoing. Amy, our meteorologist, is there in attendance as we are on the phone here today. This is bringing in private sector participants in private sector disciplines from across the state of Florida to let them know not only what they need to do to prepare for disasters but how can they engage with the state and local emergency managers as well as citizens and other private-sector entities within the communities they operate within. We will go to the next slide.

On top of the GET A PLAN program, we also produce, every year, a severe weather awareness guide. We do this at the start of the year. In Florida, we do severe weather awareness week at the end of January, beginning of February, so we generally release our guide along that timeframe. We touch on all the different severe weather that we face in the state of Florida and you see the example on the slide there of flooding. We have pages of preparedness material and what they could do, what you need to know, from interesting facts and figures on storms flooding hurricanes, tornadoes, lightning, those kinds of things. Each section on severe weather occurrences has its own section within the guide and we update that annually for distribution throughout the state. This is available on our website. We include games at the back of the guide for our younger citizens that go along in conjunction with our kids get a plan material as well. Beyond that, let's go to the next slide.

In conjunction with severe weather awareness week at the start of hurricane season, as we approach that, we do a student contest across the state of Florida. We ask elementary and middle and high school students to produce either a poster or video PSA for submission to the division that have been judged and we pick some winners out of it. You will see on the screen we have posters that won this year. After we have chosen the winners, we take these winning entities, whether it's a poster, or for the high school students, videos and turn around and produce those into our PSA and other material for distribution throughout the hurricane season. We utilize this on our website and on the videos we do all of our PSA and airtime distribution -- we add the pack every year from the winners into our rotation of preparedness material that we posted through airtime contracts throughout Florida will be the video messaging.

On top of that, in addition to the severe weather awareness student contest material, we also participate in a number of local Expos and preparedness and awareness outreach events. I'm

going to let Amy Godsey speak to that. She is generally our front-line person out there giving a lot of presentations on it so it isn't me, please take it away Amy.

Thanks Will. One of the things we do here in Florida is educating Floridians on hazards. On how to prepare. Preparedness messaging. Ultimately we serve the state of Florida and its citizens so the better they're prepared, the better we can respond to disasters including hurricanes. We like to do that within the community and through city or county or state entities. But also are on the private-sector side either partnering with their management or other business. Right now we currently partner with Radio Disney. Radio Disney has a large following in the state of Florida. So we go out to their events across the state and get stage time and indirectly the audience and have them interact with us. As mentioned before, the communities we can't reach we utilize with technology through video announcements that play on our website and hopefully on TV throughout the state.

It's becoming more the norm across the country these days. We developed our own mobile app location and website that is based on preparedness material but focuses on the evacuation portion of response efforts and preparedness efforts. What the app does, and it's available on the iTunes store and the marketplace and all those things, it will allow the end-user on their mobile or computer to go through the GPS capabilities in the device or through their ZIP code and will allow that person to see what shelters have been opened and allow them to see which shelters have space and give them turn by turn directions to the shelters close to them. We take a direct feed from the Red Cross for the Red Cross shelters. One of the other newer additions we've added to the app is a partnership with the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association, so not only can the end-user see open Red Cross shelters but they can also see all of the open hotels and motels that are along their route and we'll tell you which ones are open in the aftermath of the storm or leading to a storm and we will let them know the availability. They will do a red, green, yellow system. If there's space available at that facility. It will give them directions on their location to that facility so whether they want to go to a shelter or find a hotel or motel they can use the mobile app to find these locations.

This is all part of preparedness and again, through our messaging that we put out through the website and twitter and Facebook, we are engaged in these places. We are constantly pushing this information out. The website and mobile app, addresses and locations and our severe awareness week. Going through those traditional medias and included in PSA's and other material and press releases and things we put out as we run into the start of hurricane season.

Amy spoke briefly about Radio Disney. Amy if you want to add to that portion.

Looking to be in the community anyway we can whether it is state fairs or other Expos that we have. We are highlighting our largest partnership with Radio Disney. Part of the private-sector side that we are trying to do which is an excellent opportunity to build a more solid foundation with our private-sector and the stores that people are familiar with like the Wal-Mart and Home Depot and those in the community and to strengthen the bond and get that information out there since that is a symbol of rebuilding after a hurricane, getting the stores open. We're starting to target those businesses around the state of Florida.

