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CORPORATE AFFAIRS

Special Essays

Discuss the process of gathering support in the corporate world for the *Project Impact* initiative.

During the creation of the *Project Impact: Building Disaster Resistant Communities* initiative it was decided that one of the three founding principles of a successful effort would be contingent on the establishment of widespread mutually beneficial public-private partnerships.

For the first *Project Impact* pilot communities, FEMA worked at the national, regional and local levels to develop partnerships with the private sector that would benefit the community's mitigation efforts while also helping businesses become more disaster resistant.

From the beginning, large Fortune 500 companies, such as Home Depot and Verizon Communications, saw the need and became involved in FEMA's efforts to make America disaster resistant. The largely favorable impression that the corporate world holds of the agency and the director's efforts in making FEMA a successful, customer-oriented organization aided in this effort. One CEO of a major insurance company liked what he heard when Director Witt referred to citizens as "customers" – recognizing and emulating the way a successful corporation would treat its customers – which turned out to be one of the reasons the company joined the project.

As *Project Impact* progressed passed the pilot phase, Director Witt, in his continuing commitment to and interest in the importance of building bridges to the private sector, created FEMA's first Office of Corporate Affairs. Barry W. Scanlon was selected as the office's first director, a Presidentially-appointed position. Director Witt created this office to signify the high regard in which FEMA held the potential of increased participation of the private sector. In addition, the office serves as a conduit for FEMA partners and the *Project Impact* communities to reach out to the private sector and develop more mutually beneficial partnerships.

By recruiting corporate partners like BellSouth, Fannie Mae, Visa, Compaq, and others, FEMA has been able to create the support fundamental to the growth of *Project Impact*.

Discuss the partnership with Fannie Mae and what affect that has had.

As FEMA began the effort to expand *Project Impact* beyond its successful pilot phase in 1998, FEMA Director James Lee Witt wanted to create partnerships or initiatives that would provide citizens as many opportunities as possible to act on their personal responsibility to become disaster resistant. In order for homeowners to take preventive measures on their homes to protect their families, property, and personal belongings, funding would be required.

Towards this effort, FEMA sought to build on one of the founding principles of *Project Impact* - private-public partnership. Fortunately, Director Witt had a pre-existing professional relationship with Jamie Gorelick, vice chair of Fannie Mae, the nation's

largest source of funds for home loans. Through Director Witt and Vice Chair Gorelick's leadership and partnership, FEMA and Fannie Mae were able to develop and implement the *Project Impact* Prevention Loan Program.

The loan program provides homeowners with funds to strengthen and retrofit their homes to minimize damage from the devastating effect of hurricanes. The loans, provided through lenders and purchased by Fannie Mae, enable homeowners to take preventive measures including installing hurricane shutters, constructing safe rooms to withstand the devastation of tornados, or seismic retrofitting to prevent earthquake damage.

Since the program began, thousands of homeowners in states all over the country have received more than \$4 million in loans to prevent disaster damage. This increased mitigation activity has protected thousands of disaster prone citizens while ensuring that disaster costs and fatalities will be reduced the next time disaster strikes. Advantages of the program include:

- A quick approval process.
- Provision of a competitive interest rate compared to other consumer installment loans.
- Protection of families, property and personal belongings while reducing the impact of natural disasters.
- Ensurance that prevention improvements are made by approved and certified contractors.
- Increase in home value.

Loan Details

The program offers unsecured, fixed-rate loans of up to \$20,000 with 10 years to pay off debt. The rate is periodically based upon market conditions, but set for the term of the loan.

All one- to two-family homeowners are eligible for the loan program. The loans are initiated by a Fannie Mae-approved specialty third-party originator, and serviced by a Fannie Mae-approved loan servicer.

Examples of disaster prevention upgrades include:

- structural elevation
- utility protection/elevation
- elevation of HVAC equipment
- foundation bolting
- chimney bracing
- cripple wall stiffening
- sprinkler system installation/retrofit
- replacement of roofing systems
- installation of fire-resistant siding
- installation of shutters/protection systems for openings
- structural strengthening for wind
- installation of hail resistant roofing materials and window glazings
- construction of an in-home "safe room"

CONGRESSIONAL & LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Mission Shift to an All-Hazards Disaster Response

Describe how your office's mission and functions have evolved since FEMA changed its focus to an all-hazards disaster response. Describe the evolution of your division's mission and functions from 1992-2000.

Prior to 1993, FEMA's major authority fell under the Civil Defense Act with agency emphasis on preparing for and responding to the threat of nuclear attack. The Civil Defense Act was primarily nuclear attack legislation - not used for natural disasters. In the 1980s, the president wanted to change the definition of "major disaster" because there was pressure on the administration to have FEMA respond to the Mariel boat lift (a surge of incoming refugees from Cuba), which everyone felt was beyond the purview of FEMA. The Armed Services Committee agreed to add language that better defined natural disaster and designated resources to be tapped in the event of a nuclear attack as "dual-use" resources for natural disasters as long as it did not detract from the nuclear attack capability.

During the early 1990s, with Cold War issues dissipating, FEMA wanted to move away from the nuclear attack mentality to an all-hazards preparedness/recovery approach which belonged, congressionally, under the Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee. After 1993, FEMA worked with Congress to move the Civil Defense Act under Title II of the Robert T. Stafford Act, which shifted the agency to an all-hazards, disaster-preparedness mission.

The move to all-hazards disaster response actually happened without much fanfare. Typically, FEMA's confirmation hearings were held before the Senate Armed Services Committee, which had jurisdiction over civil defense. There were many discrepancies between the Civil Defense Act and the Stafford Act, but FEMA and committee staff did not want to go through a major revision. So, under the Senate rules, by precedent, the Senate EPW committee used the confirmation process to move FEMA under their jurisdiction.

In 1993, after the Midwest floods, FEMA worked with committee staff on changes to the Stafford Act that provided additional funding and emphasis on mitigation. Under Section 404 of the Stafford Act, the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), funds were available to state and local governments for measures to eliminate or decrease damage from natural disasters. Unfortunately, available funding was low and the 50/50 federal/state cost share was too expensive for state and local governments. The program was rarely used.

The changes in the legislation included calculating a percentage of funds for mitigation grants based on all disaster program costs, and adjusting the cost share to 75 percent federal and 25 percent state and local. The result has been an increase in mitigation grant funding and the completion of projects to move tens of thousands of homes and facilities out of harm's way.

FEMA's Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) changed to reflect the director's top priorities of effective disaster response and mitigation. OCLA incorporated

these messages in its interaction with Capitol Hill on a daily basis. Director Witt was the first director who came to FEMA with disaster experience and, in a non-partisan way, he worked with all members on the Hill to understand and work with him on his priorities. In 1994, when the Republicans won control of Congress, FEMA and Congress found common ground for good government. FEMA was one of the few places in government where there were no partisan games, but rather bi-partisan engagement in the issues of emergency management.

One of OCLA's greatest accomplishments was the long-fought battle to kill what it considered to be irresponsible reinsurance legislation. For years, the insurance industry continued to encourage Congress to pass legislation that would provide extra protection for insurance companies, but provided neither more availability nor affordability for people wishing to purchase hazard insurance. Through two Congresses, FEMA was able to rely on its credibility and its friends on Capitol Hill to fight against the huge insurance industry lobby on legislation that led to bad insurance practices and actually undermined the concept of mitigation. The fight was successful because of the relationships that FEMA forged with the Hill during disasters.

Management Reorganization

Describe how your office's senior management was reorganized in 1993. Have major changes in your office's management structure occurred since then? If so, what was changed and why was it changed?

Congressional Affairs Management Changes

Prior to 1993, the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) was primarily staffed with political appointees and some career staff. The career staff drove the issues, such as the National Flood Insurance Program and disaster response and recovery. In 1993, during the reorganization, OCLA created a career deputy director position, which became responsible for the stewardship of the office and was accountable to the professional staff.

OCLA also reorganized the office into two teams, the Legislative Team and the Disaster Team. While compiling the teams, OCLA rewrote position descriptions, which established performance standards and responsibilities that had not existed previously. The team structure allowed for professional development for staff. Out of the team concept came additional positions such as a Legislative Reference Specialist; a staff member dedicated to supporting legislative research for the OCLA office, as well as providing legislative updates and reports for the entire agency. The Disaster Team works together to respond to all disasters, as well as overseeing the cadre of OCLA disaster reservists.

Since 1993, under the leadership of Director Witt, OCLA has been able to take a much more proactive role to engage members of Congress and their staff to work with FEMA as partners in emergency management.

Customer Service Improvements

How has your office implemented FEMA's customer service policy? Please cite specific examples of research and/or surveys conducted by your office related to customer service. Also, cite specific changes that were made in the way your office does business as a result of the research and surveys that were done. Finally, give examples of specific improvements in the way your office has serviced its customers since 1992.

Congressional Affairs and Customer Service

The FEMA Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) sent targeted customer service surveys to its customers on Capitol Hill, and internal customers within FEMA. As a result of the surveys, OCLA took two key steps to improve its customer service. A legislative reference position was created to provide internal customers with consistent, timely information on legislation that could impact the agency. Second, OCLA enlisted the services of Congressional Quarterly database, which it has used on a daily basis for years, to help keep the agency and committee partners informed on legislative research.

Results-Oriented Incentives

How has your office adapted new ways of motivating employees and improving program performance? Specifically, which methods of reward or accountability practices have been implemented? Cite specific criticism and praise that prompted such changes in your office, if applicable.

Motivational Forces in Congressional Affairs

The Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) has been motivated chiefly by the support of agency leadership and the permanent staff. While the new employee review system placed a proper emphasis on training and development of employees, the biggest impetus to improved performance in OCLA has been the central role it has played during the last few years.

The agency's leadership has made Congressional Affairs a central player in agency considerations. This has meant that rather than being a reactive, defensive office, OCLA has been able to reach out to committee and member offices prior to events. The leadership from Director Witt is continued by the associate directors who have made themselves and their staffs always available to conduct detailed policy briefs on complex matters. This has resulted in improved relationships with Congress at every level. These efforts have been praised by both internal and external sources. Externally, the agency has been recognized through: floor statements by individual members; improved Appropriations Committee marks; deference to FEMA positions on legislative matters; correspondence from congressional offices in the field and in Washington; and other

indicators of an improved relationship between FEMA and Congress. Internally, staff offices and directorates have lauded an approach that has introduced their issues to appropriate staff through outreach efforts. For example, National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) orientation for new staff has been well received by incoming members of Congress. In addition, it is important in that it gives FEMA NFIP staff an opportunity to hone their presentations, refine their materials and put their program in the best light. These results have greatly improved morale in OCLA. There are strong affirmations given to the staff by all of their customers. While some directorates have even provided tangible awards to OCLA staff, it is the respect and the support throughout the agency that has motivated an ever-improving performance.

Use of Technological Innovations

Describe how your office has employed the use of new technology since 1992. Also describe ways in which old technology has been used in a new way, if applicable. How have these technological innovations affected your office's performance.

New Technology in OCLA

The Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) works with all Washington, D.C. congressional offices. Members of Congress, and more frequently, FEMA's points of contact on their staff, change with every election. OCLA identified a need for a comprehensive database to capture certain key information about each office that was easy to update and available to all members of OCLA staff. Microsoft Access was used for the database and OCLA staff utilizes it every day.

The agency's adoption of electronic mail has been invaluable to keeping in contact with FEMA's field congressional liaisons and regional counterparts. OCLA also occasionally uses e-mail to correspond with congressional offices.

OCLA manages all disaster-related congressional and White House correspondence, using an agency-wide correspondence tracking system on a daily basis to monitor, track and run reports on completed or outstanding correspondence.

The Internet has become invaluable for legislative research. The Internet is used for everything from tracking legislation or finding information relating to members of congress, to looking up media coverage in a disaster area. OCLA specifically utilizes the Congressional Quarterly Internet service for access to hearing schedules, text of bills, bill history and information printed in the Congressional Record. All of this technology has significantly streamlined OCLA's ability to find a larger pool of information in a short amount of time.

Computer software technology has improved the ability to reach out to the Hill with mass mailings on issues such as Hurricane Season Preparedness, *Project Impact*, Fire Safety and Flood Insurance. Packages of information on these themes are now standard, annual mailings that allow OCLA to provide timely, useful information to FEMA's partners on Capitol Hill.

Partnerships

What groups, organizations, companies or contractors are you now working with outside of FEMA. Summarize these partnerships and cite when and why each partnership began and how the working relationships have evolved. Provide insights about the partnerships in terms of how they have assisted your office in carrying out its functions and/or how they have contributed to FEMA's overall mission.

Congressional Affairs: Partnerships

The Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) is responsible for communicating with the U.S. Congress regarding appropriations, legislation, disaster activities, and day-to-day problem solving. While there has always been a continuous dialogue with the U.S. Congress, Director Witt has supported and participated in a proactive engagement of members of Congress and their committee and personal staff in order to enlist them as partners in emergency management. In addition, each region is responsible for communicating with the congressional district offices in their states. One of the greatest opportunities to introduce congressional members and their staff to FEMA, or engage them in emergency management, is during response and recovery activities. Valuable time has been spent on developing training for FEMA reservists who serve as congressional liaisons in the field, working with district staff after disasters are declared. Again, OCLA has focused on a proactive approach that educates congressional staff, enlists them as partners, and builds strong relationships. Ultimately, this communication benefits the individuals and communities affected by disasters by providing clear messages, additional resources for information, and a united federal government response.

The strong relationships that have been formed during response and recovery have paved the way for a receptive audience when FEMA pursues its legislative initiatives and interests. Members of Congress and their staff are very receptive to FEMA's ideas and may be helpful because they have been enlisted as partners in responding to America's natural disasters. In addition, when members of Congress are considering legislation that may affect FEMA, they reach out to OCLA to assist them in determining the effects of what they are proposing.

Overall, FEMA's bipartisan relationship with the U.S. Congress has strengthened over the years and has enabled the agency to pursue pre-disaster mitigation - clearing the floodplain and improving mapping - in a time of shrinking budgets and an era of no new federal programs.

Organizational Culture

How did FEMA's mission shift change the agency's organizational culture? (This question refers to FEMA's shift from a focus on National Preparedness to a focus on Emergency Management.)

Congressional Affairs: Shift from Preparedness to Emergency Management

It would appear to be an overstatement to say FEMA benefited from the end of the Cold War as much as any agency in government. But that's not quite enough. As ongoing debates on deterrence and terrorism indicate, some of the issues and positions that animate discussions in these areas are still assertively voiced. It might be more accurate to say the shift from national preparedness to emergency management was made *possible* by the end of the Cold War. The actual shift happened because of determined leadership. FEMA's transition freed up some outstanding employees that had been working in planning and other areas to bring their talents to emergency management in general, and disaster response and recovery or mitigation, in particular.

The shift from nuclear attack scenarios to natural disaster themes was fresh air in a stagnating environment. It brought new internal resources to areas that had long been neglected. This was, and is, an invigorating time. The reorganization was not perfect in every detail, but the flat structure allowed a lot of staff increased visibility at an important time in FEMA's history and provided a transparent organization with a sense of mission. Also of paramount importance was the staff brought in by the new administration in 1993. Bringing in leadership, James Lee Witt, with experience in emergency management meant having top level managers who understood the programs they were running and how the management actually worked (or failed to work) at the state and local level. This was a boost of confidence for employees who were used to working with political employees unfamiliar with FEMA and suspicious of career staff. Again this contributed to higher employee morale and a much more productive workforce.

For the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) it meant having leadership that not only accepted, but welcomed, invitations to work with Congress - whether it was testimony before a congressional panel or a one-on-one exchange with a member of Congress or a staff person. This cooperation has reinforced an accurate perception that FEMA is a responsive agency, proud of its work and anxious to engage Congress as an important partner in that work. The attitude and approach have been an inspiration to OCLA staff and have greatly improved the morale and élan of the office.

Training

Describe any new training initiatives or changes in old training offered by your office to employees since 1992.

Congressional Liaison Training

The most important advances in training for the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) occurred in 1995 with the development and implementation of Congressional Liaison Training. In 1995, a working group was convened to develop the first formal coordinated congressional liaison officer (CLO) training. Prior to this class, no formal training existed for the CLO cadre. The class provided the cadre with a universal approach to congressional disaster response and taught the need for looking for opportunities, building relationships, and being proactive with congressional members and staff.

The entry-level class enhances knowledge, skills and abilities and is part of the credentialing process for the FEMA reservist congressional liaison cadre. After the enormous success of the basic class and the development of a professional cadre, there appeared to be a need for a class for advanced level congressional liaisons. The Lead CLO class is geared toward seasoned congressional liaison officers who have the strengths, abilities, and experience to lead other CLOs in a catastrophic disaster. The advanced course emphasizes management skills, mentoring, and advanced problem solving. Also, the Lead CLO is trained to hone interpersonal skills, to participate in special events planning, and to deal with a variety of different situations that may occur in a catastrophic disaster.

In addition to the basic and advanced congressional liaison classes, OCLA has developed a Train the Briefer course to develop the presentation skills of program staff; a Diversity Training class for FEMA's regional CLOs; and an Introduction to Congressional Operations for the new cadre of federal coordinating officers.

Director Witt's Leadership

Describe director Witt's direct involvement with your division or sub-office during and after the major reorganizations took place. How has he been directly involved during major disasters or events since then? How has he been directly involved during non-disaster periods? Please provide specific examples.

Director Witt and the Office of Congressional Affairs

Director Witt's involvement with the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) has been constant and has set the standard for the depth and quality of the agency's relationship with Congress.

From the time of his confirmation, Director Witt pledged to be available to any congressional request. He has kept that pledge and has met or spoken with the majority of the membership of Congress during his time at FEMA. His expertise, dedication, empathy, and non-partisan approach have made him the kind of appointee that members of Congress believe and respect. That's not an overstatement: from liberal Illinois Democrat Sen. Dick Durbin, to moderate Republican House member Sherwood Boehlert, to conservative Oklahoma Republican Sen. James Inhofe; would come the same statement: James Lee Witt is the best appointment in the Clinton administration.

Other members with great relationships with the director include Sen. Paul Wellstone, D-Minn.; Rep. Eva Clayton, D-N.C.; Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md.; Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif.; Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore.; Sen. Bob Graham, D-Fla.; Rep. James Oberstar, D-Minn.; Sen. Ernest Hollings, D-S.C.; Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine; Rep. Jerry Lewis, R-Calif.; Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska; Rep. Doug Bereuter, R-Neb.; Sen. George Voinovich, R-Ohio; Rep. Joe Scarborough, R-Fla.; Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala.; and Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss.

During major disasters the director has routinely been in phone contact with members of Congress early in the process. He invites them to join him on his trips to the disaster sites. He then tours the affected areas with the congressional members or their local staff and follows up with meetings in their Capitol Hill offices. Following the tornadoes that ravaged the Oklahoma City area in the spring of 1998, Director Witt's visit to the disaster

area included most of the Oklahoma delegation (Sens. Nickles and Inhofe, Reps. Lucas, Largent, Istook, Watkins, and Transportation Committee Chairman Bud Shuster). The director met with congressional members, toured the affected area, and participated in a press conference. It's interesting to note that all this occurred during Director Witt's vacation!

During non-disaster periods the director has been busy delivering the message of a new FEMA, better able to respond and assist in the recovery process. The new FEMA uses mitigation – measures to make communities more disaster-resistant - as its cornerstone. He has spread the message through testimony at hearings, private meetings with members and personal meetings with congressional office and committee staff.