The next slide you will see is of the Florida Advertising Association. This is an agreement we have with the Association across the state of Florida for the digital billboards and they have, and I know the map is not very easy to see so if you can squint and see a lot of red green and yellow dots across the state of Florida. Those are representing all of the electronic billboards we have in the state of Florida and if we could get more clarity you will be able to see the location of each one of those electronic billboards. So the agreement we have with the OAA we contested messaging on there during events and the run-up to an event and again traditionally the week before the start of hurricane season we run our test messaging and preparedness messaging through all of the digital billboards across the state to get people thinking about it as they are driving down the interstates and highways and roads that these billboards are viewable. On the left side of the screen you will see the template that says test. That is a template we develop in conjunction with the OAA sign standard, so no matter what the messaging is that template is always going to be the same with the yellow it sticks out and it is not necessarily the prettiest thing but it will grab people's attention as they are driving. The goal is to have them become used to seeing these. When they see this yellow sign on these digital billboards to know that is something that needs to draw their attention and they need to look at it to see what information is posted and put out there. This is a no-cost partnership that we have with the Association so that all digital billboard owners and providers throughout the state, it is on their billboards and their location at no cost to us and enduring inactivation or incident they will preempt the other information on their boards for the messaging that we asked them to put up. This is a good partnership we have been lucky we haven't had to activate all that often in terms of actual incidents that in terms of the fairness throughout the hurricane season they are easy to work with and willing to put our message out and excited to participate with us.

Hurricane season begins June 1st 2012. We are in the mid- to late portion of our planning process where we will do June 1st for the rollout of hurricane season. This year we are going to have a director down at the National Hurricane Center in Miami to do a kickoff down there but as you will see on the screen we are also rolling out a couple of other items and partnerships we've been working on to highlight those at the start of hurricane season as well. In the middle of the screen you will see AT&T. They are the first company in the U.S. to go through the DHS program and be accredited through that process and we've been working with them both at the private-sector summit. This week, as well, is going into June to highlight that and encourage other businesses across the state of Florida to go through that process and become accredited themselves. Additionally you will see the Wal-Mart logo. We have a very good relationship with them and going back to the portion before where we were talking a little bit about how Florida evacuates and those things. One of the other things we have in conjunction with Florida Evacuate is what we call CERT gator which is our geospatial assessment over operations and response. This is our GIS platform we use during operations. We have worked with Wal-Mart to include all of their data feeds for open stores that would be open in the aftermath of a hurricane in Florida. So the public would be the first responders and other people can see that data in real-time and not only what is critical infrastructure or other data layers we have in place to the GIS platform but also the live feed from Wal-Mart so that we will know which of their facilities are open and operational. This will help us obviously elude to the public the various facilities, and are they open where they can find resources. It will help us place and plan for our pods and the distribution of those commodities so we are not competing with the Wal-Marts of the world in the aftermath of the hurricane. And hopefully as we go through this everyone finds these tools

will encourage the other big box stores and other private-sector entities that we can work with and get that similar data to input it into our gator system so it's not only Wal-Mart out there but the Lowe's or the Home Depot and the other similar big-box stores that maybe I've used and a good resource or tool for folks coming back after a storm to know where the car is and have that data in a central location for both internal use but for public use as well. Lastly you will see Google; we've been working with Google as well with our GIS team to coordinate our EAS alert messages that go out across Florida during our EM net system and provide the data to Google. Google has public alert page and we are building a platform so we can share our EAS messaging data with Google so that Google can then post our EAS messages and data onto their public alert page as well. In addition we are also working with Google to provide the data from our GIS data from gator for all of our critical infrastructure and I shouldn't say all, the critical infrastructure and data we have in the state that is already publicly available. That data that is not available we wouldn't be sharing but the things that are currently able to be seen by the public on our GIS platform we are sharing that data with Google as well so they can include it into their system. If we can go to one last slide. In Florida this is a significant hurricane here for us and this represents the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Andrew impacting the state. So all of our messaging as we roll into the start of hurricane season is going to be focused not only on getting a plan to be prepared but also what Hurricane Andrew and the 20 years since then and where we were and where we've come. Both as a state and emergency management community. And hopefully be able to utilize that messaging to encourage people to be prepared because it only truly does take one storm to impact an entire hurricane season. We've been fortunate in Florida to be six years now without a direct impact from a storm and being able to relate to such a significant incident and remember what happened back then and how we've progressed through the rebuilding and recovery but also preparedness is what we think is going to be strong messaging for us as we go into the season. Those are some of the things we're doing in messaging that we put out and partnerships we have throughout the year, but also more notably during the run-up and during hurricane season. That is the end of our presentation and as we get to the end we are happy to take specific questions on anything we have or other questions you may have regarding the Florida division of emergency management. We appreciate your time and look forward to the rest of the presentations.