While some Cabinet members have insisted on meeting with members of Congress only, Director Witt has routinely hosted luncheons for staff and gone to Capitol Hill to meet with staff. He has recognized not only their importance in the process but also their ability to speak with the same depth and attention to detail on FEMA programs as he is able to do.

Director Witt's unique qualifications for the position have often been remarked upon. Two key points are his professional background in emergency management as well as his close personal relationship with his boss, President Clinton. These factors have been of tremendous importance to the success of the agency. But there is another factor in his background that has been helpful in his relationships with Congress on FEMA's behalf. There is an old story that during the early years of the Kennedy Administration, Vice President Lyndon Johnson visited his old Texas friend, Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn, and marveled at the brilliance of President Kennedy's advisers. The vice president was effusive in describing their academic and intellectual accomplishments. Finally the speaker nodded his agreement but then wistfully remarked, "Yeah, but I wish at least one of them had run for sheriff."

James Lee Witt was voted county judge, the highest elective office, of Yell County, Ark. He won election several times prior to being chosen to head Arkansas emergency management by then-governor Bill Clinton. His experience in practical politics has given Director Witt a respect for fellow politicians that is occasionally absent in some appointees. Rather than taking a cynical view of a politician's outlook, Director Witt has respect for their position, the pressures they face, and the ways FEMA can assist in crafting a message that is helpful to them and to the agency.

Director Witt has given OCLA unprecedented support. His reputation as a problem-solver and a bi-partisan administrator has been of enormous help to the office in building relationships with Congress. He has asked the office for policy advice, strategic approaches to issues and logistical help in the field. He made it a priority for all members of the OCLA staff to have an opportunity to work to their highest potential. His recognition has raised the stature of the office and has raised morale in OCLA to its highest levels.

Directorate and Office Leadership

(For Department Heads Only) How did your leadership as director contribute to changes in your office or directorate? What were your primary objectives and how did you attempt to accomplish them? What were your successes?

Leadership in Congressional Affairs

Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) leadership has recently concentrated on allowing staff to work at the high level commensurate with their skills, dedication and spirit. Our task and our charge from our superiors was to let what is considered to be one of the highest quality staffs in the agency do their work. They need occasional consultation and encouragement, but their overall skills and judgement are such that the most valuable tools we could offer them was our confidence in their abilities and our support during difficult periods.

This approach to the management of the staff and the work of the office has been successful in several regards.

First, staff morale has been very high, as has been the quality of the work. There is a thorough-ness in the OCLA staff work that is reassuring to their congressional connections and to FEMA program staff who are our experts in matters of program and policy substance. This has reflected well on the agency as a whole and on individual directorates that appreciate the attention and respect their work has been accorded.

Second, we are pleased that individual OCLA staff who have for a long time been program experts are now receiving overdue recognition from program managers, associate directors, and the highest levels of agency leadership.

Through emphasizing some of our stronger partnerships with congressional members and committees we have changed the conversation on FEMA's relationship with Congress in both directions. More agency staff are now aware of the two-way communication that has to occur and they are more aware of the possible benefits to FEMA from an informed and committed staff on the Hill.

Future Direction

(For Department Heads Only) How do you see your office/directorate evolving in the next ten years?

Predicted Evolution for OCLA

FEMA's partnerships with congressional offices, based on the hard work of agency leadership over the last eight years, are as strong as they have ever been. Significantly, the same can be said for the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) relationships with internal FEMA partners. OCLA representatives are routine invitees for directorate and/or staff meetings throughout the agency. This is due to the contributions of OCLA staff to these discussions.

This is a situation that OCLA wants to build upon throughout the agency. It is already true within some regions and OCLA hopes to make the congressional liaison role more prominent in all regions. This will involve having staff positions dedicated to the congressional liaison function and to build on relationships that are in place.

An effort to improve the Stafford Act, the authority under which federal disaster assistance is delivered, has been the work of the last several years. A similar coordinated approach will be needed on other authorizing vehicles such as the National Flood Insurance Program (its last significant legislation was six years ago); the Emergency

Food and Shelter Program (largely unchanged since 1987) and others that would benefit from refined legislative authority.

A further refinement may include greater use of FEMA's expertise in the international arena. While FEMA's authority in this area is currently limited, the domestic experience could lead to FEMA playing a consulting role or a planning role in other countries. This is especially likely in responding to the consequences of hurricanes, earthquakes and other risks in this hemisphere.

Another legislative priority over the next decade will center on the evolving importance of mitigation (pre- and post-disaster) and establishing a broader understanding of the benefits of taking action to become more disaster resistant. This endeavor will require work in partnership with Congress, state and local governments and within the federal family. FEMA and OCLA will have the challenge not only of making a theoretical case for this work but in definitively showing the ongoing implementation that has been carried out and the benefits that have accrued from that work.

Just as emergency management has gradually evolved as a separate and distinct discipline, so too will the congressional and legislative approach to explaining and supporting this discipline.

Disaster Operations

Describe your office's role on the EST. Summarize an experience your office had working on the EST during one major disaster or emergency since 1992. What exactly did you do and what kinds of challenges did you encounter? Be specific and aim to leave the reader with a good understanding of what function your office fills on the EST, as well as the challenges you face.

OCLA's Role on the Emergency Support Team

The Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) is responsible for communicating with members of Congress and their staff during response and recovery, including activation of the Emergency Support Team (EST) at FEMA headquarters. OCLA has a staff member on call for EST activation. In addition, there is a relationship established between the EST director and the staff members in OCLA who are responsible for communicating with members of Congress in an affected state. In 1997 when the Red River Valley flooded, OCLA was responsible for the information that Director Witt communicated to the affected congressional delegations regarding FEMA's response activities. In addition, OCLA established and maintained consistent communication with the staff of those members of Congress. In order to ensure the appropriate information was relayed, OCLA worked closely with the EST director and the information and planning unit. Shortly after the levees broke in Grand Forks, N.D., and East Grand Forks, Minn., the North Dakota delegation requested a briefing at FEMA in order to get the latest information on the disaster and the federal government's response. In addition, staff from members of the South Dakota and Minnesota congressional delegations attended. Preparing for and facilitating this briefing was a monumental undertaking that required OCLA and the EST to work closely together. In 1999, the EST worked tirelessly to track Hurricane Floyd and its effects from Florida to New England. Based on hurricane forecasts, OCLA was responsible for coordinating

with affected congressional members and staff of appropriate states, soliciting their input and updating them regarding FEMA actions. During that EST activation, 12-15 members of Congress visited the EST to be briefed, participate in press conferences with Director Witt, provide their perspectives, and voice their expectations. Folding these members into response efforts required considerable coordination and a seamless working relationship between OCLA and the EST.

During activation, when the EST is coordinating the movement of large quantities of resources, such as water, members of Congress are very interested in the logistical aspects of how much is available and when it will arrive. OCLA depends on the EST to provide accurate up-to-date information on activities – information that is often quoted publicly by congressional members. There must be mutual trust between OCLA and the EST in order to ensure that the interests of the agency and members of Congress and their staff are met during response and recovery operations.

Special Essays

Discuss any major amendments to the Stafford Act since 1993 and how those changes have impacted policies and programs.

Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs: Stafford Act Changes

The first major addition to the 1988 Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act was the Volkmer amendment in 1994, passed in the wake of the 1993 Midwest floods. The amendment was named for Missouri Rep. Harold Volkmer, although Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa also was a major sponsor of the legislation. The amendment expanded the funding for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). Funding was previously based only on individual assistance disaster expenditures and costs were divided 50/50 with the state. Under Volkmer, the HMGP funding was based on 15 percent of the combined total individual assistance and infrastructure assistance spending. The cost share was changed to 75 percent federal and 25 percent state and local.

This change resulted in a huge increase in mitigation work across the country.

Thousands of structures have been removed from the floodplain, or elevated or flood-proofed. Many other structures have been retrofitted to guard against earthquake damage.

Given the foresight it represents and the potential long-term benefits to increase public safety and reduce disaster costs, the Volkmer amendment (Section 404) has been one of the most significant pieces of disaster legislation ever enacted.

As this FEMA history is being compiled in mid-2000, Congress is considering important additional amendments to the Stafford Act. These amendments would:

- Fully authorize *Project Impact*, FEMA's disaster-resistant communities initiative, as a permanent program,
- increase the mitigation grant program to 20 percent of disaster spending,
- allow FEMA to use cost estimates for large projects, thus significantly reducing administrative costs,
- streamline management costs,

- combine the housing and grant programs for individuals into one seamless program of assistance, and
- provide more flexibility in FEMA's fire suppression program.

Provide an overview of appropriations and budget issues regarding the agency since 1993.

Appropriations and Budget Issues

Since the beginning of FEMA, disaster spending has increased on an annual basis. In the 1970s, Congress would appropriate emergency funds since there was no standing disaster fund. In 1988, the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act established a standing statute for disaster funding, including triggers for declaring and funding disasters. But, funds were still appropriated by Congress through emergency supplemental bills, which only added to the national deficit.

In the early 1990s, Congress changed the rules in order to reduce the deficit. Even emergency disaster spending had to be offset against other appropriated funding. FEMA needed either an increase in annual appropriations, or funds had to be rescinded from other agencies, which was incredibly painful to the other agencies. This approach created pressure to do something about disaster spending. But, changing disaster-funding structure is extremely difficult. There is not much wiggle room in the domestic account and FEMA budget allowed for \$320 million annually for disasters, while FEMA's 10-year annual average for disaster costs is approximately \$1.2 billion. Over the past few years the Office of Management and Budget has been more realistic about what FEMA actually needs for disaster spending. However, finding those funds can be very difficult. One approach the administration and Congress are taking to address the costliness of disasters is to provide increased funding for disaster-resistance measures (mitigation), with the understanding that an up-front investment saves twice as much money in future disaster spending.

Also, in an effort to make FEMA more accountable for disaster funds, Congress put an expectation on FEMA to create a centralized system for financial accountability. FEMA's Office of Financial Management (OFM) became the keeper of that system. It now serves as the "numbers spokesman" for the agency, which has help establish consistency of message along with accountability for disaster funds.

With OFM's stewardship of the funds has come the first full audit of the Disaster Relief Fund, certified by the Inspector General. Along with accountability has come increased accuracy in forecasting expenditures from the relief fund. FEMA is now able to provide: an accurate listing of outstanding disaster costs from previously declared disasters; a detailed accounting of non-specific disaster spending; and a projection of expected disaster costs. Given the episodic nature of disaster spending, this is a fluctuating number - depending on disaster activity and spend-out rates from previous disasters. To keep Congress apprised, FEMA provides a monthly report to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees of the current and projected disaster relief fund balance. This combined tabulation allows Congress to budget more effectively toward the true cost of all disasters.

The Appropriations Committees and the Budget Committees have addressed the issue of emergency spending, understanding that more realistic budgeting is needed. The last

several years have seen FEMA and the administration requesting contingency funding for disasters (an example would be \$300 million in actual appropriations and \$2.3 billion in contingency funds – together equaling FEMA's five-year average spending of \$2.6 billion per year). The Congress has become sympathetic to this approach and has agreed to it the last two fiscal years. This results in sufficient and dependable funding for the disaster relief fund and, at the same time, reduces the need for supplemental funding when large incidents occur.

FEMA's disaster spending also benefited from the effects of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). The GPRA urged the government to become more outcome-based, asking the question "What are we getting for our money?" FEMA's move toward disaster resistance (mitigation) and support of programs - such as buy-outs of repetitive flood-loss properties - are in keeping with GPRA and are helping to lower disaster costs.

Discuss any Flood Insurance legislative changes since 1993.

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Changes

Sens. John Kerry (D-Mass.), Connie Mack (R-Fla.) and Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.) were the principal sponsors of 1994 insurance reform act legislation on the Senate side while on the House side, Reps. Joe Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Doug Bereuter (R-Neb.) provided the leadership to push it through.

The legislation framed many issues that are just now coming to fruition. One example is the erosion study recently released by FEMA and the Heinz Center. The legislation also promoted a study of the effects of eliminating subsidies for flood insurance policies. The study will be influencing legislation in this area for years to come.

Perhaps the biggest impact of the insurance reform act was the enforcement of a flood insurance mandate for homes in a 100-year floodplain. After passage, mortgage lenders had to determine whether a structure was in the floodplain and, if it was, the lender then had to ensure the purchase of flood insurance.

That mandate, combined with FEMA's "Cover America" campaign, greatly increased the number of flood insurance policies in the country. An offshoot of this increase was the funding of the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program, established by the legislation. A companion piece to the Volkmer amendment, this program also provides mitigation help, through repetitive loss property buy-outs or planning assistance to help local communities achieve mitigation objectives. Also, increased collection of policy fees adds to the funds available for floodplain mapping.

The Flood Insurance Reform Act of 1994 was a particularly significant contribution since flood insurance, far more than any form of disaster assistance, allows families and individuals to receive commensurate compensation for their flood losses.

During the 106th Congress Reps. Doug Bereuter (R-Neb.) and Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) made great strides in fashioning amendments to the Flood Act that would directly address the problem of repetitive flood-loss properties. Though this legislation was not able to advance during 2000 it will be the basis, the logical starting point, for future legislation in this area.

OFFICE OF EQUAL RIGHTS

Describe how your office's mission and functions have evolved since FEMA changed its focus to an all-hazards disaster response. (Describe the evolution of your division's mission and functions from 1993 to 2000.)

Mission shift from national security to disaster response and mitigation

In 1993 the Office of Equal Rights did not exist. Within the far larger Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), a four-member division of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) focused primarily on EEO complaint processing. This seemed the appropriate role for the division in a FEMA focused on national security, to which the functions of the division appeared peripheral at best. The division did oversee the Agency's Affirmative Employment Plan, but controversy over affirmative action had effectively frozen implementation.

The division had inherited authority for administration of Civil Rights regulations from the formerly autonomous Office of Equal Opportunity (see Essay 2), and had even published a booklet in 1991, "*Service to all: FEMA and Civil Rights*," to demonstrate the importance of nondiscrimination efforts in agency programs and activities. But the Civil Rights function fit badly with the main mission of OHRM and received little attention from senior leadership. Year in and year out, the division cooperated with other Southwest agencies to create interesting and informative programs to mark various special observances mandated by Congress, such as Black (later African-American) History Month. But these efforts brought the division little substantive recognition. When in the fall of 1993 FEMA Director James Lee Witt created an Office of Equal Rights (OER) that would report directly to him, the situation began to change. Witt did not specifically charge the new office to find a role for itself in FEMA's evolving new mission, but the office sought one nonetheless. It already had begun to do so during Hurricane Andrew in 1992, when office staff cooperated closely with FEMA Community Relations personnel in the Miami area. Trips by staff to the flood-ravaged Midwest States in 1993 and to Los Angeles after the 1994 Northridge earthquake solidified the cooperation between the two components. OER was concerned to ensure that Community Relations disseminated information about disaster assistance to minority groups, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Already the office was creating the doctrine that, by so doing, Community Relations actually played a vital Civil Rights role. The Stafford Act requires that all disaster assistance "be distributed in an equitable and impartial manner, without discrimination," but there can be no impartiality or equity if large portions of the population are denied access to basic information about aid to which they are entitled.

As FEMA's growing commitment to domestic disaster assistance emerged in 1993 and 1994, OER faced the issue of its place in the restructured, faster-reacting disaster field office (DFO) environment. Heretofore the Equal Rights presence at disaster sites had been spotty at best, depending mainly on the individual commitment and skill of a few key FEMA personnel. The regions, not headquarters, chose those who fulfilled the Equal Rights function in the field. The official job description called for a collateral duty position titled EEO Counselor. Headquarters often did not know who these counselors were or if they had received adequate training. Few of these counselors paid attention to

issues of equity in service delivery to the disaster survivors. Perhaps the worst example of the old system had been seen during Hurricane Andrew, when the Program Support chief functioned as the EEO counselor. Attempting to supply and equip a DFO with 5,000 total personnel, EEO clearly was last on his priority list - and understandably so. Yet the Miami DFO and the surrounding disaster area would provide some of the most daunting Equal Rights challenges for the agency; challenges for which it had not been prepared.

With this memory in mind, OER staff began work in 1994 on the concept for what eventually became the Equal Rights Officer (ERO) cadre. A major stumbling block to its creation had been the fear that an organization composed entirely of reservists and disaster assistance employees (DAEs) might be subject to arbitrary removal or discipline by a federal coordinating officer (FCO). In negotiations with Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) and the Response and Recovery (RR) Directorate, OER won the promise that no adverse action would be taken by an FCO against an ERO without the approval of the Director of Equal Rights. At the same time, it was determined that the ERO would serve on the federal coordinating officer's staff. With these issues clarified, planning for the cadre accelerated in 1995.

OER staff assisted by OHRM personnel traveled throughout the United States to interview the first group of EROs. They came primarily from three groups: human resources professionals with an EEO background; people active in various community organizations; and retirees from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Training for the first eighteen EROs took place in September in Richmond, Va. Less than two weeks after graduating, some of the new cadre hit the ground in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands in the wake of Hurricane Marilyn. They were mentored by OER staff and, later, by a few handpicked fulltime personnel with collateral-duty EEO assignments.

The size of the cadre has varied widely over the years, fluctuating from a high of 57 to its now formally established ceiling of 40 personnel. The mission and functions of the position also have changed during the half-decade of the cadre's existence. Focusing at first primarily on the area of internal EEO, the cadre steadily moved into other areas. Today an ERO's activities can be summarized as follows:

Assistance and Training

Provides advice and guidance to the FCO on EEO and Civil Rights matters; presents training on sexual harassment prevention, cultural diversity, and the EEO process. This training is a vital component in an agency defense against allegations of discrimination.

Civil Rights Resolution

Works proactively with Community Relations, Public Affairs, Human Services, and other DFO components to resolve individual or group Civil Rights issues; visits and speaks with key community leaders and organizations; assesses accessibility at disaster recovery centers and distributes information about OER programs.

Counseling

Assists FEMA employees, employment applicants, and managers in resolving quickly EEO problems or other employment issues that arise from lack of a DAE grievance procedure; guides supervisors through downsizing to achieve the best possible outcome; processes all EEO complaints that cannot be resolved informally.

Today the ERO is a trusted member of the federal coordinating officer's staff. EROs have served in more than 200 disasters from Guam to the Virgin Islands. EROs played a critical role in calming the sometimes-tense aftermath in North Carolina following Hurricane Floyd in 1999. They have worked to ensure that Indian tribes are treated equitably by state governments. They have aided individual disaster victims who believed they had been discriminated against and have taken part in efforts to help people and communities take full advantage of the disaster assistance that is, by law, their right. EROs have saved FEMA countless thousands of dollars in costs due to informal resolution of complaints. In one fiscal year, for example, EROs resolved 66 separate issues, some of which could otherwise have become lengthy and potentially costly employment discrimination complaints.

In 1996 a change of leadership in OER ratified the change in office orientation. Adell Betts, director of the Office of Equal Rights since its organization (and division director since 1986) retired. Her replacement, Pauline Campbell, was responsible for the disaster declarations process in the Response and Recovery Directorate. Campbell's selection clearly indicated Director Witt's belief that OER had a legitimate role to play in the agency's disaster assistance program.