We appreciate it. Let's keep things rolling. Trenise let's toss it to you.

This is Trenise Lyons from the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH). I will give you a brief overview of the great hurricane blowout and what we have going on here then. If we can go to the next slide.

For anyone who is unfamiliar, the great hurricane blowout is a social media outreach campaign that we launched here at FLASH in 2010. It is relaunched every year at the national hurricane conference and has been fortunate to have director Bill Reed, on board each year to kick off the campaign. The foundation is these six items that you see here. Where we want people on the path of being prepared for hurricane season. But we try to do it in a less scary way and focus more on the advanced preparedness and how getting ready before the season starts will give you the opportunity to relax a bit as things are coming your way because you know that you are prepared. So we base the campaign in tried-and-true traditional emergency preparedness messages. Things like having your plan and building your kit and being safe when the power is

out with a No Power, No Problem campaign. Protect your home in a flash when talking about mitigation. We inject these nice little photographs and then activities that the family can do together to make preparedness not this scary thing. If we move onto the next slide.

Last year when Hurricane Irene was going up the coast we had been doing the blowout for two years at that time, yet Hurricane Irene is going up the coast and we are still seeing the same old bad hurricane preparedness habits. And these are some pictures of some masking tape, a different tape, going up on Windows in preparation for the storm. We knew that old method of putting that tape on windows was still hanging around.

We thought we knew that for sure that people still believed that putting tape on windows was a good idea but we wanted to be sure so we contracted with people here and were interactive and surveyed people out on the street and found that 67 %, nearly seven in 10, people still believe that they should tape their windows as a preparedness method for hurricanes. And so folks down here in our neck of the woods and also in Florida think that we are off the hook, you can see the number, 58 % of people in the south, and that includes the Southeast areas which are highly at risk for hurricanes, also believe that they should be taping their windows. We decided last here we were going to focus the call to action for the thirty-year hurricane blowout investing this protective myth. That is the next slide.

We came up with a campaign called Go Tapeless and this campaign is tongue-in-cheek in keeping within the overarching theme of the blowout, but ultimately what we are encouraging people to do is to abandon that idea of taping their windows before a hurricane and using and taking effective hurricane protective measures if there is a storm coming. But supporting your windows before the storm was better, using tested and approved hurricane shattered were impact resistant materials on your home. So we launched this campaign in March and that is one of the things we do every year. The blowout is about advanced preparation. We always launched the campaign before June 1st at the hurricane conference and start talking about this idea of hurricane preparedness well before the season starts let alone when a storm is heading your way and you have those 72 hours to get ready. We launched Go Tapeless and we can go to the next slide.

We had a show and had everyone there at the conference on board and believing this call to action to make sure they were on board to join us in this initiative. The first thing we wanted to do was get our Go Tapeless champions. You can see Bill Reed covering his face here and we also reached out to Jim -- from the Weather Channel starting at that level and then working with the grassroots level to make sure everyone has this campaign in their hands so they can take it out to people at the local level to families and individual homeowners to make sure they know the right things to do to protect themselves from hurricane damage.

The way we did this is we have a great hurricane blowout website. It is greathurricane.org. You can see people are getting on board and taking the pledge. You all can join to make your own Go Tapeless pledge.