Since 1996, support for the ERO cadre has remained steady, especially in regard to its developing role in Civil Rights. OER has begun to formalize its Civil Rights policies and procedures to match those in the EEO area, mainly because the presence of the cadre in the disaster field has brought more visibility to the office. Posters and brochures are available for placement at disaster recovery centers to ensure that all disaster applicants are aware that they are protected against discrimination. Procedures for processing, investigating and making findings in Civil Rights cases have been established. Under its regulatory authority, the office can and does assist disabled persons who seek employment with the agency or admission to courses at the National Emergency Training Center. As Fiscal Year 2000 came to a close, the office began its first-ever compliance review of the administration by FEMA and a state (North Carolina) of the Disaster Housing and Individual and Family Grant programs during a disaster operation (DR-1292-NC).

The office has also expanded its functions in the EEO arena. As interest rose throughout the 1990s in sexual harassment prevention, OER developed policies for Director Witt and began sponsoring training sessions on the subject. Staff visited regional offices and field facilities to intervene in specific situations, offering advice and guidance designed to avoid or decrease EEO-related tensions. As the number of cadres multiplied, OER representatives were included in their training courses to present basic orientations. Most important, beginning in 1997, OER took control of recruitment and selection of collateral-duty EEO counselors for the entire agency, and developed training specifically tailored for them.

Still another area of expanded responsibility for OER has been that of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). ADR can encompass a wide range of dispute resolution

techniques ranging from very informal settlement procedures, through various types of mediation, to formal arbitration. Federal law requires that the head of each agency designate a senior official to be the dispute resolution specialist of the agency. The EEOC rewrote its regulations for complaint processing to require agencies to offer ADR to complainants when appropriate. In January 2000, OER published a pilot ADR program for the EEO system. Disputes may be settled by experienced OER complaints staff, neutrals from other federal agencies, or contract mediators.

One unique function of the office that preceded the Witt era continued: work on projects concerning the disaster-related needs of disabled and elderly persons. Behind these projects lay the regulatory requirement of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act that all federal assistance programs, including emergency management, be accessible to qualified disabled persons. In late 1992 a staff member had been named co-chair of the Health Care and Special Needs Topic Committee of the National Hurricane Conference (NHC), one of the nation's largest emergency management professional organizations.

From 1993 onward, this committee has planned workshops and day-long training sessions at the annual NHC meetings to introduce emergency managers to such issues as communication with the deaf, evacuation of mobility-impaired people, and sheltering those with severe medical concerns. In coordination with FEMA's Emergency Education Network, OER produced four one-hour teleconferences in 1993, 1994 and 1995, highlighting some of the same issues for a much larger national audience. Later in the decade, the office assisted the U.S. Fire Administration with technical help to produce a booklet on evacuating disabled persons from high-rise buildings, a document that proved valuable and popular with the fire service community. OER continues efforts to ensure that FEMA public information is accessible, whether it is pamphlets produced in Braille or audios and videotapes with closed captioning for hearing-impaired people.

In support of these and other OER activities, Director Witt has provided steadily increasing staff resources. Total personnel in the office have more than tripled between 1993 and 2000. In 1998, full-time EROs began work at FEMA's National Processing Service Centers in Denton, Tx., Berryville, Va. and Hyattsville, Md. They trained managers and counseled the temporary staffs of these facilities. At FEMA headquarters in Washington, D.C., a specialist from OER is now dedicated solely to EEO complaints originating from FEMA reservists. Members of the ERO cadre have been used to augment the staff by conducting telephone resolution efforts of EEO or Civil Rights complaints.

Promotion of a diversified workforce has proved the most daunting challenge faced by OER. Diversity refers to the many ways that people differ from each other - gender, age, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, educational background, perspective and family values. Diversity can also be defined as the sum total of the resources that can be found in a group or organization. Diversity is not another way of saying EEO or affirmative action.

Director Witt made a true effort to diversify the agency's senior leadership, and women made some striking gains in the higher grades. Still, true diversity remained elusive. Continued problems at the EEOC and key Supreme Court decisions all but paralyzed the affirmative employment effort. At FEMA, prolonged job and promotion freezes reduced opportunities to hire women and minorities. The reservist cadre as a whole was dominated by white males.

But the office and agency continued to chip away at the problem. FEMA's OER works with other employers, schools and universities, and other public and private groups in a cooperative action to improve employment opportunities. The OER encourages appointment of Special Emphasis Program Managers (e.g. People With Disabilities Program, Federal Women's Program and Hispanic Employment Program) and continues to participate in planning the annual series of congressionally mandated special observances that celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of the American mosaic. OER also provides field courses on the importance of valuing diversity. Since 1993, the OER has seen as much change -- if not more -- than any component within FEMA. While its overarching mission of supporting the Agency's activities has remained the same, the means of accomplishing the mission have broadened and altered. The ERO cadre now places the office at the heart of most disaster operations. Its views once routinely neglected, OER currently finds itself included in -- and, in the case of the recent Telework initiative -- leading agency activities. The Office of Equal Rights has found a firm place in FEMA's strategic plan because it is a vital partner in the effort to "ensure that the public is served in a timely and efficient manner.

Management Reorganization

Describe how your office's senior management was reorganized in 1993. Have major changes in your office's management structure occurred since then? If so, what was changed and why was it changed?

Amid the massive reorganization of FEMA that took place in 1993-94, a small eddy of change in a staff office might almost have been overlooked. But Director Witt's decision to sever the equal opportunity function from the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) led to the establishment of a dynamic and multifunctional Office of Equal Rights (OER).

As background to the reorganization it is necessary to explain the necessity for it. Upon assuming the directorship of FEMA in 1985, Julius W. Becton consolidated the then independent Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) with the Office of Personnel. He believed that the component responsible for personnel policy should be held accountable for enforcing policies prohibiting non-discrimination in employment. The merger occurred in May 1986, the former OEO becoming the Division of Equal Opportunity. While theoretically defensible, the practical effect of Becton's action was to place the personnel office in constant jeopardy of a conflict of interest. This fear was realized as employees began to bring complaints against the office and its successor, the OHRM, on a variety of discriminatory grounds. Beyond the issue of EEO conflict, OHRM proved an unreceptive location for the agency's Civil Rights program.

In mid-1993 Director Witt requested that the division develop decision papers for and against separation from OHRM. Witt chose to create a new office that would bear a new, more inclusive name. To recognize that the organization focused on assuring nondiscrimination for disaster victims as well as for FEMA employees, Director Witt approved the title Office of Equal Rights. He also chose former EO Division Director Adell Betts to become director of the reconstituted office. The OER began full operation in November 1993.

In an all-hands memo dated May 3, 1994, Director Witt wrote:

Last year I announced that the name of the Office of Equal Opportunity had been changed to Office of Equal Rights (ER) to reflect more appropriately the range of the Office's responsibilities. Those additional responsibilities are primarily in the area of Civil Rights. The ER Office not only deals with employees and applicants for employment at FEMA, but also coordinates the Agency's nondiscrimination policy for our State and local aid recipients.

More important than the name change, however, is our decision to give the Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights programs greater visibility by elevating ER to status as an independent office. I have decided that the Director of ER will, for the most part, report directly to me. The ER Office and its programs have my full support. This action is another step in our commitment to the renewal of equality for all at FEMA.

Customer Service Improvements

How has your office implemented FEMA's customer service policy?

During the past seven years, the Office of Equal Rights (OER) has made notable improvements in delivery of one of its most important services: the counseling and processing of Equal Employment Opportunity and Civil Rights issues and complaints. An aggrieved person starts the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) process by meeting with an EEO counselor. As such, EEO counselors are critical to the efficient and effective operation of FEMA's Equal Rights program. They must advise individuals of their rights and responsibilities; conduct inquiries and gather the facts; attempt informal resolution of the matter(s); and document the information.

Previous practice for acquiring EEO counselors required managers and supervisors to appoint employees to serve the agency in a collateral duty capacity. This process was not the most efficient in that some employees did not feel comfortable or capable serving in this capacity. As a result, the agency was often deficient in the number of counselors that were needed.

In order to achieve better results, in 1997 OER began requesting that volunteers render this service. Employees with an interest in the process were given the opportunity to respond to an EEO counselor application. A query was made regarding the volunteer's ability to support the program; whether he or she had the flexibility necessary for the work; whether the applicant had participated in EEO counseling or negotiations; and the volunteer's understanding of the confidentiality of the process. So many employees applied to serve as volunteers that a selection process was established by OER to determine the number of counselors needed and the applicants who would serve in this capacity.

We now have EEO counselors who promote efficiency of the process with excitement and premium services to clients and OER. OER continues to utilize this process and is seeking ways in which to improve relations among EEO counselors, clients, and the office.

Another significant development in customer service on the part of OER has been the establishment of the Equal Rights Officer (ERO) cadre. Organized in 1995, members of the ERO cadre have served in more than 200 disaster operations. The cadre supports the basic mission of OER. That mission is to promote diversity; ensure a discrimination-free work place; and guarantee equal access to FEMA programs and benefits. Through its activities, the cadre also supports a key goal of FEMA's strategic plan: "to ensure that the public is served in a timely and efficient manner." The organization also plays an important role in fulfilling the plan's objective of achieving and maintaining a high level of overall customer satisfaction, internal and external, with FEMA services.

Until the creation of the cadre in 1995, Equal Rights services at the disaster field office (DFO) were inadequate. A collateral-duty EEO counselor (when appointed), handled employee complaints, but had little training or contact with the OER at FEMA headquarters in Washington, D.C. These individuals rarely dealt with perceived discrimination issues raised by disaster victims. Although the need for a full-time Equal Rights position with expanded duties had become clear by the early 1990s, a sensitive staffing issue delayed implementation. The regions could not make enough permanent full-time staffers available to serve in this function. Using reservists or disaster assistance employees (DAE) in this capacity appeared problematic because of fears that a federal coordinating officer might discharge a reservist with whom he or she came into conflict.

OER resolved this latter issue in 1994 when the Office of Human Resources Management and the Response and Recovery Directorate agreed that no ERO would be disciplined or deactivated without express approval of the Director of Equal Rights. The two offices also approved the placement of the ERO on the direct staff of the federal coordinating officer. At the same time the director of OER determined that the cadre should be centrally managed at FEMA headquarters. Recruiting began in 1995 and the first cadre members went almost directly from their training class to assignments in the Caribbean at 1067-VI and 1068-PR.

The cadre thus has placed a wide variety of Equal Rights services at easy reach of a wide variety of customers. The customers of the cadre include all FEMA personnel, as well as the applicants for disaster assistance.

Use of Technological Innovations

Describe how your office has employed the use of new technology since 1993. Also describe ways in which old technology has been used in a new way, if applicable. How have these technological innovations affected your office's performance?

Our most important use of technology predates 1993. By necessity, we developed a database to track EEO discrimination complaints as soon as it became possible, sometime in the mid-1980s. Over the years our system has become more refined, and as of September 2000, we are on the verge of purchasing off-the-shelf software known as EEO Assistant. Designed to account for recent changes in EEO regulations, this package will include references to alternative dispute resolution efforts.

Simply put, this office could not function without such a database. Given the volume of complaints, the complexity of stages in the process, and the number of persons involved,

only electronic record keeping makes data retrieval possible. Each year the office must report to the equal Employment Opportunity Commission on its activities. Those reports are substantially based on data created by the software system.

The other major use of technology by OER is much more recent but hardly less important. In 1999 the office created a website for use by the Equal Rights Officer (ERO) cadre. The site includes: downloadable copies of required EEO and Civil Rights posters and brochures; all forms needed to process a discrimination complaint; instructor's guides and overheads for training modules presented by the EROs; copies of critical Agency policies; and a "What's New" area where the latest items of interest are posted.

The site allows EROs to carry on independently of headquarters in regard to such functions as ordering posters and brochures, since the items needed are readily available. Its utility can be most clearly shown in the role it played during the revision of the cadre's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). In 1998 the office had to mail print copies of the original version of the ERO procedural manual to all cadre members for their review and comment. The 2000 revision is being handled very differently; a brief memo advised the cadre that the new, much larger, document had been posted to the site and was available for immediate download. The office still offered to provide print copies, but only on specific request from those without Internet access. The office thus saved about nine hours of labor in reproducing the text, not to mention over 3,000 pages of paper.

Training

Describe any new training initiatives or changes in old training offered by your office to employees since 1993.

The Office of Equal Rights (OER) has embarked upon significant changes and new initiatives in conducting training. One of the primary factors contributing to the institution of change was the revision to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) regulations governing the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) process that became effective November 9, 1999. These regulations implement Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. Managers and employees are being trained on a continuous basis in regards to the modifications to the federal sector EEO regulations and the impact of the revisions on agency budgets and the EEO process. Training has been given to senior staff of the agency, the federal coordinating officers (FCO) cadre, the Labor Management Partnership Council (LMPC), and several directorates. Training through informal processes, such as meetings and phone conferences, continue.

OER historically, as a requirement, provided at least 32 hours of EEO counselor training to those employees who were to serve as EEO counselors. OER personnel and/or contractors conducted the training without significant emphasis on FEMA's employment structure. However, in recent years, this practice has changed, with the institution of new methods and approaches to the training mechanism.

OER continues to use contractors because of the limited number of staff available to conduct training. However, there is significant interaction in the classroom environment among the contractor and OER personnel. While the contractor will focus on the general requirements of the process, OER personnel interject with specifics relating to the FEMA

environment—applicability of the process to the various types of employees of the Agency. OER has also partnered with EEOC to conduct training for the agency and both institutions have benefited from the experience. OER was able to gain better understanding of the requirements and develop working relationships with the institution responsible for establishing the EEO regulations, while the EEOC, as well gained insight and provided feedback into the processes the agency was utilizing in implementing its regulations. OER has also been requested to conduct EEO training for federal agencies on behalf of the EEOC. OER will not only provide initial training to EEO counselors, but will also meet the recent EEOC mandate of eight hours annual training.

Significant changes have been made in regards to the ensuring that EEO counselors and complainants understand the EEO process. EEO counselors are not only trained, but their knowledge base is tested at the conclusion of the training by participating in written assignments and interactive role-play.

Major changes have also been made in the information that is dispersed to EEO counselors and complainants. An extensive EEO counselor "tool kit" was developed which incorporated meticulous details and helpful hints for the EEO counselor as well as detailed and specific information about the EEO process for complainants as it relates to permanent full-time and other types of employees.

EEO training for supervisors, managers, and employees have always been a mandate of the EEOC. However, OER and the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) are implementing this requirement in a new format by working together to provide a comprehensive training package. Beginning in Fiscal Year 1998 and continuing to the present time, all of the regional offices and FEMA facilities received training in Equal Employment Opportunity issues and sexual harassment. The training also covered a variety of critical issues pertaining to OHRM.

The revised regulations of the EEOC also require that all new EEO investigators complete at least 32 hours of investigator training before conducting investigations. In addition to the training requirement for new investigators, EEOC is now requiring that all investigators receive at least eight hours of continuing investigator training every year. OER requires its new investigators to obtain the required training on their own initiative. However, OER is taking charge of the continuing investigator training. The investigator cadre was recently trained on the impact of the revised regulations; given an update on the difference between the several types of employees of the agency and their expectancy to sufficiently address the issues and policies relating to these employees; and several other mechanisms that OER is instituting in regards to expediting the procurement and investigative process. A partnership to develop an efficient cadre of investigators has been established and OER will continue to nourish this relationship.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) training is a major undertaking that OER and the Senior ADR Specialist of FEMA is beginning to initiate. The revisions to EEOC's regulations mandated that all federal agencies make ADR a significant component of the EEO process. ADR is to be made available during the pre-complaint and formal complaint process. Any person who serves as a neutral party in the agency's ADR program must have professional training in the dispute resolution techniques that will be administered. As such, OER's complaints manager and senior EEO specialist have been certified as mediators. In the future, all OER staff working with EEO issues will receive certification.

The EEOC also mandates that in order to encourage the successful operation of ADR throughout the agency, all managers and supervisors should receive ADR training with emphasis on the ADR act and its amendments; EEOC's regulations and policy guidance with respect to ADR; the operation of the ADR methods the agency employs; exposure to other ADR methods; and drafting the settlement agreement. OER's complaints manager and FEMA's ADR specialist have provided training to the LMPC and the federal coordinating officer cadre and will continue training other agency managers, supervisors, and employees as well.

Another significant initiative is that the office had to create entirely new training for the Equal Rights Officer (ERO) cadre beginning in the fall of 1995. All classroom training for the cadre is designed and delivered by OER and Emergency Management Institute (EMI) staff. The only exception to this practice is the contracting of EEO counseling instruction to an outside vendor. EEO complaints staff and EMI jointly provide oversight of the EEO counseling training initiative, but all administration of the contract is handled by EMI. A basic orientation course for new recruits is offered every other year. The course lasts six days and includes a disaster field office simulation exercise. Veteran cadre members attend an annual one-week update course. Update topics change yearly, depending upon changes in ERO responsibilities or functions. Every two years, students receive EEOC-mandated refresher training in counseling.

Training for new recruits also includes on-the-job learning. All new hires must successfully complete two three-week rotations at different disasters under mentors at Level 3 (fully qualified) proficiency. Student EROs must accomplish certain prescribed tasks and are evaluated by the mentor on general knowledge, skill and ability. A successful graduate of this combined classroom/deployment program is raised to Level 2 proficiency and can deploy independently.

How did your leadership as director contribute to changes in your office or directorate? What were your primary objectives and how did you attempt to accomplish them? What were your successes?

I was assigned to the Office of Equal Rights in late 1996. At the time of the assignment, Director Witt asked me to bring the office into the rest of the agency. I took his statement to mean that he wanted the Office of Equal Rights to become a part of the agency's processes and programs and to ensure that agency employees felt that they had a safe place to come.

This translated into ensuring that agency components are aware of the office's roles and responsibilities, how Equal Rights might assist program offices in accomplishing their goals. Internally, I focused on improvements needed within the organization.

My objectives only became clear as my tenure in the office progressed. The first of many areas of focus was to look at the agency informal EEO complaint resolution activity.

With an increased focus through the use of the Equal Rights Officer cadre, the complaint resolution rate increased dramatically. During the first year of my tenure, over 60 issues presented to the cadre were able to be resolved.

Another objective was to ensure that offices within the agency recognized Equal Rights as a resource whether for employees, managers, or for programs. We now have regular contact from both managers and employees throughout the agency seeking advice to

ensure that the right things are done the right way. We have been very successful as it relates to EEO but continue to strive for further participation in the Civil Rights (program) areas.

One of my main objectives was to give the staff an environment both comfortable and functional while ensuring adequate resources. During the past four years, we have remodeled the office space, upgraded our equipment and file systems, added office systems furniture for the administrative staff, and generally made the working environment a more professional and pleasant environment.

How do you see your office/directorate evolving in the next ten years?

During the next ten years, I expect that the Office of Equal Rights will continue to further develop relationships with other organizations within FEMA as a support element or resource. I expect that this will be especially noticeable regarding the office's current program involvement.

Our current program involvement focuses primarily on the disaster operation, our relationships in the disaster community, and evaluation of program implementation at the end of the disaster. As we continue to evolve, our involvement may expand to other external programs such as *Project Impact*, with an eye toward equity in the implementation of our programs.

Special Essay

Discuss the evolution of the Alternative Dispute Resolution program Discuss initiatives that have provided victims assistance and how those initiatives have been effective.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is a vehicle whereby conflict is resolved at the earliest opportunity and the lowest level possible without loss of rights. It is a positive course of action because it encourages individuals to actively participate in problem solving while preserving the integrity of ongoing work relationships. It empowers those closest to the dispute to resolve their own issues rather than placing control with an outside decision-maker, thereby reducing or eliminating the costs associated with litigating disputes.