The next part of that, once you have awareness, you have to give folks the resources to make it happen. So we have as a part of the campaign a "protect your home in a flash" campaign with

step-by-step information, tools and resources on exactly how to do emergency boarding on your windows. We tell people that they should be looking for tested and approved hurricane shutters and impact resistant windows and doors. In addition to those resources, there are tons of other things. What changes go into your kit and how do you do a family plan and what things should you do to clear up your yard and landscaping to make it more hurricane resistant. All of those activities in step-by-step's are there and it's written from the consumer point of view so people don't have to try to go through a lot of technical jargon. It is written like a DIY activity you would find at one of those popular DIY websites for home improvement. In addition to that, we are working closely with national entities and the hands-on network to take some of these activities that we have created as a part of hurricane preparedness and other preparedness activities to give them to the voluntary group so as they are looking for activities to do in their local communities these resources will be available as a part of their two kinds and resources to conduct these kinds of emergency board up or a neighborhood cleanup for landscaping or clear up brush when it comes to wildfire season. These resources will be available as toolkits for the volunteer community to download and use for their volunteer groups. We're working hard to make sure these things are available so that anyone anywhere can use them however they see fit. We get to the next slide.

That is my contact information. This is very quick for me. The one thing we want to make sure that everyone knows is that all of the resources we have as a part of the blowout and even as a greater organization for FLASH are available to you free of charge. If you see anything as you are clicking through the blowout website when you click to the FLASH website and you would like to have access to or you think that would be useful as you are conducting outreach and doing activities on the ground, please feel free to call me or e-mail me and we can work with you to get those resources to you and put them into your hands. So I look forward to questions and answers but that's all I got for now. So thank you.

One more thing, we will be having an annual meeting at the end of the year and everyone is invited. Wanted to make sure you knew. Thank you.

A little plug after the presentation if you don't mind that. Thank you very much. Why don't we move along? I will toss it to the Cindy from Connecticut.

Hi guys. Thanks for this opportunity. Hopefully what you will learn from this is what CERT can do in your communities in regards to sheltering. We can go to the next slide. Just as a quick overview of this is some topics we will be discussing, but to familiarize everybody with who and what we are. Fairfield, Connecticut is a low-lying beach community of 60,000 people in southern Connecticut. We sit on Long Island sound and approximately 55 miles from New York City. Densely populated and 10 % of our community lives in a flood zone.

But what of all the commotion about Irene? We went through some of the steps that would help familiarize this if you who had some input into this and help to those of you who weren't really paying attention to this, understand what was going on. Irene started in August of 2011. She was active for nine days. She was originally thought to be a category three when she impacted the state of Connecticut. She was later downgraded to a category one and hit us as a very powerful

tropical storm. More impressively, she affected the entire eastern seaboard, spearing Florida coincidentally.

The last time Connecticut was impacted with a direct hit was in 1955. Some of you might remember, but most of us would only know about it through history books. In August of 1955, Connecticut was hit with back-to-back hurricanes, Connie and Diane, ended a seven-day period they dumped a total of 7 inches of rain in our state. Every river and stream was over their banks and there were about 90 totalities along with all of the people missing. As Irene is turning in the Atlantic we are all getting nervous up here as to what is going to happen fifty years since an impact.

The East Coast starts major preparations and you can read what some of the things that were going on. But most importantly there were hundreds of thousands of people evacuating near the coastal areas and hundreds of shelters were being prepared. Gas stations ran out of gas in our community. Grocery stores ran out of milk and bread. Batteries and flashlights couldn't be found anywhere. And radios were sold out. At the time I counted 30 shelters that had opened in our immediate surrounding communities. That's locally here and not the entire seaboard and not all of Connecticut.

You can see as Dave progressed in this presentation, the activities that start taking place. On Thursday, August 25th our governor declared a state of emergency and the emergency operations center is fully activated. It was at this time that a lot of our citizens started to pay attention. We had never really been here before and this had impacted most of our families. People are starting to get nervous. On Friday, we had a hurricane warning in place for southern Connecticut and northern Connecticut has a tropical storm warning. On Saturday, Metro North commuter railway service and Amtrak had early halt service. These lines are run through the center of our town and have been known to flood in previous storms. And coincidentally, New York City also halts Metropolitan transit authority including their commuter rails and buses and subways. We have Parkway route 15 which runs from the New York border through the northern part of Fairfield and almost to Hartford. They decided this year we would most likely be closed down as is it is a scenic highway and trees align both sides. Mostly old growth trees. That was coming. Spak through a CERT. We are the community emergency response team. We are a group of trained volunteers ready to assist our community in a crisis. We were established in 2007 and we are five years young with 60 active members and still growing. My goal is to get to 100. Our mission, simplified, is to assist our community in a time of crisis with people and pet sheltering being our main task. Our training includes a basic IS and CERT course. We added shelter operations at shelter management which is done by the American Red Cross. And those sheltering are taught to us by our animal control officer and veterinarian Doctor Sheldon who is Connecticut region one, state animal response team leader. So he is our CERT leader. It's important to note that in 2006, the law mandated the pet evacuation and transportation standards act, which required companion animals are included in all disaster planning and evacuation plans. So it is included in our mission statement and all of our planning involves pet sheltering. But the shelters are always co-located and our people shelters but not in the same space. It will be in a different part of the building. And CERT as a partnering without shelter we really help with resources and we are not actually allowed to handle the pets. That is left to the animal control officers. They are active as CERT members as well. Shelter guests are required to walk and feed their pets when they come

to our shelter and they have to bring their own food of course and show updated proof of rabies vaccines. We also have additional training which includes traffic control and people searches and evidence searches and CPR and first aid and we participate and bought the regional drills and local drills. We train and practice and learn and train and practice and learn. We have monthly meetings and if all goes well we're always prepared when we are called upon. But we now know we are going to be impacted by Irene. Whether we do it, you can follow the timeline but essentially our EMD contact CERT present alerts activation. Our President contacts the members to see who might be available at what times they might be available. And on Thursday the 23rd, our Board of Education was contacted and alerted that we would be opening a shelter at the high school. We have two high schools, and one we generally open for shelter. Shift assignments get prepared and we continue to watch the weather.

On Friday, the CERT president meets with our assistant EMD. We go to the high school where the shelter will be, and the utility company that maintains the generator is confirmed they are in working order and I will have electricity and hopefully air-conditioning. We walked through the shelter and we also meet with the customer relations staff. A representative is required to be there when the shelter is open. They have their tasks that they perform prior to our arrival. Later that afternoon we meet with the first response office and review hurricane preparations. Present at those meetings would be MDs and the Fire Department and Police Department and utility companies and the health department and MRC team. Public Works and Red Cross and CERT. CERT is officially activated by the end of that day. Here I want to point out that if the leadership and cooperation of our municipal officials including our first select responders and emergency management team that is the single most important factor in our success as CERT and applies to shelter management. Without this support our program would never be able to run the way it runs and we just wouldn't be an asset to the community. Our activities make it easier for our leadership to attend to the other crisis is going on in our town.

The health department and MRC are officially activated and animal control is contacted that the shelter will be opening. And on Saturday morning the town residents are all notified of the shelter and when it will open and there will be a voluntary evacuation until noon which will become mandatory after that. 10 % of our community is in a flood zone.

On Saturday, the expected impact of Irene is 4:00 p.m. in the afternoon. The CERT and MRC need to start unloading our shelter trailers and setting up shelter. At this point it's still looking like Irene will be a category one and for us that means 74-mile an hour winds and possibly four to six hour storm surge and while they is generally not huge structural damaging storms the results of letting and searches and downed trees and power lines should still be considered a life-threatening event for us.

We set up shelter and we get the animal control shelter, we get the pet shelter established with the help of CERT members and we had 30 preassembled crates. Command was established and the commander was one of our CERT people and there was our shelter manager at the same time. The Health Department took over all food operations for our shelter. We had a quick meeting with both CERT team and MRC help department team to review and communication reporting and expectations and so on. MRC ordered 50 pizzas. It's funny. You can always find a pizza place open in a storm. They were pre-delivered, entirely too many of our guests arriving

but just as a backup so we would have food. We also had donations come in from local stores and a bread company made bread donations and one resident brought in trays of professionally catered food that she had ordered for a funeral which unfortunately had to be canceled that day because no one could travel. The American Red Cross provided us with snacks as well.

Irene hits and here are some headlines. This is the event we've been planning for and this is our big one.