In November 1990, the U.S. Congress passed the Administrative Dispute Resolution Act (ADRA), which authorizes and encourages each federal agency to develop a policy for implementing alternative means of dispute resolution in its administrative programs. Since that time, the President, Congress, the U.S. Department of Justice and the courts have emphasized the value and importance of ADR. Under the revised regulations of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which became effective on November 9, 1999, all federal agencies are required to have an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) ADR program in place by January 1, 2000.

Although the EEOC mandated the use of ADR during the pre-complaint and formal complaint process, informal resolution of issues and complaints, both EEO and non-EEO,

has always been a priority for OER in lieu of filing formal complaints. During the past several years, FEMA has had a moderate EEO complaint-filing rate, considering the number of employees (including permanent full-time employees and reservists) in the workforce and the number of EEO counseling conducted. In Fiscal Years 1997, 1998 and 1999, there were 66, 77, and 32 issues, respectively, that were informally resolved prior to or during the informal EEO counseling process by the cadre of agency collateral duty EEO counselors and Equal Rights officers (ERO). EEO counselors and EROs will, however, retain the right to attempt informal resolution.

FEMA has taken several steps in regards to implementing ADR. On May 8, 1995, FEMA published an agency ADR policy. On November 3, 1999, Director Witt appointed Cindy Mazur as the Senior ADR Specialist for FEMA.

In January 2000, the OER completed the development of the ADR Program for EEO. The Union and Labor Management Partnership Council also reviewed the pilot ADR program for EEO and endorsed the initiative. On February 2, 2000, Ernest Abbott, FEMA's general counsel, established internal staff policy encouraging the use of ADR to the greatest extent possible.

One or more ADR methods can be utilized in resolving disputes such as mediation, negotiation, facilitation, fact-finding, and conciliation that FEMA will utilize. These methods can be employed in processing EEO complaints; merits systems protection board appeals; grievances; contract and procurement disputes; disaster assistance-related issues, etc.

Specifically, the EEO ADR program is intended to:

- Reduce the average processing time of complaints;
- Prevent the escalation of disputes into multiple complaints of discrimination;
- Increase the total number of complaints/disputes resolved at the informal stage;
- Enhance the overall morale and cooperation of employees, supervisors and managers;
- Increase the confidence of employees and managers in OER's EEO process;
- Increase active participation in problem-solving by all involved parties, thereby potentially reducing the number of future disputes;
- Ensure better utilization of staff and resources; and
- Reduce the costs associated with the processing of complaints.

Overall, the EEO ADR program is intended to preserve the integrity of ongoing work relationships and to empower employees and managers with the opportunity to resolve their disputes rather than placing control with an outside decision-maker. ADR has already been utilized successfully by the Agency and we expect continued growth of success. As well, training on the ADR program has been provided to several managers and employees and will continue until all employees receive such training.

FIA

Mission Shift to an All-Hazards Disaster Response

Describe how your office's mission and functions have evolved since FEMA changed its focus to an all-hazards disaster response. Describe the evolution of your division's mission and functions from 1992-2000.

By statute, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), and the Federal Insurance Administration's (FIA) administration of the program, focuses on the hazard of flooding. However, through the advertising campaign, Cover America, FIA has fostered community involvement in *Project Impact*, whose objective is to promote a comprehensive approach to hazard mitigation. Therefore, while the primary mission of the FIA is to promote awareness of vulnerability to flooding at the community level, by incorporating that message into the broader context of *Project Impact*, FIA has used its advertising leverage to encourage communities to assess their exposure to all natural hazards. The flood insurance section on the FEMA Website provides the necessary tools for residents to protect themselves, their homes and their communities from floods and other hazards. These are described in detail at <http://www.fema.gov/nfip>.

Management Reorganization

Describe how your office's senior management was reorganized in 1993. Have major changes in your office's management structure occurred since then? If so, what was changed and why was it changed?

In 1993, FEMA's reorganization resulted in the reassignment of three senior managers to different organizations within the Federal Insurance Administration (FIA), as well as the realignment of a number of functions. To the three existing divisions in FIA, a fourth, the marketing division, was added. That structure remained in place until the change in administrators in 1998, when another realignment of functions was initiated. The objective of the later realignment was to better serve FIA's evolving mission and to correct certain organizational anomalies that were either caused or not addressed by the 1993 reorganization.

Cost Reduction

Give examples of your office's efforts to reduce costs from 1993 to 2000. Highlight specific successful efforts and be specific about where costs were actually reduced.

The Federal Insurance Administration (FIA) has been able to achieve cost reduction in a number of areas over the years.

One area that results in a major cost reduction in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is the Write-Your-Own (WYO) expense allowance. The insurance companies that write flood insurance under the Write-Your-Own (WYO) program retain a

percentage of premium for their services, generally about 32 percent. The percentage is based on expense ratios for similar lines of coverage calculated by the A.M. Best Co. Over the years, the expense percentage published by Best has included the cost of reinsurance. Since the companies do not purchase reinsurance for flood coverage, starting with the 1999-2000 WYO arrangement year, FIA has begun to remove the portion of the expense allowance associated with reinsurance. For this past year, the allowance was reduced by one percent, which will result in about \$12 million in savings. FIA's claims reinspection program routinely reduces costs to the NFIP. FIA regularly conducts reinspections on a portion of all claims paid under the NFIP. This process results in substantial savings to the program.

The streamlining of our servicing contracts has already reduced costs to the NFIP. Since 1992, FIA has reprocured the contracts for servicing the NFIP direct program and providing fiscal and statistical services to the program. On both occasions, the cost of the services was substantially reduced. The major reduction resulted from changing the NFIP direct contract from a cost-plus-fixed fee contract to a fixed price contract.

Use of Technological Innovations

Describe how your office has employed the use of new technology since 1992. Also describe ways in which old technology has been used in a new way, if applicable. How have these technological innovations affected your office's performance.

The Federal Insurance Administration (FIA) has attempted to apply emerging technologies to its mission in a number of ways.

One advancing technology that has improved performance in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is the Global Positioning System (GPS). A critical risk element for buildings in the NFIP is the elevation of the structure relative to expected flood heights. GPS, by providing a less expensive means than traditional survey methods for gathering such data, has allowed the FIA to conduct some statistical sampling that would have otherwise been prohibitively expensive. One such notable instance is in our conduct of a congressionally mandated study involving the risk characteristics of the older pre-FIRM structures insured under the NFIP. GPS made it reasonable to conduct a national sampling of structures. The technology continues to hold promise for elevation information gathering en masse for a reasonable expense.

Geographic Information System (GIS) technology has also improved NFIP performance. This technology applied in conjunction with digitized flood risk map data has allowed analyses heretofore not possible. One notable instance is in our ability to apply the technology to the underwriting of certain flood insurance policies, being able to check address locations with regard to risk zones in a systematic way. Thus, proper rating and premium income can be assured. Another notable use of this technology has been in the analysis of loss experience. Overlaying insurance exposure data and loss data onto a map has provided pictorial representations that have provided great insights into the program's underwriting experience. This technology has greatly increased the usefulness of repetitive flood loss claim data in identifying areas to be addressed through mitigation. The portion of the FEMA Website devoted to flood insurance contains all relevant program publications for all stakeholders in the NFIP. This includes insurance agents,

federal agency lenders, federal regulatory agencies, banking organizations, government sponsored enterprises, i.e. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, realtors, and most importantly the general public. This site includes "Ask the Expert" that allows for the receipt of and response to online inquiries. "Ask the Expert" has increased awareness and interest in flood insurance, and has provided quick answers to consumers' questions. Information is available at <http://www.fema.gov/nfip>. FIA has also developed an intranet site, FIANET. This website contains all program reports that were previously available only in paper format. All FEMA employees can access the FIANET at headquarters, in the regions, and at disaster sites, enabling quicker response to immediate flood insurance policy and loss information.

FIA is currently scanning all historical documents and program files into a document imaging system that will allow for online retrieval of any document by name, subject, date or other indicators. This will drastically reduce retrieval time, thereby reducing costs related to searching and copying files for customers. The system will eventually eliminate the need to maintain any paper files except those retained personally by individual staff.

Partnerships

What groups, organizations, companies or contractors are you now working with outside of FEMA. Summarize these partnerships and cite when and why each partnership began and how the working relationships have evolved. Provide insights about the partnerships in terms of how they have assisted your office in carrying out its functions and/or how they have contributed to FEMA's overall mission.

An important organization that the Federal Insurance Administration (FIA) works with very closely is the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC). The NAIC is an organization of insurance regulators from every state, the District of Columbia and the four U.S. territories.

NAIC meetings are a national forum for resolving major insurance issues, allowing regulators to develop coherent national policy on the regulation of insurance when a national policy is appropriate. The meetings are primarily a series of committee and subcommittee sessions, much like the legislative hearings of state legislatures or Congress. The committee system directs regulatory issues to expert groups for review before being discussed by the membership as a whole.

The FIA began its relationship with the NAIC on or about 1983 with the introduction of the Write Your Own (WYO) program, and over the years it has evolved into a very strong partnership. The WYO program is a cooperative undertaking of the insurance industry and the FIA that allows participating property and casualty insurance companies to write and service the Standard Flood Insurance Policy in their own names. The WYO program operates within the context of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), and is subject to its rules and regulations. However, the business of insurance is regulated principally by the states. Each state has an insurance official (insurance commissioner) who is charged with overseeing the solvency of insurance companies doing business in the state as well as their rates and market practices. Moreover, a state regulator's primary

responsibility is to protect the interests of insurance consumers, and the NAIC helps regulators fulfill that obligation. It is for this reason that FIA's relationship with this organization is important.

From the perspective of consumer protection, partnership between the two organizations is vital. The insurance commissioner is generally held accountable for the overall performance of insurance markets under the commissioner's jurisdiction and this leads to a number of activities designed to support market operations. Enhancing consumer information about insurers' prices, products and financial strength is a critical function given the heavy reliance on competition to ensure good market performance. One of the primary functions of the NAIC, according to its constitution, is consumer protection. The NAIC supports insurance department consumer activities by producing a number of consumer guides and enhance consumer information by publishing brochures, speaking to schools and community groups, answering consumer inquiries and distributing information on insurers' prices, complaint experience, and financial ratings. The FIA has been successful in providing flood insurance brochures and marketing materials to consumers through the NAIC and the insurance departments.

Educating agents about flood insurance is a necessary and major challenge for the program. The FIA relies totally on licensed insurance agents to sell our flood insurance products. Due to the uniqueness of flood insurance compared to other forms of insurance, FIA needs to continually educate agents so that they can better serve their customers. The NAIC and insurance departments has provided opportunities for the FIA to accomplish this through offering continuing education credits for agents that attend flood insurance training seminars. Many of the insurance departments have incorporated necessary flood insurance questions on the state licensing examinations for agents. In an effort to better educate consumers, many insurance departments require all fire and casualty insurers, including the Fair Access To Insurance Rates (FAIR) plan, that write homeowners insurance, to provide their policyholders at least annually with a notice that includes the following information with respect to floods:

A homeowners insurance policy does not cover property damage from floods.

Flood means a general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of normally dry land area from:

The overflow of inland or tidal waters;

The unusual and rapid accumulation or runoff of surface waters from any source.

Mudslides (that is, mudflows) that are proximately caused by flooding and are akin to a river of liquid and flowing mud on the surfaces of normally dry land areas, including the policyholder's premises, as when earth is carried by a current of water and deposited along the path of the current;

Flood also includes the collapse or subsidence of land along the shore of a lake or other body of water as a result of erosion or undermining caused by waves or currents of water exceeding cyclical levels, which results in the partial or complete inundation of normally dry land area;

A separate policy of flood insurance may be available to cover flood damage at an additional premium, and

The insurer or insurance agent should be consulted to obtain further information about how to secure flood insurance, including the availability, terms and coverage.

Finally, the NAIC has four national meetings each year. The Federal Insurance Administrator and others from the FIA have spoken before the state insurance commissioner's about the importance of the flood insurance and the NFIP. At these meetings among the information provided is: the importance of flood insurance as an alternative to federal disaster assistance, the impact and toll that floods have on property owners, business owners, and communities, and initiatives to improve the program.

Deregulation

What was your office's role, if any, in helping to get rid of unhelpful regulations within FEMA? How has deregulation efforts at FEMA resulted in the development of new innovations by employees in your office? How did deregulation improve your office's ability to respond more effectively during disasters?

Consistent with the Clinton Administration's initiative to reinvent government, the Federal Insurance Administration (FIA) took several important steps toward simplifying and streamlining the regulations of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). In June 1996, FIA streamlined the regulations that establish the financial assistance and subsidy arrangement between the government and the private insurance companies that sell and service flood insurance policies under the NFIP (more than four million policies are currently in the NFIP's book of business). Part of FIA's streamlining effort involved eliminating references or sections of the arrangement that had cluttered the program's rules. As a result, the arrangement was easier for the private insurance companies, in partnership with FIA under the flood insurance program, to use and follow. In 1999, FIA continued this initiative by streamlining the regulations for the financial control plan that sets the standards for evaluating the performance of FIA's WYO partners. FIA's efforts at simplification accomplished two important objectives: they have enabled FEMA and its industry partners to make corrections and adjustments more efficiently and more quickly, while retaining the broad framework necessary for sound operational and financial controls of the largest property insurance operation in the country.

Training

Describe any new training initiatives or changes in old training offered by your office to employees since 1992.

The Federal Insurance Administration (FIA) is committed to employee development and training and believes that it is the key to prepare individuals to communicate more effectively with each other, to ensure sensitivity to cultural diversity in the workplace and, to set the tone for the working environment. It is also the belief that, as a representative of the government, good customer service is essential in interaction with policyholders, the insurance industry, federal, state and local government employees, the media, as well as FIA's own employees. To make this work, FIA offers training programs that both meet its needs and produces results. FIA encourages staff to take advantage of these opportunities for performance improvement. Over the years, FIA has made every effort to improve its "comprehensive training program" and has taken the

lead on many occasions to initiate changes to its program that paved the way for other FEMA organizations to do the same.

In 1993, the "FIA job skills inventory" was produced in conjunction with the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM). This collection of skill requirements was the first of its kind to ever be published by a FEMA component. Developed as a result of the FIA affirmative employment plan, adopted Nov. 12, 1991, the inventory provided information to persons seeking positions and advancement. It listed the type of knowledge, skills, education, training and competencies that are requisite to the position of interest. The inventory also served as a checklist (the particular training and education listed in the inventory was not intended to be an absolute checklist to be met without deviation, but, to serve as training recommendations) in that it would allow the interested party to compare his or her personal qualifications with those that are needed for the position of interest. The difference between personal qualifications and requisite skills was intended to form the basis for that person's individual development plan. The publication was intended to benefit all employees by providing a general description of all permanent FIA positions and the training and educational background necessary to perform them.

In 1998, FIA entered into an agreement with the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and the Preparedness, Training and Exercises Directorate (PTE), training division to process, obligate and approve the payment of all FIA funded training requests.

Previously, the training division was the focal point for processing requests, authorization, agreement and certification of training (SF-182) forms within the agency. FIA's goal was to improve the overall time it takes to process SF-182 training requests and to reduce the time it takes to notify employees that their training was approved. The pilot agreement was established for one year to evaluate the efficiency of decentralizing the training process under the FIA. The new process quickly showed improvements over the old and ran smoothly with minimal delays. The average turnaround time improved from five days under the old system to one to two days under the new system. The pilot proved to be very successful and set ground rules for others to implement the same process in their organizations.

Prior to the 1998 hurricane season, FIA implemented a training program that would afford staff the opportunity to work at a disaster field office (DFO). Senior and support staff teamed up and provided technical assistance on flood insurance matters to the DFO, FEMA and other federal agencies, community officials and insurance commissioners. Invaluable working experience and knowledge was gained through their participation at the community meetings and when they accompanied general adjusters at site inspections of flood damaged buildings and contents. This experience has increased the staff's knowledge of the NFIP and its relationship to the disaster programs.

For the first time in FIA history, we brought in professional training consultants to design group training programs specifically for our staff. This was the start of an aggressive training program that offered employees a wide range of training opportunities that focused in on current issues and concerns relevant in the insurance industry. The first group-training workshops were mandatory for all staff as follows:

- Professional presence
- Diversity awareness
- Effective communications

In 1999, FIA continued to offer group training sessions to meet managerial and staff training needs. It developed an internal planning and control system that was designed to use Microsoft Project 98 software and since this was the standard software for FEMA, FIA looked into various options for training selective members of its staff. That is, those who had primary responsibility for managing projects on a regular basis and those who served as project officers. It was a good training and FIA received favorable comments and feedback from a representative from the Information Technology Services Directorate (ITS) who sat in on one of the sessions. FIA was advised by that representative that it was the first to implement this training initiative in FEMA. FIA also learned that it was the first to implement training in response to the executive mandate, "plain language initiative," which emphasized the importance of the federal government writing in plain, straightforward language. The training was tailored to meet FIA's needs and offered practical, hands-on training that was designed for the adult learner and encouraged staff to try something new. E-mail etiquette was also addressed in this session since this method of communication is rapidly becoming an alternative to direct interface.

To address the many productivity challenges faced on a daily basis (i.e., multiple phone calls, interruptions, pressing deadlines, competing priorities, ongoing projects and other urgencies), training workshops were designed in time and project management - conducted separately at a later date. The objective was to increase effectiveness and productivity in all levels of our organization. The training was implemented in three stages: 1) the 360 Degree Profile which provided each participant with anonymous feedback from their supervisors, peers and subordinates about their strengths and weaknesses, 2) the actual training in time management and 3) the Impact Analysis which measured the impact time-management training had on performance. The training was mandatory for all employees. The staff benefited from the training and continued using their planners, especially in staff meetings.

Concurrently, with the group training sessions, FIA kicked off an exciting series of brown-bag luncheons. The objective was to offer topics that were non-technical in nature and those that were of a personal interest to staff. FIA issued surveys to the staff to determine their special interest and researched local businesses and organization to see if they would be willing to have discussions. Many organizations welcomed the opportunity to speak to groups about their programs and designed special briefings for FIA at no cost. Some topics of interest were security in the workplace, health/wellness discussions and the Disaster Assistance Employee (DAE) program. Attendance was great and the sessions were very interesting. Many felt the sessions fostered an enrichment of personal life skills.

FIA is always seeking new and better ways to improve its training programs and it is the hope that the staff will continue to be encouraged and take advantage of the opportunities that are made available.

Director Witt's Leadership

Describe director Witt's direct involvement with your division or sub-office during and after the major reorganizations took place. How has he been directly involved

during major disasters or events since then? How has he been directly involved during non-disaster periods? Please provide specific examples.

There have been a number of opportunities for Director Witt to become involved in issues that FIA has had to address. Two of the most prominent have been the community compliance problem in Monroe County, Fla., and the rising lake situation in Devil's Lake, N.D.

The Monroe County matter required the development of an insurance vehicle to facilitate the county's ability to inspect certain properties that were built in violation of local ordinances. It involved meetings between FEMA and local officials, as well as close coordination with congressional staff. The director became an active player in the process, that is only now in the final stages of completion.