Shelter operations. We base our shelter operations loosely on the Red Cross shelter structure. We have changed our registration a bit so it's clear where a municipal shelter is and not a Red Cross shelter. And MRC is there to assist in the registration process and they handle all the medical and intake questions and then make the decisions based on the answers as to whether these guests belong in the medical room or if they can go to the general population dormitory. We break out into teams and some of our team members have dual tasks but based on what the shelter needs determines what types of teams we need in place. We expect to use radios to communicate in the school and those were all distributed to our volunteers. We learned you have to be prepared for the unexpected. Our radios did not work. So we then went to cell phones. One of the most important tasks in our shelter operation was having a scribe to describe all of the incident commander around the entire shelter and it kept track of the events and things that happened. This proved to be absolutely essential when we need it to write our after action report. So I would highly recommend that to anybody who has to open a shelter.

For a general population dormitory we've set up of a large gymnasium. We had a small gymnasium for overflow. We had no idea how many people would be joining us. So we decided to start into the big room and use a small one if we needed it.

This is Chris. I apologize. Would you mind skipping to the takeaways. We are running about 15 minutes late and I want to make sure we have time for Karole and the Q&A.

If you want to go to page 18.

We have 85 guests. We had a handicapped person and ready people are right to shelter by ambulance. It had homeless people and we had 13 cuts and 36 CERT volunteers and almost 250 hours of volunteer hours during the time our shelter was open. If you want to skip to page 21 to take away. But we really took away from this event was that having the AI department and MRC partner with us was imperative. They were able to take over activities that CERT wasn't trained to do or legally could not do. So that became a huge bonus for us and moving forward will always have their involvement in our shelter plan. The custodial staff at the high school had the keys to the kingdom. Make them your best friend. They can get you into the copy machines and any that may work during power outages. And they were instrumental in helping us move the equipment into the school. Our setup and breakdown wasn't flawless. We know we have concerns with anterior and asked your signage, which we will have professionally produced for us. One volunteer at a time had made them and we will step it up a notch. We need to have a better idea system between our shelter and our volunteers. I'm sorry. Next slide.

Support services from the MRC being a psychologist or a behavioral therapist is instrumental. They were really able to work with our elderly population that was nervous about being in the shelter or leaving the shelter and going home to a house without electricity. We did find that we had unexpected challenges. When the shelter was closing, we had elderly members of the family who would not come pick them up. And then we were stressing to those people and to volunteers and wondering why family members wouldn't come get them. We had one guest with medical concerns who did not go back to his home due to the power being out so he stayed and he was instrumental in finding them a set up at a local nursing facility. We had a coordinated effort between our utility company and DMT to make sure the folks that needed to go home to power were going home to a house with power.

And community preparations. I would like to have a budget to be able to do something, but like many communities, we are challenged by lack of resources. We did start a public education group and they are writing a series of newspaper articles targeting sheltering expectations of what to bring and what it means. We had a recent event in town which was a hazmat situation and the reverse 911 went out to tell the community to shelter in place. All were overloaded with calls not knowing what that meant. This is terminology we use every day and all seem to understand. We forget the public isn't really aware of what it is. So that will be a big part of our newspaper article series and trying to explain what some of these terms mean. We're in the process of expanding our town website to include CERT and preparedness information along with recruitment for spontaneous volunteers. We have a CERT Facebook page for CERT which is private to our own group and we hope to expand that to be a public site with preparedness information. We've got a big tabletop exercise planned for June. So to sum it up that's it. Happy to answer any questions.

Thank you. Karole why don't we toss it to you quickly and then hopefully we can stay online for five or 10 minutes for Q&A. Steve, can you confirm if we use this line and extend a little bit past four, will that be an issue?

That's fine. We're able to go up to 4:15 if need be. So it will not be a problem and I would like to remind everyone that this webinar is being recorded and the slide presentation displayed will be on the Citizen Corps website within 48 hours.

Thanks, Steve. Karole?

Thanks Chris. I will try not to speak super quickly. I figure I can get through everything. My name is Karole Johns and I am the program manager for the disaster assistance improvement program. I will give you an overview of what our program is and how we came into being and to tell you how we are helping citizens in the aftermath of disasters.

The genesis of disasterassistance.gov, which is our web portal, which is available to help individuals and citizens get assistance in the aftermath of a presidentially declared disaster. We will talk about our integration and future functionality that we are planning for the portal and about additional resources available.