The same type of involvement was needed in the Devil's Lake matter, which required frequent discussions with senators and congressmen from the district, local and state officials, and insurance company representatives. The objective was to provide the financial means under the Standard Flood Insurance Policy for policyholders to move out of the path of rising lake waters, but to move to a level that would eliminate the need to move again. This latter provision required an extensive negotiation process that Director Witt led personally.

Disaster Operations

Describe your office's role on the EST. Summarize an experience your office had working on the EST during one major disaster or emergency since 1992. What exactly did you do and what kinds of challenges did you encounter? Be specific and aim to leave the reader with a good understanding of what function your office fills on the EST, as well as the challenges you face.

The Federal Insurance Administration lead the Emergency Support Function-5 (ESF-5), information and planning section of the Emergency Support Team (EST) for both the Oklahoma City, Okla., bombing of the Murrah federal building and Hurricane Marilyn in the Caribbean.

This was the early stage of the newly functioning concept of the EST. The physical setup was new and had both technical and physical bugs to be worked out. The procedures for the actual operation of the function were relatively new and, as such, had not had the opportunity to be thoroughly tested. As a result of these limitations, there were numerous challenges to overcome in administering the service. On the other hand, the dedication, motivation and commitment of most of the staff of ESF-5 and the other ESFs more than made up for the limitations of the system.

These were difficult times due to both the nature of the events and their intensity. What made the Oklahoma City bombing unusual and very different from other disasters was that it was not a natural disaster but a terrorist incident, later proven to be domestic in origin and involving federal employees and their families. The EST staff continually monitored the news coverage of the aftermath of the incident and they felt as if they

could relate to the victims as fellow federal employees, friends and extended family. They also raised concerns as to the possibility of such an incident happening to them. In addition to the uniqueness of the incident, the tragic loss of the Murrah building's employees' children being cared for in its daycare facility resulted in a tremendous amount of grief and stress for the EST employees. Feeling much more stress than when working on a typical natural disaster, individual employee counseling services had to be provided on a daily basis.

As a result of these experiences, the ESF-5 teams prepared reports containing their observations and recommended changes to make the system more responsive to the needs of the workers, and to help the ESF-5 team function more efficiently. The relationships developed during these specific disasters by the teams with the Response and Recovery Operations Division staff, and the objective treatment of the findings and recommendations by the Response and Recovery staff, resulted in successful adoption of many of the recommended changes to both the physical setup of the ESF area and the operational systems and processes necessary to run it efficiently. The changes enabled succeeding ESF teams to carry out their disaster-related responsibilities more efficiently and to support the needs of disaster victims more effectively.

Special Essays

Discuss the initiative behind the marketing campaign for flood insurance and the overall impact it had on the policy base expansion.

Cover America I and II

The National Flood Insurance Program, created by Congress in 1968, makes federally backed flood insurance available in communities that adopt and enforce ordinances to reduce future flood damage. In 1973, the Flood Disaster Protection Act was passed (and later strengthened by the National Flood Insurance Reform Act of 1994), making the purchase of flood insurance a requirement for receiving a federally backed loan in high risk flood areas.

For 26 years, the NFIP relied upon the mandatory purchase requirement implemented by lenders and the promotional efforts undertaken by the insurance companies and agents who sell and service the federally backed flood insurance to homeowners, renters and business owners in these communities. After the devastating Midwest floods of 1993, which affected homes and businesses in nine states, a stunning fact was made clear—only one in 10 flood victims were covered by flood insurance. Even though it had been available since 1968, and required for mortgages in high-risk areas since 1973, American taxpayers paid a staggering disaster relief bill. Why? Misinformation, and possibly confusion: some victims were told that they were ineligible for flood insurance because they were in a high-risk zone. Others were told just the opposite—they couldn't buy flood insurance because they were located outside a high-risk area.

As a result of this flood, it was clear that communication about flood insurance had to come directly from the federal government. And that communication had to be targeted not only to the insurance companies, insurance agents, and lenders, who had historically provided information, but directly to the consumers who needed the protection.

That's what FEMA's Federal Insurance Administration (FIA), which administers the flood insurance component of the NFIP, set out to do in 1995 to reach Director Witt's goal for 20 percent policy growth in two years. Through an effort that came to be known as Cover America, FIA hired a worldwide advertising agency to plan, implement and evaluate a nationwide marketing and advertising campaign designed to increase awareness of floods and flood insurance, and generate sales leads for insurance agents. The campaign kicked off in October 1995 with television and print advertising targeting consumers. The first campaign lasted close to four years, and in 1999, FIA initiated Cover America II based on findings from the first campaign, and an independent evaluation conducted by Gallup and Robinson. The objectives are to increase awareness of and improve attitudes about flood insurance and the NFIP, and help FIA meet annual sales goals. To meet these objectives, FIA has used paid advertising on television and radio, in magazines and Yellow Pages directories, as well as through direct mail; implemented public relations efforts such as media tours and articles; and implemented a co-op advertising program for insurance industry partners. Information about these efforts and a summary of results are below.

Advertising: Television, Magazines and Radio

The first phase of the Cover America campaign kicked off in October 1995. Market research was conducted to determine the messages and images that would have the greatest impact. The first flood insurance television commercial aired from October 1995 through March 1996 on nine national cable stations and network affiliates in 44 local markets. Print ads, which used the same messages and images from the television spot, ran from October 1995 through May 1996 in 19 national magazines.

The next phase of the Cover America campaign began in 1996. New television commercials were aired nationally and regionally on cable stations, networks and syndicated programs. Additionally, new print ads using images and messages from these commercials appeared in consumer magazines. Print advertising was also used to target insurance agents and lenders.

Special advertising efforts through television and radio were taken to alert people to the risks of flood due to snow melt prior to the flooding that occurred in the upper Midwest in 1997. This same advertising was conducted before the 1997 and 1998 hurricane seasons, and in California and other states in 1997 before the El Nino rains were anticipated.

Yellow Pages

To reach people locally, the NFIP trademark listing has been published in Yellow Page directories across the country. As of 1999, the NFIP trademark listing has appeared in 645 directories. A special "Flood Insurance" heading has also been established to be included within the "Insurance" category in many directories. More than 70 million copies of the Yellow Page directories have been distributed to over 44 million households (119 million people). The NFIP logo and toll free number are also in the BigYellow internet directory. Additionally, as a result of the NFIP co-op advertising program, more than 500 Yellow Pages display ads featuring insurance companies and agents have been placed throughout the country.

Direct Mail

The FIA/NFIP also uses direct mail to reach people in local areas. In June and December of 1996, the FIA/NFIP sent informational packages consisting of a brochure, reply card, and special envelope to 400,000 homeowners without flood insurance. Additional mailings were conducted in March 1998 and February 1999.

Co-op Advertising

A co-op advertising program was initiated in January 1996 to help FIA's insurance industry partners tie into the national campaign. This program enables FIA's insurance industry partners to tell consumers that they sell flood insurance. Through the NFIP co-op advertising program, insurance companies and agents who sell National Flood Insurance can split the cost of their approved flood insurance advertising with the FIA/NFIP. Insurance industry partners who participate in this program have their names and telephone numbers as the contact, rather than the NFIP. This program takes the national campaign to a very local level and gives insurance companies and agents an opportunity to get their names in front of people in their communities as the source for flood insurance.

As of May 21, 2000, more than 1,700 insurance agents and companies have participated in the program with the FIA, accounting for nearly 8,300 flood insurance ads: 4,035 newspaper ads, 532 Yellow Page display ads, 3,510 television commercials, 59 magazine ads, 11 billboard ads, and 129 radio ads. Flood insurance ads that mention other insurance products sold through the insurance company or agency may qualify for a 25 percent cost sharing with the NFIP.

Public Relations

Public relations efforts have been used to provide more information about the NFIP, including information about flood mitigation, Project Impact, and the protection available through national flood insurance. These efforts, including television and radio media tours; articles for consumers, insurance agents, lenders and real estate agents; outreach to various targeted media including those covering small businesses, condominium associations, and state and local officials have reached millions of people. Additionally, monthly updates about the campaign are available through the FEMA Fax-on-Demand system and the NFIP website for NFIP stakeholders to use for coordinating their marketing efforts with FIA's national efforts.

Various materials, such as a series of brochures, stuffers, and counter cards were also developed for NFIP partners to use when explaining the NFIP to their clients or constituents.

Branding the NFIP through Cover America II

In 1999, FIA initiated the Cover America II campaign. This campaign has been designed using the findings from the first campaign and results of an independent evaluation of the campaign. The foundation for the Cover America II campaign is an effort to brand the NFIP. By branding the NFIP, awareness and attitudes about the program and about flood insurance will improve, and that will lead to increased flood insurance sales. The components of the campaign: paid advertising, public relations and co-op advertising, are the same as the first campaign, but each component of the second campaign has been

designed to support the effort to brand the NFIP. The new "Be Flood Alert" Brand may be found on the FEMA Website at <http://www.fema.gov/nfip/grphcst.htm>.

New television advertisements that introduced the brand first appeared Thanksgiving week in 1999, on 12 national cable stations, network news programs, as well as on the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, the Detroit's Thanksgiving Day parade, NFL football and Monday night football games. In January 2000, new print advertising targeted specifically to consumers joined the television commercials. As the campaign progressed, FIA added print advertising to insurance agents and lenders; television and radio public service announcements; television and radio media tours; a public relations kit for members of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC); new ad slicks for use through the co-op advertising program; and an updated display ad for Yellow Pages directories. A number of additional efforts are in development. These include direct mail packages targeting consumers and insurance agents; redesigned kits for consumers, insurance agents, and lenders who request more information about the NFIP; grassroots public relations kit for state and local officials; redesigned display booths; and live-read radio scripts for paid advertising through the NFIP and through the co-op advertising program.

Results: Awareness and Attitudes

Research conducted with consumers between October 1995 and April 1999 show that awareness of the NFIP has gone from 48 to 65 percent, an increase of 17 percent. Additionally, favorability of the NFIP among all survey respondents increased to 28 percent, and of those aware of the NFIP, favorability increased to 51 percent.

Flood Insurance Demand and Policy Growth

All campaign efforts encourage people to contact their own insurance agent or the NFIP for more information. From October 1995 through May 31, 2000, more than 730,000 people contacted the NFIP. More than 561,000 of these were phone calls, and of those calls, more than 92,000 were referred to an insurance agent to buy a policy. In follow up calls with consumers, about 30 percent of them say that they did purchase a flood insurance policy.

From Oct. 1, 1994 through Sept. 30, 1996, FIA was challenged by Director Witt to increase the number of flood insurance policies by 20 percent. During this two-year period, policies increased by 26 percent. A number of factors contributed to this dramatic increase during the two-year period. These included growth goals for the Write Your Own companies and their efforts to meet their goals, the conversion of condominium policies to the new Residential Condominium Building Association policy, increased lender compliance with the mandatory purchase requirement, major flood and weather events, and the implementation of the national Cover America campaign.

FEMA set annual policy growth goals at 10 percent for FY 1997 and 1998. The Cover America campaign assisted in accomplishing nearly 7.5 percent growth in FY 1997 and 8 percent growth in 1998. Growth continued in FY 1999, but at a slower rate of 1.7 percent towards a 5 percent growth target.

According to modeling completed for a return on investment analysis of the campaign, at least 21 percent of all new policy sales between 1994 and 1999 can be directly attributed to NFIP advertising and about 12 percent to flood events. The remaining 67 percent

includes a number of factors that could not be specifically identified but may include lender compliance and other marketing efforts. Further, this modeling shows that every \$1,000 invested in advertising generated 13 new flood insurance policies, and that advertising has the greatest impact on increasing flood insurance policy sales in low and medium risk areas. (See PIF Growth Chart – Special Essay #1 {excel}).

Future

As FIA has implemented the Cover America I and II campaigns, it has become clear that there is a need for information about flood insurance. Consumers are interested in obtaining more information and securing coverage against flood damage. The Cover America campaigns have helped FEMA meet goals to protect more Americans from the devastating effects of flooding by letting them know about the dangers of flooding and that protection is available with National Flood Insurance. FIA will continue the campaign, and work to improve it to help ensure that even more people are aware of flood insurance and encouraged to protect themselves by purchasing and maintaining a policy for their homes, businesses, and belongings.

Discuss the decision to address repetitive loss issues and its overall effect so far.

When the NFIP was established, it was recognized that there was a large inventory of flood-prone structures that pre-dated the NFIP and that were generally built without sufficient knowledge of the flood risk to make informed decisions. It is this body of structures that is eligible for insurance under the NFIP at less than full-risk premiums. First, this premium discounting has been a quid pro quo for communities to pass ordinances controlling new construction relative to the flood risk. Second, such a premium structure has allowed for those property owners to at least partially pre-fund their own recovery while keeping the premiums reasonable. It was expected that the worst of these older properties would be subject to repetitive flooding.

During the 1980's, as the repetitive loss properties emerged in the NFIP's underwriting experience, attempts to address the issue through insurance premium or coverage changes did not garner wide enough support from a public policy perspective. At that time, the prevailing view was that these older, very flood-prone properties were those most in need of insurance at discounted premiums. Beginning in the late 1980s, leading up to what became the NFIP Reform Act of 1994, taking mitigation action to reduce the repetitive loss problem became more of a focus. And, in the 1990s the agency encouraged the addressing of repetitive loss properties through its mitigation funding programs and the NFIP's community rating system.

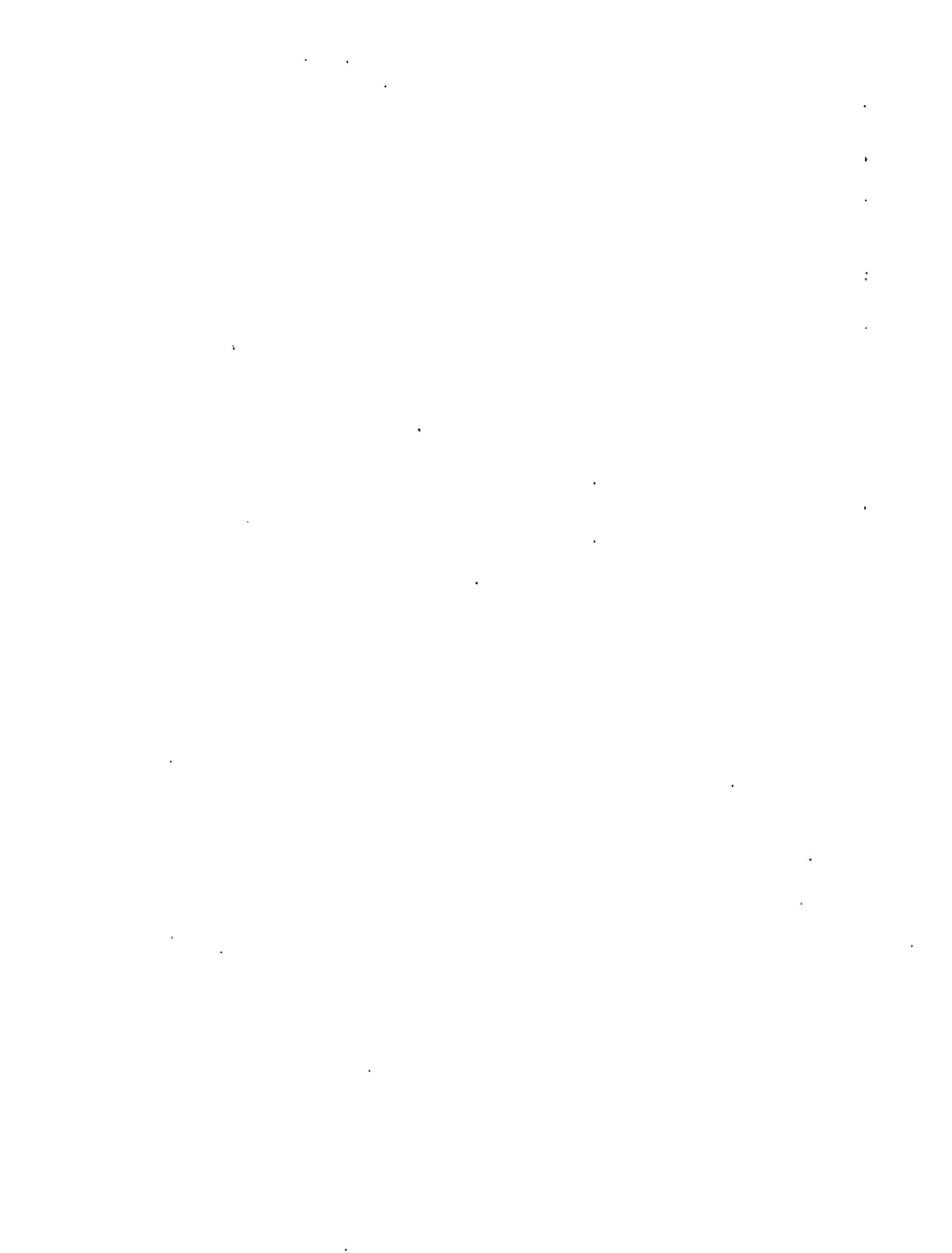
However, it was in 1998 that certain elements came together to make it possible to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for addressing repetitive losses that could be widely accepted. The environmental community viewed the mitigation of repetitive flood loss properties as an intersecting interest with restoring the natural and beneficial functions of the floodplain. The continuing accumulation of flood losses to a small number of properties, with some particularly egregious cases, brought increased media scrutiny. And, Director Witt, who had embraced mitigation as an emergency management strategy, could point to a growing body of success that was convincing not

only to the insurance and floodplain management communities, but to the emergency management community as well.

In 1998, an agency task force, headed by the FIA and the Mitigation Directorate, developed a comprehensive strategy for addressing repetitive loss properties in the NFIP. The strategy defined a target group of properties for which mitigation had the most likely short-term return on investment. Additionally, the strategy's components included increased mitigation funding, an insurance approach coordinated with mitigation actions, information and outreach efforts, and community incentives to take pertinent mitigation actions. Critical to the wide acceptance of the strategy was its development in conjunction with FEMA's state, local government and insurance industry partners.

To date, the implementation of the strategy has had numerous benefits. There has been a refocusing of existing federal, state and local funding and efforts on the target repetitive loss properties. Requests for additional funding have been made through the budget process, with some additional funding already being made available. Congressional interest in the issue has been rekindled which may lead to significantly more mitigation funding being made available. Rather than continuing to insure the target properties in any of more than 90 NFIP Write Your Own insurance companies, a Special Direct Facility (SDF) has been established and is being populated as policies renew over 2000 to 2001. Servicing these policies solely through the SDF allows for the most consistent control and tracking of losses. Additionally, specific risk information is to be gathered that is beyond that normally used in underwriting the flood policies. Such information is to be coordinated with property owners and state and local entities in order to plan and implement mitigation actions to reduce the repetitive loss problem.

More claims information than ever before has been made available to state and local officials and has spurred innovative approaches to identify and initiate mitigation actions. GIS and GPS technologies have made such information more useful than ever for mitigation planning.



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

National Emergency Management Information System (NEMIS)

Discuss the creation, evolution, and implementation of NEMIS and the goals for the system.

Response

NEMIS (National Emergency Management Information System) was developed to replace outdated legacy systems that could not adequately support the agency's emergency management mission and were not scaleable to support catastrophic disaster situations. It was designed to: (1) replace, expand and integrate the functionality of the legacy Automated Disaster Assistance Management System (ADAMS), Automated Construction Estimation (ACE) System, and Teleregistration Systems; (2) interface with the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS), the Small Business Administration, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and State Individual and Family Grant Programs; and (3) provide common data formats and standard interfaces. The NEMIS project has been instrumental in stimulating numerous improvements in the agency's disaster business processes as well as the information systems architecture through its integrated information systems approach.

Project Description

NEMIS is an agency-wide system of hardware, system and applications software, as well as telecommunications that has provided a new technology base to FEMA and its emergency management partners. NEMIS employs a complex and technically sophisticated mix of custom-built software to implement FEMA business rules, commercial software, database software and data replication processes, commercial databases, communications, desktop and mobile computing capabilities, and a full range of system management and role-based access controls. NEMIS was field-tested and rolled out during the summer of 1998, and has processed over 135 major disasters, emergency declarations, and fire suppression disasters successfully. It is intra-agency, interagency and inter-governmental in scope. NEMIS, with FEMA's integrated voice/data/video communications network, is the foundation of FEMA's information technology architecture. NEMIS now represents an infrastructure base upon which FEMA can build. There are plans to build on NEMIS through integration to other agency systems, and the addition of new functionality to meet new FEMA requirements. NEMIS has significantly improved FEMA's disaster operations, reduced operations costs, and reduced the time to deliver disaster benefits. NEMIS allows FEMA to perform its mission faster, more consistently, more accurately, with better management controls, and at a lower cost. In NEMIS, a major portion of the life-cycle of emergency management (disaster response, recovery, and mitigation) processes are automated, including incident monitoring, situation reporting, damage assessments, and disaster declaration processes. Once the president declares a disaster, NEMIS automatically launches the three major disaster assistance grants processing programs: Human Services (HS), Infrastructure Support (Public Assistance) and Mitigation (MT), each of which is

automated and directly interfaces with the agency's financial system. Actions that previously required weeks are now performed in a matter of hours or a few days. In human services, NEMIS supports the entire disaster application process. For instance, the automated system assists the states with processing the Individual and Family Grant (IFG) requests, making eligibility determinations for a high percentage of cases, and where appropriate, computing grant amounts. NEMIS provides standard and state-specific formatting and downloading of individual/family grant data to state disbursement systems. Centralized mailroom and document imaging are integrated with Helpline operations, which allows applicant assistance specialists to have immediate access to any applicant's entire electronic case file.

In Infrastructure and Mitigation programs, NEMIS automates the grants processes by which FEMA awards grants to state and local governments to repair damaged facilities and infrastructure and to mitigate future damage by protecting or relocating facilities and properties. NEMIS supports *Project Impact* by maintaining an Internet-accessible partnership database to track the successful fulfillment of solid commitments.

NEMIS includes both intranet and Internet capabilities, such as maintaining a searchable reference library, downloading of state IFG data and updating a call tracking and reporting system for congressional and media affairs staffs. It also provides a way for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Farm Services Agency to check compliance of their applicants with the National Flood Insurance Reform Act.

NEMIS also automates key response operations activities, including the processing of disaster acquisition requests and mission assignments to states and other federal agencies. Automation of the disaster acquisition requests speeds the approval process, eliminates possible wasteful duplication, improves management oversight and financial integrity, and accelerates the acquisition of goods and services.

NEMIS contains an automated disaster deployment system for assigning and deploying personnel to disasters as well as also ensuring FEMA's well-trained and knowledgeable cadre of disaster support personnel receive equitable treatment.

The NEMIS donations management system, can be used by the states and FEMA to automate donations call center operations, track donated goods and services, note items that are not needed, and to coordinate the distribution of donations with volunteer organizations.

NEMIS is a large information system using the latest technologies. The system is based on Oracle 8 relational databases, using advanced database replication to share data among some 30 operational databases nationwide. The NEMIS servers utilize Windows NT 4, while NEMIS clients are based on FEMA's standard Windows Operating System. The FEMA implementation of Oracle over this many Windows NT geographically-dispersed servers is one of the largest ever put into operation. The NEMIS servers are primarily Compaq Proliant servers. These are robust, rack-mounted, multi-processor servers that utilize a redundant array of inexpensive discs (RAID 5) for data safety and stability. Most NEMIS application functionality is delivered in a client/server based design, with the primary client development tool being PowerBuilder. NEMIS also includes web-based components, both in an intranet and Internet design. Due to the nature of the information processed, almost all of NEMIS operates behind FEMA firewalls, with only a limited Internet presence. NEMIS applications outside the firewalls will be protected by public key infrastructure access controls and encryption. The system includes

document scanning and optical storage capabilities that provide for the scanning of supporting disaster documentation at regional offices and processing centers; and retrieval of scanned information anywhere in the nationwide NEMIS system. Pen-based computers that can be issued to FEMA contract inspectors support inspection management of damaged homes. These hand-held Windows-based computers can "dial in" to download inspection assignments, and upload inspection results. On the server side, Microsoft Exchange is used to support this communication. Preliminary damage assessment information can be gathered on notebook computers. This notebook damage assessment capability is based on an Oracle database on the notebook computer that provides for replication of the damage assessment information into the rest of the NEMIS distributed databases. NEMIS servers are currently operational in all ten FEMA regional offices and headquarters, with several of the core NEMIS servers operational at FEMA's Mount Weather Emergency Support Center (Berryville, Va.) and at FEMA's National Processing Service Centers (Maryland, Virginia, and Texas). In disaster operations of sufficient size, FEMA sets up a disaster field office to support disaster response and recovery operations and deploys a NEMIS rack-mounted server to the field office. In such cases, FEMA establishes a local area network to link the personal computers with the NEMIS server. The field office server would also be linked to the FEMA wide area network through leased circuits, making the local computers and the disaster field office server an integral part of the nation-wide NEMIS for the duration of the field office activation.

Life Expectancy

The technology used in NEMIS provides the foundation for FEMA to add new functional capabilities and capitalize on its significant investment in NEMIS. As new capabilities are built on this infrastructure, advantage will be taken of all relevant technologies. The development team expects to use Web-based, or thin-client, approaches to augment information retrieval to an even greater extent in the future. The Information Technology (IT) Services Directorate continually evaluates the proper migration path to new commercial software, such as Oracle 8i, and Windows 2000. Hardware technology will continue to evolve and can be expected to provide significant improvements in scalability and performance. Given its inherent scalability and upgradability, NEMIS will serve as the primary processing platform for the agency for at least the next five to ten years. Plans call for continual software evolution and integration, as well as technology upgrades to NEMIS, with new releases scheduled every six months.

Information Resources Board

Discuss the establishment of the Information Resources Board and the resulting effects of the board.

Effects of the Information Resources Board

In 1994, FEMA Director James Lee Witt established the Information Resources Board (IRB) to oversee the acquisition of information resources and to promote the use of information technology as a strategic resource to accomplish FEMA's missions. The

director selected the designated senior official for information resources management to serve as board chairman. Until 1996, the designated senior official was Lacy Suiter, who also served as special assistant to the director. Board members consist of associate directors, administrators, and office directors, or their deputies, for each of FEMA's major entities.

With the passage of the Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996 (Clinger-Cohen Act), G. Clay Hollister was appointed chief information officer (CIO) in concert with his duties as executive associate director of the Information Technology Services Directorate. As CIO, he serves as chair of the IRB. The IRB's charter was expanded to include the duties cited in the Clinger-Cohen Act. Among these duties, the chair conveys the consensus and other views of the board to FEMA's director for decision-making purposes and for carrying out the director's duties as specified in the Clinger-Cohen Act. The board meets every six weeks or at the discretion of the chair.

Project Status

Although a small agency, FEMA has large information flow requirements to support widely-distributed emergency management planning and operations. The information flow extends to the 28 federal government signatory departments and agencies of the Federal Response Plan, state and local governments, numerous business partners, and the American public. FEMA views information technology, networking, and telecommunications as mission-critical functions, and inseparable from day-to-day and emergency activities.

In November 1998, the CIO issued the *Federal Information Resources Management Information Technology Architecture*. In addition to defining and documenting the information technology and network technology architectures, the CIO and the IRB members view an information technology (IT) enterprise architecture as an opportunity to manage FEMA's IT systems development in a more interoperable, open, standardized, secure, and cost-effective manner. The IT Architecture serves as the basis for the board's deliberations and recommendations on developing IT systems, reengineering legacy systems, and for achieving integration and interoperability among systems across FEMA. In compliance with the Clinger-Cohen Act, the IRB devotes the majority of its attention to the review and evaluation of major Information Technology investments. New initiatives are presented to the board for member recommendations and approval. Ongoing and developing systems are reviewed by the board on an annual basis. Prior to the director's annual budget review, the board evaluates the agency's entire portfolio of proposed and ongoing information technology projects. At the board's discretion, a member or project manager may be required to justify or clarify a specific request. The reviews have reduced the number of duplicate systems and have assisted the agency in acquiring complementary software systems. Also, the presence of the board has expedited the establishment of enterprise administrative systems and operating standards. The CIO solicits the views of the board members on proposed IT policy and procedures, including the memoranda, circulars, and guidance issued by the CIO's office, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Government Accounting Office. The board uses these opportunities to develop common IT functions and to extend FEMA's enterprise IT architecture. The board provides the mechanism for overseeing consistency and integrating information systems on an agency-wide basis. Looking beyond FEMA's

organization, the agency has taken the lead in encouraging the use of technology to improve the flow of emergency management information and services nationwide. The Information Resources Board sponsors and is supplemented by the information systems policy group, whose members comprise the senior IT professionals and systems managers from across the agency. The duties of the group are wide-ranging and include providing technical advice; preparing technical briefings; formulating recommendations on enterprise IT standards; identifying information resources issues; and meeting with other information systems groups to enhance intergovernmental coordination.

Life Expectancy

The Information Resources Board will continue on its present course of aligning the requirements for information systems with FEMA's missions and strategic goals. The agency will continue to develop and maintain affordable IT security and critical infrastructure protection and assurance consistent with federal directives and guidance from the Office of Management and Budget. FEMA's enterprise systems will have the lead role in developing standardized services and platforms that will be broadly available. In the future, the CIO, in consultation with the board members, will evaluate and approve IT plans and design requirements that support the goal of building, fielding, and integrating enterprise IT systems and services.

Preparing for the Year 2000 (Y2K)

Discuss the challenges of preparing for Y2K.

Response

Two major activities dominated FEMA's Information Technology (IT) Services Directorate and related emergency services efforts to improve readiness reliably for the many unknowns associated with successful transition into Year 2000:

- 1) The Emergency Services Sector (ESS) of the President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion was led by FEMA's chief information officer and executive associate director for Information Technology (IT) Services Directorate, G. Clay Hollister. The council was chaired by the assistant to the president, John Koskinen, who required sector reports on a quarterly basis from member agencies and organizations. In the aggregate, the sectors spanned all key aspects of society's infrastructure and had global reach as well. The ESS fostered increased awareness through outreach, improved preparedness and contingency planning, in the event of loss of services, throughout the emergency management and services community.
- 2) The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) required all federal agencies, including FEMA, to give quarterly progress reports on their Y2K compliance, as these agencies prepared to conduct their mission without interruption into year 2000. FEMA submitted eleven quarterly reports to OMB. The last pre-year 2000 FEMA report was dated November 1999. FEMA completed work on all 47 mission-critical systems by March 31, 1999. All mission non-critical systems were reported compliant in the August 1999 FEMA report to OMB.

Project Description

End users of FEMA services represent broad constituencies in state, local, and federal government, in addition to a large cross-section of the public and private sector partners in emergency management nationwide. The year 2000 or Y2K “problem” was a challenge for governments and businesses around the country and the world that is not likely to be repeated. The success that resulted from efforts to prepare systems for the date change by FEMA and its constituencies is a tribute to the skill, dedication, and hard work of the countless professionals who made Y2K their cause.

The Y2K experience demonstrates the importance of six basic principles:

Principle 1

Top management needs to be involved in information technology decisions on an ongoing basis – Information technology is increasingly at the heart of how organizations conduct their business and Y2K highlighted the value of having top management providing leadership in this area.

Principle 2

Organizations need to do a better job keeping track of and managing the technology they use and the functions that technology performs – Y2K provided an urgent reason to conduct a comprehensive inventory of information technology infrastructure and processes necessary to complete the FEMA mission successfully.

Principle 3

Contingency plans should be continually updated and tested –
It is essential to have contingency plans that are continually updated and tested.

Principle 4

Service-specific national centers are an important resource for reconstitution of critical services – Entities closest to providing a service are the most knowledgeable and capable of restoring that service. The ability of companies and Federal agencies to provide assistance to one another in an organized way is increasingly important as they become more interdependent and interconnected.

Principle 5

Full disclosure is critical to sustaining public confidence in the face of possible emergencies – One side effect of the Internet explosion is the ease with which rumors, misinformation, and false assumptions spread across the country. The public’s measured response to the wealth of Y2K information – both positive and negative – offered by FEMA, the president’s council, OMB, and our other partners is a reminder of the importance of providing more, rather than less, information to the public when dealing with a critical issue.

Principle 6

Forming partnerships across traditional boundaries can be a tremendous asset in the drive to achieve a commonly held goal – The experience of reaching across traditional boundaries, whether between the public and private sectors, the legislative and executive branches, or countries around the world can help us respond to other large-scale challenges in information technology, including efforts to protect key infrastructure systems from cyber-threats and malicious activity.

Life Expectancy/Future of Final Product

The Y2K effort was a one-time challenge with positive ramifications for all those involved in meeting the need for improved preparedness, mitigation, and response to and recovery from future natural and manmade disasters.

Reference Materials

ID	Document Name	Date Written	Contact & Location	Return	Synopsis	Director y	Site Map	Bitonal	Gray-scale	Color
A.2	www.fema.gov; refer to Y2K matters in Archives; also, "R" Drive in ITS for quarterly reports to OMB on FEMA Systems	1998-2000		No	Y2K reports		0	No	No	N

Results-Oriented Incentives:

How have you adapted new ways of motivating employees and improving program performance? Specifically, which methods of reward or accountability practices were employed?

Response

Prior to the arrival of James Lee Witt as the director of FEMA, the agency was scarred with the reputation of being a slow responding and bureaucratic agency for disaster relief to the states and was once called a "political dumping grounds agency." Thus, customer service was poor and the morale of FEMA employees was at their lowest.

Project Description

In 1993, FEMA's new director, James Lee Witt, had the challenge to improve the agency's reputation and at the same time improve employee morale and customer service. There is no doubt that Witt vastly improved FEMA's public relations through his unique personal abilities and skills, but it was the responsibility of all managers and supervisors to provide incentives to motivate employees and improve customer services. One of the first initiatives was an agency-wide requirement that every FEMA employee must attend a two-day customer service class. The next action resulted in upgrading outdated Cold War job descriptions to current and applicable job descriptions, which included reinventing employees through on-the-job and formal training as part of the National Performance Review. Upgrading all job descriptions was a good start to solving morale problems.

Part of the process of reinventing employees was to move them from obsolete positions to new technology jobs. Just in the Information Technology (IT) Services Directorate alone, \$2 million of its existing budget was spent in the first year on formal training in retooling its technical staff.

Next, IT found grade level disparity within its technical staff. By correcting this pay disparity through internal promotions, IT was able to promote 164 employees over a four-year period, becoming somewhat competitive with private industry.

Promoting good communications between management and the employee was another key ingredient to improving employee morale. This was accomplished through staff meetings, team meetings, labor management relations meetings, open door policy, newsletters, and the use of Internet and e-mail.

In 1997, Director Witt approved a new reward and recognition system for FEMA that allowed employees to recognize and reward accomplishments and quality performance of other employees. The agency has set aside money for three straight years for these monetary awards for both bonuses and quality step increases. Also, time-off awards have been given to deserving employees for their special accomplishments.

All of the above has improved employee morale and has been a direct result in improved customer service. Today, FEMA has the reputation as being one of the premier agencies in the federal government.

Life Expectancy/Future of Final Product

An example of final product from all of the described incentives in improving customer service is how the help desk function at the Information Technology Service Center (ITSC) at headquarters evolved from what used to be called the “helpless desk” by some irate customers in the earlier days to a highly professional service center respected and complimented by today’s customers.

The IT helpdesk job is not easy. People have various relationships with technology and their personal computers (PCs), but there is the constant theme: “I expect it to work and when it does not, it’s a crisis.” The complexity of the technology, coupled with employee’s ever-increasing dependency on it, contribute to the expectations and the frustrations on both sides of the aisle. However, the men and women who provide the information systems support to FEMA headquarters have continued to improve their skills, response, and attitudes. It is a great FEMA success story.

The ITSC at headquarters has evolved from a fledgling group of individuals that had no experience with helpdesk operations, into a customer-orientated, and highly motivated organization. Branch personnel continually look for ways to improve customer support and satisfaction. They have sought out professional organizations, such as Help Desk 2000 and the Help Desk Institute and have taken advantage of the expertise and training available from these industry leaders and have applied it to FEMA’s environment. Their affiliation with these organizations has earned them recognition as proactive and forward-thinking members of the Help Desk community.

Director Witt’s Leadership

Response

The Information Technology (IT) Services Directorate was established in 1995.

Prior to the establishment of the IT Directorate, the several organizations in FEMA — such as the Federal Insurance Administration, the United States Fire Administration, and the Preparedness, Training and Exercises Directorate — each had their own computer support services, local area networks, and computer software and hardware procurement procedures. This redundant organizational structure for the support of information technology services was ineffective and expensive.

FEMA reorganized twice since 1993. In 1995, Director Witt reorganized the agency along functional lines, integrating similar programs and initiatives, and supporting staff. In 1996, a bottom-up analysis of all positions and the reorganization to remove overlaps, focus on new technology, and reassign Cold War functions and staff to new FEMA all-hazards mission.

The restructuring consolidated and realigned several information technology services functions from throughout the agency. It was driven by Director Witt’s desire to support FEMA’s all-hazards mission and establish new partnerships to better serve customers. The reorganization would accomplish these goals by facilitating the workflow within the organization and enabling the IT Directorate to accomplish its mission more efficiently and effectively.

Project Description

With the establishment of the IT Directorate, several events provided challenges and opportunities for streamlining the IT Directorates operation and agency-wide services. Special events included:

- Appointment of a new IT executive associate director and deputy
- The appointment of the IT executive associate director as the critical infrastructure assurance officer
- Establishment of the enterprise-wide information system, National Emergency Management Information System (NEMIS)
- Logistics Management Institute assessment of information technology in FEMA
- Information Technology Management Reform Act, Chief Information Officer (CIO) Act enacted by Congress
- The appointment of the IT executive associate director as the chief information officer
- The encouragement by FEMA leadership in opening the door for change.

The new organizational structure has been successful, in large part, because of the interest shown by the director and the executive associate director of IT in improving and streamlining the way the directorate functions and improving the agency's overall service to FEMA's internal and external customers.

Directorate Leadership

Response

The current executive director for the Information Technology (IT) Services Directorate was appointed to the post in June 1996. At that time, the organization was structurally fragmented, and lacked clearly defined mission and functions down to the branch level. A major reorganization, from bottom to top, was implemented based on a detailed functional analysis of every position in the directorate.

Project Description

The primary objectives of the IT Directorate are to:

- Stabilize and modernize information technology services for FEMA's internal and external customers.
- Develop, field-test, and maintain the agency's largest software system, the National Emergency Management Information System.
- Accomplish the internal and external missions of the executive associate director, the chief information officer, and the critical infrastructure assurance officer.
- Ensure that FEMA's information systems are secure and protected.
- Ensure that FEMA's information technology systems and services are operational and cost effective.