Disasterassistance.gov came about as a result of an Executive Order that George W. Bush signed in 2006. It was a result of the government response after Hurricane Katrina, Rita, and William. He wanted to improve the delivery of federal disaster assistance for individuals. So the government got together and created the disaster assistance improvement plan through a task force. Agencies got together to envision how this could happen and one of our mandates was to use the existing technology to improve how citizens can get assistance in the aftermath of a disaster. Out of that came the disaster assistance improvement program. It is an [Indiscernible] an initiative, which is combining 17 federal agencies to help disaster survivors. FEMA is the managing partner and we launched the disasterassistance.gov website on December 31st 2008 as part of that original mandate.

Within FEMA, we have several different parts of the organization feeding the disaster assistance improvement program, also known as the DAIP. We are part of the recovery directorate so we work with recovery as part of our program strategy but we are also closely tied with the IT department within FEMA so we work closely with the OCIO to make sure the technology we are planning has been improved so our system works within the IMA organization. As you can see we have 17 federal partner agencies, and their tiny logos at the bottom, are helping to provide the program strategy and content for the site.

This is a snapshot of the landing page for disasterassistance.gov. This is newly redesigned this year. There are two major things that a disaster survivor will find on coming to the website. The first is static information about the 72 forms of federal assistance currently depicted on the site. They can get information by clicking on that first button to take a questionnaire. It's completely anonymous. No personal identifiable information is passed through taking that questionnaire. But it does provide filters that by answering 11 fairly straightforward questions will take those 72 forms of assistance and pair it down to a subset that is most likely relevant to that person's situation. So there is a guarantee of eligibility to taking the questionnaire but it does give the disaster survivor an idea of the different types of assistance they may be qualified for. By clicking on the "apply now" button, they can go into an application with FEMA for individual assistance into the application process we have ties to forms of assistance with three of our other partner agencies and we are working on expanding that ability to allow for additional online application through a single application on the website.

So the resources that are available on the site I mentioned, we have 72 forms of assistance and that is still continues to grow. Those 72 forms of assistance are across 17 partner agencies. The program management office for DAIP is available as a resource. We have packed the sheets and how-to guides and informational materials and we would be happy to share with you. We also do outreach and briefing. We have been happy to do demos of the site so that is available to everyone in the very near future. All of our collateral and the fact sheets and the how-to guides and information will be available for download directly on the site. That is still in the process but I hope to have that up and available in late June and early July time frame.

Disasterassistance.gov and DAIP is a program that has gotten a lot of recognition since we first started up. We were mentioned as one of the top five government websites on Congress.org, received government computer news award for government IT achievement in 2010 and we were named one of the nine federal information technology program finalists for the American

Council for technologies and intergovernmental solution awards. We received a 2,009 best of IEM award for our information exchange model. We also received, in 2010, a combination of merits from the Society for new communications research for our quarterly digest. It's been a very rewarding program to work with.

I apologize for my rapid delivery but we're running out of time. This is my contact information. If any of you on the webinar are interested in having a detailed briefing or receiving a demo of the site, please feel free to contact me. Thank you.

Thank you very much. And with all this hurricane preparedness information I wanted to give a callout for ready.gov. We just put up our hurricane preparedness information, which is on the ready hurricane page. That is ready.gov/hurricanes. That will be the resource that will allow FEMA to share content directly with the public. You can take that and put it on your website and you just grab the short code and add it to your site. It's the kind of thing most people can do rather quickly. That is a resource that FEMA will use to take users to all of our hurricane preparedness content that will help them learn about risks or know how to take action or basically be that personal multiplier(?) that I think was emphasized in a lot of the presentations we listened to today. So if you all would like to use that Q&A chat box up in the center of the screen now. You can type your questions and they will get forwarded to the moderator and we can do our best to route them to the correct speaker. For all of those that did speak on the call we totally understand if you need to drop off but if you can, stay on for another five or 10 minutes.

Thank you, Chris. Moving into the questions. We have one question here from Irene for Will. When and where is Weather Fast?

I'm here. Weather Fast is the title of the next show with the National Weather Service so in Florida, we partnered with the Tallahassee and Jacksonville and Miami and Tampa offices. It's an initiative spreading across the country with a weather service and there's one in New Orleans in January and there's been other ones in Kentucky and Alabama and so forth. The National Weather Service had an expo that we partner with.

Thank you very much.

Next question is from Eugene. To the Connecticut CRT, did you do search and rescue? Do you train for that? If so, how? Stack we did not do search and rescue during Irene. We have been trained by our local police department on how to do basic research and evidence rescue. There is a regional training event coming up I believe in June for the Connecticut region, one on search and rescue which will be done on a statewide level.

Thank you.

I see that Marvin Stein wanted a copy of the slides. We will be posting both the slide and the audio as two separate links on the Citizen Corps website within 48 hours of the end of this webinar. If you go to www.citizencorps.gov and click on resources and in our library, you will see that link. I will put that up in a minute. Let's go to the next question. Kelly is asking. Is there any one program willing to collaborate with me to create short and translated messages for media

that has a limited messaging space, such as twitter, to convey warnings and watches and disaster info during Irene? I was not able to translate warnings to New Hampshire or Vermont and the like to have these resources prepared as soon as possible and the chair of the local CERT teams to have on file.

Absolutely we would be more than happy to work with you. You can contact me directly and I'm happy to share my e-mail address. It's publicly available so you see it on the line. It is William .-dot there at EM my Florida.com.

I cannot be more specific -- to be able to do mornings and stuff but a suggestion could be if there is a place we can put that information and that you can post short links to, that could be an option as well. Then I want to consider that.

We have a lot of great questions coming up. Have the presenters from Florida and Connecticut partnered with faith-based organizations? If so, how? This is Cindy from Connecticut. That is an initiative we've been working on and there are a couple of people within our CERT team and who have taken initiative and that was several ministers and pastors to see if they can either join us at a shelter or help educate a faith-based population on the importance of being prepared. It is a little slow in progress but we are heading down the right track.

I would say something similar in Florida. In Florida we have the S. S. 15 down here with its volunteers and the nation's. They do most of our outreach to the faith-based community before, during and after an incident. We are trying to increase that and ramp that up more than we are reaching all the communities within the state.

Will or anyone, is Wal-Mart on the evacuate.org mobile app?

Will or anyone? What Florida evacuate has is a device that puts people to shelters specifically for evacuations. Point people to shelters near their location. What Will was referring to Wal-Mart was putting the stores that are open on call, on our website and publicly available and we are getting that from Wal-Mart to post on gator. Evacuations are a separate program to point people and give them GPS directions to the nearest open shelter.

Amy was correct. The Wal-Mart information is not yet available on the mobile app and this will be a data stream that comes in from Wal-Mart that we'll put onto gator which is publicly available and the girl is down the line to incorporate that into Florida evacuate that work but we have not gotten to that point. We're still refining the data from Wal-Mart to ensure we are getting the stuff up on our GIS platform and get that correct first and then we will work on incorporating it into the other platforms.

We have time for about two or three more questions. Do you have hand radio operators in your CERT?

We have members of our CERT team that are hand radio operators.

Great. Also for you folks, I did post the link that you can click that will take you to the CERT webpage via citizencorps.gov. Please feel free to click on that link and visit that page and familiarize yourself with the community emergency response team program. There is a list of items recommended for CERT teams to keep on hand in event of emergency. For example, walkers. If you go to the link I just referenced to you, you should be able to find that information there. We will take the last question from Irene. Can Will or anyone talk about local expos?

We do, not only the ones that were listed on to slide there, but as well as the events we do in conjunction with Radio Disney, we do a lot of local expos at the request of different organizations across the state and we are always encouraging those entities whether it is local church groups or businesses or any sort of community organizations. We get those requests to produce a big(?) and their preparedness expos this time of year on a daily basis and every single one that we can accommodate; we certainly try to and aim to. We have regional coordinators throughout the state, and the state of Florida is broken into several regions. We have a regional director in each one of the regions who pass out preparedness material and the information and much more than we listed on the slide presentation today. We had that out at these expos and we take those requests all the time and we get to as many as we can.

This wraps up our Q&A session for monthly call and I want to thank everyone for joining and this will be posted on the website within 48 hours so you can review it again at your leisure. We will see you again next month. Thank you very much.