Following are successes achieved by the current IT Directorate's management:

- The National Emergency Management Information System (NEMIS) was successfully developed, tested, and field-tested for a 1998 rollout. In fiscal year 2000, all federal disasters were supported by NEMIS, greatly improving the quality and timeliness of customer service. System development was completed with only a 7.5-percent cost overrun. Employees who worked on NEMIS' system development received the Director's Award.
- FEMA received two external awards, the "Excellence in Information Technology" award from Government Computer News, and the "Top 100 Award" from Federal Computer Week.
- The Y2K Committee chaired by Congressman Stephen Horn ranked FEMA third amongst all federal departments and agencies for its efforts on the Y2K compliance project.
- The IT Directorate developed an agency-wide information technology architecture. The development team incorporated the missions, functions, and programs for each office in FEMA. The information was collected through face-to-face interviews by IT Directorate staff, with points of contact for each organization. The project is in its implementation stage.
- FEMA's information technology systems are reliable, and state-of-the-art, including high-speed local area networks (LANs), wireless technology in disaster field offices, and dial-up video.
- Information systems are well secured against intrusion, providing information assurance.
- In the past four years, over \$1.6 million have been expended in training funds to insure that staff retains current technical skill levels to provide effective customer service.

As of July 2000, the current IT Directorate's management has brought the agency's information technology posture up to the current day's technology and ensured that FEMA will remain on the cutting edge of new information technology.

Future Direction

Response

The future of information technology, in both the public and the private sectors, will be molded by the evolution of new technology. Whether organizations, such as FEMA and the IT Directorate, keep up with state-of-the-art information technology to meet their needs largely depends on several factors, including:

- Availability of funds to upgrade information systems
- Active recruitment and retention of information technology professionals, such as computer specialists
- Ready and continual access to training for technical support staff and end users
- Education of senior management on technology issues for policy making purposes

Project Description

Several factors have had a profound effect on how business is conducted, both internally and externally. They include:

- the proliferation of the use of the Internet by all sectors, public and private
- the evolution of e-government
- continued growth of e-commerce
- new federal law that upholds the legality of e-signatures on certain types of documents

The IT Directorate continues to be challenged by the very rapid change in information technology, and the administration's mandate to provide more and improved customer service with dwindling resources. This situation is exacerbated by the government's mandate to outsource more jobs and having to depend on contractors because of the difficulty in retaining and recruiting information technology specialists. This problem is caused, in general, by the inability of the federal government to match salaries offered to information systems specialists by private sector organizations. The Office of Personnel Management is working on alleviating this problem. Additionally, experienced staff, with many years of government service, are retiring, and will continue to retire for the next few years, causing an experience void between the current employees and new hires.

The IT Directorate will continue to fulfill its mission requirement of providing timely and cost-effective information services to its customers by building into its five-year strategic plan, annual performance plan, and annual budget request the articulation of programs, required staff, and financial resources needed to support specific programs and initiatives.

Critical Infrastructure

Discuss the changes in critical infrastructure protection since 1993.

Response

In response to growing concern about the safety and security of our nation's critical infrastructure, which includes physical and cyber-base systems, the president issued Presidential Decision Directive/NSC-63. This directive requires for each cabinet department and agency to submit a formal plan for protecting its critical systems from intentional acts of harm.

Project Description

FEMA's critical infrastructure has been largely comprised of physically separate systems. As FEMA moves toward an open, collaborative computing environment with its state and federal partners and other agencies, these systems become increasingly dependent on each other. Thus, the failure of one component in the infrastructure may cause a cascade of failures in other components. For example, a breach in physical security may lead to theft of a critical server, or a breach through a cyber-based system could lead to a complete shutdown of environmental controls for an entire office. Therefore, it is

imperative that potential threats and risks to which FEMA is vulnerable be continually evaluated and analyzed.

The "FEMA enterprise" is simply and broadly defined to incorporate all internal and external resources, including partnerships, needed to accomplish FEMA's mission requirements. These resources include, but are not limited to, regional offices and disaster field offices; FEMA documents, databases and facilities; fixed and transportable assets; security and critical infrastructure protection resources and measures; telecommunications and networking resources; and other entities that can be pressed into service in the event of a national emergency. Management of FEMA's critical infrastructure requires a robust, reliable architecture, and well-balanced security mechanisms for FEMA to efficiently use its resources.

The goal of enterprise security management is to apply security in multiple layers. This will enable FEMA to incorporate programs that are consistent with the priority ranking of the resource to be protected, and mitigate the potential risks to the architecture and users. The intent is to design a security architecture that will provide:

- Maximum Availability - to assure that critical resources can be accessed quickly and efficiently by valid users;
- Authentication and access control - to establish the validity of a claimed identity, to prevent the unauthorized use of resources, and to provide separation of duties;
- Confidentiality - to protect sensitive information from unauthorized disclosure and sensitive facilities from physical, technical or electronic penetration or exploitation;
- Integrity - to protect the accuracy and completeness of information by ensuring reliable transmission and reception of valid information in accordance with standard business values and expectations;
- Non-repudiation - to protect against any attempt by either the sender or receiver of the data to falsely deny sending or receiving the data.

Emphasis will be placed on designing, developing, and integrating security programs into the systems and networks in a disciplined manner across the FEMA enterprise. Wherever possible, an open systems approach, based on industry standards and common industry conventions, will be used. In addition, close cooperation and coordination is essential to provide a robust, flexible infrastructure protection program that will fully consider the systems of FEMA's business partners, the regions, the states, and local governments.

Life Expectancy

FEMA's critical infrastructure has been mainly comprised of physically separate systems. As FEMA continues to move toward an open, collaborative computing environment with its partners and other agencies, these systems will be increasingly dependent upon each other. Computer crime has risen exponentially. The rapid growth of a computer-literate population ensures an increased threat to agency critical infrastructures. Critical infrastructure protection is and will continue to be a responsibility which organizations must consider in all future initiatives.

Customer Service Improvements

How has your office implemented FEMA's customer service policy?

Response

As a consequence of the six-month review of the agency's 1993 reorganization, FEMA Director Witt decided to establish the Information Technology (IT) Services Directorate. In January 1995, the IT Directorate was formed. The directorate's plan was to consolidate and centralize information technology services, such as local area network (LAN) management; information management; database and bulletin board administration. A further initiative of the newly established IT Directorate was to clarify the roles and responsibilities of internal partners for modeling projects and geographic information systems applications.

Project Description

Subsequent to the establishment of the IT Directorate, FEMA established the headquarters Information Technology Services Center (HQITSC) in May 1995. This marked the first time in FEMA's history that action was taken to consolidate and standardize headquarters information systems and services. The HQITSC became the focal point for information technology services at headquarters, covering both day-to-day operations and disaster operations support. The customer base includes all FEMA, contract support, and other department and agency personnel located at FEMA headquarters. The HQITSC provides support for 1,200 PCs, 495 facsimile machines, 450 printers, 34 network servers, and the telephone system.

During emergency support team (EST) operations, the headquarters operations branch provides support services to the full range of information technology systems and functions, including workstations, local area networks (LANs), telephone systems, and audio-visual systems. Additionally, support is provided to video-conferencing between FEMA headquarters and the National Hurricane Center, FEMA regional offices, and the states during the hurricane season, other disasters and emergencies, and other EST events, such as the Y2K rollover. Special training sessions have been developed and conducted by headquarters operations branch staff to assist EST personnel in learning how to use NEMIS.

FEMA has been using Remedy as its enterprise-wide help desk application since 1997; HQITSC adopted Remedy in 1998. HQITSC has logged over 29,800 tickets, with an 82-percent closure rate. HQITSC management is committed to continuous professional training. To-date, there is one HD2000 Certified Help Desk Director, three HD2000 Certified Help Desk Managers, and one CIO Certified Help Desk Manager. All technicians working in the HQITSC are HD2000 Certified Help Desk Professionals. In addition to these certifications, a Project Management Certification and an Information Resource Management training program are in progress.

Life Expectancy

Good customer service is a continuous requirement for the HQITSC, which must anticipate and meet the needs of internal and external customers, during day-to-day operations and emergency operations.

Use of Technological Innovations

Describe how your office has employed the use of new technology since 1993. Also describe ways in which old technology has been used in a new way, if applicable. How have these technological innovations affected your office's performance?

Response

Since 1993, FEMA has continually improved communications systems to support multiple large-scale disasters. Currently, FEMA is integrating legacy national voice, video and data networks to improve performance and efficiency. In the future, FEMA will continue to implement innovative communications technology to improve disaster response capabilities.

Project Description

Throughout the 1990s, FEMA has maintained separate communications networks to support voice, video, and data requirements. For the last decade, voice communications technology and requirements have remained relatively constant. Private Branch Exchange (PBX) switches are still used to provide local "dial-tone." A national network of leased lines interconnects the PBX. Connections to the public switched network provide supplemental (overflow) capacity as well as 800-type service. Satellite communications systems provide the capability to support disaster areas – even when the public communications network is knocked out.

In addition to voice calls, the PBX also supports legacy videoconference requirements. Multiplexes are used to allocate bandwidth to the video sessions and, in some cases, to increase capacity (via voice compression). For example, during Hurricane Marilyn, FEMA established 70 channels over a single leased line, normally capable of supporting only 24 channels.

The most significant change in communications requirements and technology has been in the area of data networks and security. The advent of the Internet, enterprise applications (such as NEMIS and e-mail), high-speed computers and related advances have forced FEMA to frequently modernize and expand. In the early 1990s, a simple "bridged" network and 56 kilobits-per-second circuits were used to interconnect FEMA locations across the country. Today, FEMA's wide area network utilizes hundreds of routers, switches and circuits to support the growing demand for data communications.

In November 1998, FEMA published the information technology architecture (ITA) plan. The ITA identified several performance and efficiency enhancements and defined a phased implementation approach. The principle near-term recommendations included the following:

- High-performance, high-availability switched backbone
- Increased network efficiency through modern compression and bandwidth sharing
- Integrated voice, video and data communication services

- Leveraged use of public switched services and Virtual Private Networks (VPNs)

The first three recommendations have been largely implemented. High speed Asynchronous Mode switches are deployed at major FEMA locations across the country. The switches provide carrier-class survivability, and near-instantaneous rerouting capabilities. The switches also provide the ability to dynamically allocate bandwidth with the required level of Quality of Service (QOS). The QOS features have enabled voice services to be integrated into the common backbone network. Advanced voice compression techniques are used to achieve an eight-to-one improvement in bandwidth utilization. In addition to voice integration, new video systems and gateways are being deployed to achieve greater efficiencies, more capabilities and so that legacy dedicated circuits can be deleted.

The new integrated network has substantially improved performance, reduced congestion, and increased efficiency. Most importantly, the network integration project has positioned FEMA to rapidly expand services in the event of a major disaster.

Life Expectancy

The rapid growth in computers, applications and communications technology will require a flexible and scalable growth strategy for the foreseeable future. As summarized previously, FEMA is well positioned to manage growth through the use of a switched backbone, Quality of Service, and integration of voice, video and data services. FEMA is also ready to take advantage of public switched services, which can provide significant bandwidth scalability without the burden, or expense, of maintaining the network. FEMA is also evaluating or planning advanced new capabilities which will continue to improve the ability of FEMA to support existing requirements, support federal disasters, and improve the efficiency and security of the network services. New capabilities under evaluation include:

- Virtual Private Networks (VPNs)
- Wireless Technology
- Integrated Voice Response (IVR) Systems
- Advanced Call Center Technology
- Improved Network Management Systems
- Telecommuting and Distance Learning
- Integrated Messaging (fax, e-mail , voice, pager)
- High-Speed Firewalls
- IP Telephony

NAWAS

Introduction

The evolution of the National Warning System (NAWAS) from a single purpose nuclear attack warning system into an all purpose nationwide emergency all hazard response network acclaimed as an indispensable lifeline of disaster coordination and response throughout the emergency management community is a classic example of FEMA's reinvention into unified crisis management response. Using the concepts of reinvention,

customer feedback, procurement streamlining, and reengineering, FEMA has restructured NAWAS into a multipurpose backbone that satisfies both the national security mission and disaster response mission at one fourth of the original cost.

Project Description

The NAWAS was implemented in 1966 to serve as an attack warning system to warn the population regarding all levels of attack and related emergency events. In accordance with initiatives set forth by the 1993 Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), NAWAS migrated into a dual purpose entity that, while remaining available for the potential attack contingency, is used extensively on a day to day basis for all categories of emergency response and coordination events.

The NAWAS currently consists of 61 multi-point voice circuits interconnecting approximately 1,650 warning points in all 50 states in the United States. The circuit configuration consists of one circuit for each state, 10 for each of the 10 FEMA regions, and one overall control circuit. Each circuit consists of a multi-point 4-wire link interconnecting each location on the circuit continuously on a 24-hour basis. Each point on the circuit uses a government-owned, special-purpose speaker phone set to constantly monitor all conversations on the circuit and communicate on a two-way voice basis when necessary. Each of these multi-point circuits normally functions independently, but all or combinations of the circuits can be bridged together when necessary, such as in the event of a full scale attack on the U.S. mainland.

FEMA's mission is to reduce the loss of life and property and to protect U.S. institutions from all hazards. This requires a robust communications capability that can operate and support the mission during day-to-day activity as well as in emergency situations where resources, infrastructure, and telecommunications are damaged or limited. The NAWAS supports this requirement with a 24-hour warning and coordination net for all categories of emergencies. It is provided through a two-way constantly available voice communications net, so that acknowledgements of warnings and elaboration of details may be passed back, and so that necessary two-way coordination, response, and follow-up actions may take place. The ability of NAWAS to provide emergency managers the immediate ability to exchange and coordinate information relative to all types of critical events, including tornadoes, hurricanes, and earthquakes, is critical to the mission of FEMA, and it is essential that the NAWAS remain in a constant state of operational readiness.

The NAWAS system in its original configuration as engineered in the late 1960s incurred expenditures generally averaging \$7.5 million a year. During the last five years, an aggressive effort has been employed to reduce these costs along with enhancing the day to day usage of the system. In 2000, annual costs ran \$1.5 million for a system that is universally considered four to five times more effective than the original product. For the NAWAS project, FEMA employs several tactics and strategies in accordance with the principles of reinvention:

Economies of Scale

The principal strategy has been to utilize the very low competitive rates available on government wide telecommunications contracts. The Federal Telecommunications

Service 2000 contract was used as soon as available to provide all the extensive circuits used for NAWAS throughout the United States.

The initial NAWAS was procured on an end-to-end basis from a public telephone company consistent with standard practices in the industry. Subsequently, FEMA has taken advantage of the evolution in the telecommunications industry to both upgrade the system and greatly reduce the cost of the handsets and configuration management nodes in the system. The agency has acquired all necessary equipment to manage the leased circuits, and all telephone sets required to use the capabilities. There is no required or budgeted cost for this element of the system, which costs approximately \$1 million a year in the original configuration.

Financial Analysis

As noted above, this technology allows FEMA to integrate low prices with intelligent network configuration technology and approaches to provide significant cost savings. That potential has been realized with the system costing less than 25 percent of its original annual cost with effectiveness improved immensely.

Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)

The NAWAS system has been included in FEMA's strategic plan and annual performance plan since their inception under the agency's response and recovery mission. The response backbone provided by NAWAS has been in continual use and is highly praised by all state and local entities using the system for its effectiveness and necessity as a life saving hotline for emergency responders. It supports in some way or another every one of FEMA's GPRA goals. This project will continue on a 24-hour basis to allow all kinds of state and local entities throughout the United States to conduct emergency life saving response and coordination efficiently. This is done through effective communications and ready access to information, including the ability to share information with other government offices and the public.

Acquisition Strategy

As stated above, the acquisition strategy has two parts: (1) the use of congressionally encouraged government-wide contracts, and (2) the competitive acquisition of terminal and system management equipment that reduces the operations and maintenance costs of the system, from over \$1 million a year to mere hundreds of dollars a year.

The dramatic effectiveness of NAWAS was graphically demonstrated in May 1999, when a record outbreak of some 70 tornadoes ripped through the nation's heartland. The story of its success was encapsulated on a tape presented to all senior managers in FEMA, and merited a thank you letter from the National Weather Service, which utilized NAWAS during that severe weather event.

Life Expectancy

Based on several operational and cost studies of the NAWAS, affordable wireless technology, such as satellite communications, will not be cost-effective until 2002. Therefore, the current use of dedicated telephone lines will continue to be the technology of choice for the NAWAS until 2002.

Geographic Information System (GIS)

Introduction

Geographic Information System (GIS) has been used by FEMA for several years. However, it was during and after Hurricane Andrew that its full potential began to emerge. Inspired by the avid use of this technology by the South Florida Water Management District, FEMA deployed its first GIS capability at the Miami disaster field office (DFO), working closely with the state of Florida in using the technology to support that disaster.

In the aftermath of the Andrew "experience," GIS began to take a more cohesive shape within FEMA. GIS-based hurricane, wind, and earthquake damage estimation models were developed. Using equipment returned from the Florida DFO, a small contractor staff of GIS technicians was set up in the mezzanine to support the emergency support team (EST).

The use of GIS at FEMA was further enhanced by its use in the aftermath of the 1994 Northridge Earthquake. The first use of real-time flood extent information on GIS maps occurred during the 1993 Great Midwest Floods.

Soon afterward, managers at FEMA recognized the need to further organize and structure the GIS support capabilities of the agency. As such, management of the GIS contract support team located in the mezzanine was moved to the Information Technology Services Directorate under the newly formed GIS applications branch.

Project Description

Under the aegis of its GIS applications branch, IT designed and developed the mapping and analysis center (MAC), a state-of-the-art GIS laboratory to support the EST and the Response and Recovery Directorate. In addition, a structured set of deployable GIS suites and on-call GIS contract support was put in place to provide onsite GIS support to disaster field offices. Over the last four years, the MAC has grown in stature, effectiveness, and capabilities – providing combined GIS support at headquarters and in the field to more than 150 disasters.

The MAC is now managed by the IT GIS team, comprised of five full-time and two part-time contract support staff, supporting GIS production and analysis, system administration, database administration, and Web development. The MAC now fulfills GIS requirements for all of FEMA and is actively developing Web-based interactive mapping functionality to bring GIS to every FEMA desktop.

GIS continues to be a burgeoning technology. Recognizing this and the need to bring GIS at FEMA to its full potential, the FEMA chief information officer has formed an agency-wide GIS working group to formulate and facilitate the development of a FEMA Enterprise GIS that will fully integrate GIS within all of FEMA's programs and emergency operations. The working group is just beginning the enterprise planning process by conducting and documenting a FEMA GIS requirements analysis. This will be followed by a strategic plan and implementation plan. The goal is for FEMA to set the standard for GIS excellence in emergency management.

Life Expectancy

GIS capabilities will continue to be a critical component of emergency management, for mitigation and for response to emergencies and disasters. As the technologies supporting GIS become more sophisticated and complex, the emergency management community must keep up with its knowledge of the state-of-the-art of those technologies. For the foreseeable future, FEMA and its state partners will use GIS in their emergency management activities.

Emergency Alert System Primary Entry Point Program

Introduction

The Primary Entry Point, or PEP, program was originally conceived to provide a "Last Resort" communications capability to the president of the United States of America. When all other methods for reaching the American people become unusable because of a national level disaster, such as a nuclear attack, the president will use the PEP system to disseminate information to the public.

Project Description

The PEP system consists of standard broadcast stations within the continental United States (CONUS) and four outside CONUS. One of the stations outside CONUS is state emergency operations center in Hawaii. These stations were selected based on a number of criteria, including the following:

- The transmitter had to be located outside of the two-pounds-per-square-inch (PSI) overpressure area. The overpressure area is an area caused by a nuclear detonation. The pressure or PSI decreases in proportion with distance from the detonation.
- Population coverage of each station was considered. Stations capable of reaching the most people were selected.
- For greater geographic coverage, all but three of the PEP stations broadcast using amplitude modulation (AM) frequency. Stations on the lower portion of the band were selected to provide the best coverage during the day, while stations in the higher portion of the band were selected for nighttime coverage. Coverage can be provided to 95 percent of the population at night with 10 specific PEP stations. During daylight hours, the full complement of 30 stations is required to provide this same level of coverage.
- Stations that have the capability of simulcasting on more than one band, such as AM and/or frequency modulation (FM), and/or on TV were selected, where available.
- Stations that serve more than one Emergency Alert System (EAS) function, such as National Primary and/or State Relay Network Station (SRNS) and/or Common Program Control Station (CPCS-1), were selected.

When the station selection process was complete, equipment was provided to the stations. The equipment consisted of:

- A backup generator capable of providing power to all components of the station, including heating, air conditioning, tower lighting, and of course, transmission systems.
- Fuel storage tanks with a capacity of allowing each station to operate on emergency power for 30 days.
- A clean fuel system that filters the stored fuel, thereby extending the life of the fuel considerably.
- An automatic transfer switch to transfer the station load from commercial power to the generator and back.
- A fallout shelter with a minimum protection factor (PF) of 100. The PF in this case means that occupants will receive 100 times less radiation than if they were not protected by the shelter.
- Advanced programming equipment, which allows the station to operate from the shelter.
- A high frequency radio, antenna tuner, power supply, and antenna for use in communicating with state and/or local emergency operation center (EOC), FEMA, and other PEP stations, when required.
- An ultra high frequency or very high frequency remote pickup unit/transceiver for communications with the state EOC.
- Electromagnetic pulse (EMP) protection to prevent damage to electronic equipment from an EMP that would be generated by a nuclear detonation. This protection also provides excellent protection against lightning damage.

Soon after the commencement of the PEP project, a conference was held. Representatives from each of the PEP stations were invited to attend, with FEMA funding travel for one representative. Additional representatives were welcome to attend at the station's expense. During this conference, the PEP system and plans for its development were discussed. One of FEMA's requests at this meeting was that an advisory committee be established. The purpose of this was twofold:

- To provide technical advice and assistance in the development and implementation of the PEP system.
- To ensure that the equipment and procedures provided to the stations would be useable and effective.

The station representatives formed a group and named it the Primary Entry Point Advisory Committee (PEPAC). The PEPAC is funded by FEMA via a cooperative agreement between FEMA and the PEPAC. The funding is used to hold periodic conferences and meetings, to reimburse the participating PEP stations for PEP program related costs, and to cover expenses related to provision of expert technical onsite assistance by PEP members to PEP members.

The PEPAC has performed other functions such as managing the completion of the protection when the original contractor became unsatisfactory, and managed the contract for the installation of EMP protection components. Presently, the PEPAC is functioning

primarily as an advisory committee to provide information to FEMA and to assist the PEP stations with resolution of problems. In several instances, onsite assistance has effectively solved problems at a very reasonable cost. It also manages reimbursement to stations for PEP-related expenditures.

One very important agreement was reached at the initial meeting. Since the PEP system is intended for presidential use, the station representatives accepted the premise that FEMA could interrupt programming. They agreed to the concept of a FEMA-provided electronic device that could interrupt programming at the transmitter. These devices, which are now installed, have a manual override function to allow stations to recapture their transmitters, if necessary.

As stated above, the original purpose of the PEP system was to provide a "Last Resort" capability. However, before all of the work could be completed at the PEP stations, the Cold War came to an end and (supposedly) the PEP system was no longer needed.

Therefore, for approximately two years, very little was done with the stations. Then, a new White House Statement of Requirements (SOR) was developed and signed by the president. The SOR requires that the PEP system be the primary means for the president to access the EAS and reach the American populace in times of severe national crisis. This requirement renewed and increased the importance of the PEP stations. And because of this, all PEP stations are now at 100 percent readiness status.

Life Expectancy

There will continue to be a requirement for a capability for the president to speak to the American people in time of national crisis. It is anticipated that, as information systems and telecommunications technologies advance, new technological advances will be applied to continue to provide the president the required capability to speak to the American people from, basically, any geographical location on very short notice.

Partnerships

How has the National Emergency Management Information System (NEMIS) enhanced FEMA's emergency management partnerships?

Response

NEMIS is an agency-wide system of hardware, system and applications software, as well as telecommunications that improves FEMA's effectiveness in accomplishing emergency management, encompassing Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery. NEMIS is intra-agency, interagency and inter-governmental in scope, assisting the states and other federal agencies in accomplishing their roles in emergency management. NEMIS solidifies FEMA's inter-agency and federal/state partnerships.

NEMIS was developed to replace outdated legacy systems that could not adequately support the agency's emergency management mission. It was designed to: (1) replace, expand and integrate the functionality of the legacy Automated Disaster Assistance Management System (ADAMS), Automated Construction Estimation (ACE) System, and Teleregistration systems; (2) interface with the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS), the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and state Individual and Family Grant and

Public Assistance programs; and (3) provide common data formats and standard interfaces. NEMIS provides a database to track and monitor commitments for the *Project Impact* mitigation initiatives. The NEMIS project has been instrumental in stimulating numerous improvements in the agency's disaster business processes through increased levels of integration with other federal agencies, and state and local governments.

Project Description

From the very onset of NEMIS, a cross-section of the emergency management community was involved in its development. Issues included the definition of requirements, the evaluation of the proposed design, and end-user testing of the initial product. Participants included: FEMA headquarters and regional personnel, permanent and temporary disaster assistance workers, state and federal agency employees, and voluntary agency representatives (VOLAGS). Their participation helped provide a perspective that strengthened the NEMIS development and ensure the implementation would be supported by FEMA's emergency management partners.

In response to FEMA's emergency management partnership requirements, NEMIS includes both Intranet and Internet capabilities. These capabilities support FEMA's federal and state partners, whether they are at their office or at the scene of a disaster. FEMA can extend its wide area network connectivity to its partners and provide NEMIS on the desktop at its partners' locations.

In the processing of individual assistance requests, NEMIS provides valuable improvements to FEMA's state and federal partners' support, such as a searchable reference library to access the latest policies, rules, and regulations. It also tracks and logs agreements between states and FEMA, as well as state administrative plans for mitigation projects. NEMIS supports two-way data exchanges with the SBA for applicants qualifying for low interest loans and also provides capabilities for checking duplication of benefits. The automated system assists the states with processing Individual and Financial Grant (IFG) requests, making eligibility determinations, where appropriate, and computing grant amounts. NEMIS then provides standard and state-specific formatting and downloading of IFG data to state disbursement systems. It also provides a means for the SBA and Farm Services Agency (FSA) to check compliance of their applicants with the National Flood Insurance Reform Act.

In the areas of Public Assistance (PA) and Mitigation, NEMIS provides user-friendly automation to request federal assistance as well as to formulate, review, approve and track PA and Mitigation projects. NEMIS provides quality commercial data to ensure consistency and integrity in defining state and local grantees and subgrantees. Case Management Reports provide the required oversight and work completion tracking. These capabilities are being placed on the Internet and protected with Public Key Infrastructure access controls and encryption.

NEMIS incorporates a powerful donations management system, which can be used by state call centers to record donated goods and services and by state donation coordination teams to disburse the donations to the appropriate volunteer organizations. Should the disaster recovery operation increase in size, these same data can be made available for use by FEMA in catastrophic national disasters. Most importantly, the donations management system tracks unneeded goods collected as well. This ensures that donated goods and services do not go where they are not needed.

NEMIS includes an web-accessible database to track and monitor commitments for mitigation initiatives, made as a result of *Project Impact* agreements between FEMA and the communities.

A call tracking and reporting system for congressional and media affairs personnel ensures that these FEMA partners receive timely responses to their requests for information or that FEMA's media affairs personnel can disseminate fast breaking news to the local media outlets quickly and efficiently.

NEMIS also automates emergency response operations, including the processing of mission assignments to other federal agencies. This evolving paperless tasking capability may speed the review, approval, and award processes to ensure prompt mission assignment payments.

Through the integration of capabilities in NEMIS, FEMA has increased its opportunities for building closer partnerships with other federal agencies, state and local governments, and voluntary agencies.

With an open architecture, NEMIS presents opportunities to expand and build additional capabilities, such as developing FEMA's e-government initiative, beginning with an integrated grants management system and automated vendor payments process. Through continual software evolution and technology upgrades, NEMIS will be positioned to maintain its effectiveness into the future. The advent and effectiveness of e-government depends on new and improved technologies. The NEMIS e-government implementation will bring federal, state, and local emergency managers closer together for information sharing.

Life Expectancy

The technology used in NEMIS provides the foundation for FEMA to add new functional capabilities. As new capabilities are built on this infrastructure, advantage will be taken of all relevant technologies. Web-based, or thin client, approaches are expected to be used to augment information retrieval to an even greater extent in the future. The development team is evaluating the proper migration path to new commercial software such as Oracle 8i, Windows 2000, Public Key Infrastructure, and Virtual Private Network technology. The latter two technologies will secure and extend NEMIS capabilities to the States and other Federal Agencies over the Internet. Hardware technology will continue to evolve and can be expected to provide significant improvements in scalability and performance. With regular technology refreshments and new NEMIS releases scheduled every six months, NEMIS promises to be the primary processing platform for the agency for at least the next five to ten years

Deregulation

What was your office's role, if any, in helping to get rid of unhelpful regulations within FEMA? How has deregulation efforts at FEMA resulted in the development of new innovations by employees in your office? How did deregulation improve your office's ability to respond more effectively during disasters?

Response:

Federal deregulation from 1993 to the present time had no impact on the development of new innovations by employees, how the directorate responds during disasters, or FEMA's information technology systems development and policy.

Organizational Culture

How did FEMA's mission shift change the agency's organizational culture? This question refers to FEMA's shift of focus from *National Preparedness to Emergency Management*.

Response

FEMA, in its early years, had in its mission the requirement to work with other federal departments and agencies, states, and local jurisdictions to ensure their emergency preparedness. The collection of emergency preparedness organizations at all levels of government led to national preparedness. Many of the initiatives, such as siren attack warning systems and fallout shelters that ensured the continuity of government in the event of nuclear attack, were deemed critical to national preparedness. As the nation came out of the Cold War era, FEMA turned its focus toward all hazards emergency management, encompassing Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery. This new focus reduced the cost of certain national preparedness requirements, such as protection from electromagnetic pulses and nuclear fallout.

Project Description

FEMA and its predecessor agencies always included national preparedness in its emergency management efforts to prepare states and local governments for response to national, state, and local emergencies and disasters. One major change for FEMA was the shift from a hazard-specific agency to an all-hazards emergency preparedness agency. Another change is the renewed focus on mitigation, such as the *Project Impact* initiative. FEMA now works with state and local governments to reduce or mitigate the effects of disasters. For example, the agency changed its policy on coverage extended by the Federal Insurance Administration (FIA). FIA no longer underwrites insurance for properties in 100-year floodplains. Instead, FEMA encourages property owners to voluntarily move out of harm's way.

As part of its all-hazards approach to emergency management requirements, FEMA assists state and local governments by providing technical assistance and funding for emergency equipment, such as emergency electric power generators and warning systems. This funding is also provided to state and local jurisdictions to defray part of their expenses for salaries, emergency management facilities, and other administrative expenses attached to emergency management.

FEMA also maintains the Emergency Alert System (EAS). The primary mission of the EAS is to provide the president a capability to speak to the American public and government officials during time of national crisis. A secondary use of the EAS is by state and local government officials to speak to their populations during a state or local time of crisis. Additionally, FEMA operates and maintains the National Warning System (NAWAS). NAWAS is a nationwide, dedicated and reliable emergency information and

warning telephone system. It can be activated at the federal, state, and local levels of government to provide government officials information on an impending or existing disaster or emergency.

Life Expectancy

State and local jurisdictions will always be at risk to all hazards, both natural and technological. Natural emergencies and disasters, such as hurricanes and tornadoes, cannot be stopped. However, their impact on the loss of lives and property can be mitigated through effective disaster mitigation and emergency management preparedness for rapid response and recovery. FEMA's ongoing all hazards national program of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery to save lives and reduce the loss of property will always be a requirement of the federal government.

The agency's increased focus on all hazards emergency management encompasses national preparedness. The basic requirements for an effective nationwide emergency management capability, at all levels of government, will prepare the nation's emergency managers for responding to and managing any type of natural or technological emergency or disaster. FEMA expects rapid changes in the technologies available to support the emergency management community. Technologies, such as wireless communications, are providing emergency managers with portable and easily deployable equipment. Also, the combining of multiple capabilities in one device, such as a cellular telephone, provides emergency managers a telephone, a pager, and access to the Internet. Not too long ago, obtaining all three capabilities required a separate telephone, pager, and computer. Wireless technology is becoming much more cost effective and very user friendly, compared to technologies used in the past. The advent and effectiveness of e-government depends on new and improved technologies. E-government will bring federal, state, and local emergency managers closer together for information sharing. Geographical distances between emergency managers and their parent organizations will not become an impediment to rapid, reliable, and effective communication.

Training

Describe any new training initiatives or changes in old training offered by your office to employees since 1993.

Response

Prior to the establishment of the Information Technology (IT) Services Directorate at FEMA, the agency established the headquarters information technology services center (HQITSC) in May 1995. This marked the first time in FEMA's history that an attempt was made to consolidate and standardize information systems and services at headquarters. The HQITSC became the focal point for information technology services, covering both day-to-day activities and disaster operations support.

As a result of the consolidation of IT services, branch personnel were able to track customer requests for services by category throughout headquarters. One of the most frequently requested items was training on IT software and equipment. Although the

agency had established a standard applications software package, there was no agency training program for the employees to get hands-on IT training.

Project Description

The HQITSC test & training center was developed to provide a wide variety of hands-on IT related training to employees at headquarters.

HQITSC customer training programs include:

- -NEMIS Test & Development
- -HQ Computer Based Training Program
- -ITS Orientation for New Headquarters Employees
- -Outlook Introduction/Advanced
- -Outlook Calendar
- -NEMIS Action Tracker
- -Office Specific Applications
- -Emergency Support Team Training

In addition to holding customer training classes, the operations branch at headquarters has taken steps to improve customer service by offering professional development training to its staff. Professional certifications include:

- Certified Helpdesk Director training
- Certified Helpdesk Manager training
- Certified Helpdesk Professional training
- Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer
- Microsoft Certified Professional training
- Certified Netware Engineer
- Certified Netware Administrator

Life Expectancy

Continuous

Disaster Operations

Describe your office's role on the Emergency Support Team (EST). Summarize an experience your office had working on the EST during one major disaster or emergency since 1993. What exactly did you do and what kinds of challenges did you encounter? Be specific and aim to leave the reader with a good understanding of what function your office fills on an EST, as well as the challenges you face.

Response

The emergency support team (EST) provides general coordination support to the response activities in the field and serves as the central source of information at the headquarters level regarding the status of ongoing and upcoming federal disaster operations.

Project Description

The operations branch at headquarters provides the full range of Information Technology (IT) Services Directorate support for the EST. This includes systems readiness, exercise, special events, and disaster operations support. The telecommunications service center (TSC) in the national network operations branch offers daily cellular and pager support to the EST efforts.

During EST operations, the operations branch provides support for the full range of IT support, including workstation, local area network (LAN), telephone systems, and audio-visual systems support. Branch personnel provide support for video-conferencing with the National Hurricane Center, regions and states during hurricane season and as required for other EST events. Special training sessions have also been developed and conducted by branch personnel to assist EST personnel in learning how to use NEMIS.

The telecommunications service center orders, delivers, and maintains cellular and pager equipment for the EST members. In addition, TSC supports the team mission by maintaining a master personal identification number (PIN) database, which allows the team to be notified at any time, day or night, for extreme circumstances. The TSC staff ensures the accuracy of this database by a constant connection with the pager vendor. This database is cross-referenced with the Communicator and the Master Access Database for team coordinators.

When the EST is deployed to FEMA headquarters, IT shifts its focus to accommodate new priorities, supporting the current EST members and troubleshooting their equipment problems. TSC encountered more instances of individuals not receiving pages while in the EST command center, for instance, which prompted more trouble reporting and calls to the vendor.

Life Expectancy

Continuous

Mission Shift

Describe how your office's mission and functions have evolved since FEMA changed its focus to an all-hazards disaster response.

Response

Prior to 1993, the FEMA information technology mission was performed within the National Preparedness (NP) Directorate. At that time, the NP Directorate had several offices performing information technology functions, including the Office of Information Resources Management and the Office of Systems Engineering. The offices supported all FEMA elements and programs, unclassified and classified. NP had an over-arching information technology mission responsibility to support day-to-day, disaster, and national security activities of the agency. In 1993, these information technology missions were shifted to the Operations Support Directorate, and in 1995, they were shifted to the new Information Technology (IT) Services Directorate.

The IT Directorate was established by merging the Information Systems Policy and Oversight, Software Design and Engineering, Operations and Maintenance, and Information Systems Engineering Divisions of the prior Operations Support Directorate with resources acquired from other directorates and administrations, such as the GIS function from the Mitigation Directorate and the technical requirements and specifications branch staff of the Response and Recovery Directorate.

Operations Support Directorate Mission 1993

The Operations Support Directorate had primary responsibility for providing agency-wide direct support services, addressing the common needs of all agency programs. Services included were administration, acquisition, logistics, information systems, security and health and safety for day-to-day operations and all-hazards emergencies. Additionally, Operations Support ensured adherence to management policies of the including program guidance. Information systems support consisted of policy and oversight guidance, software and communications design and engineering support, and operations and maintenance support. Also included were requirements for specialized capabilities and integration of FEMA-wide networks. This provided for the operation of the backbone communications systems essential for the agency to accomplish its day-to-day and emergency missions.

Information Technology (IT) Services (IT) Directorate Mission 1995

Information technology services assistance was provided for policy and oversight guidance, software and communications design and engineering support, and operation and maintenance support. These services ranged from requirements for specialized capabilities to integration of the FEMA-wide networks, such as the agency's backbone telecommunications systems, which supported both day-to-day and emergency missions.

Information Technology (IT) Services Directorate's Current Mission

The IT Directorate provides executive leadership and direction for management of information technology resources, and information services to accomplish and support FEMA's mission. The IT Directorate provides agency-wide information technology services assistance and guidance for information technology policy and oversight, software and communications design and engineering support, and operation and maintenance support. IT executives serve as:

- Chief information officer (CIO), who establishes clear accountability for agency information resources; oversees FEMA's IT investments; ensures compliance with laws and regulations governing IT; coordinates the agency's information technology activities. (CIO functions established by Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996.)
- Critical infrastructure assurance officer (CIAO), who protects all aspects of the agency's critical infrastructure; implements and coordinates federal government's initiatives on critical infrastructure protection. (CIAO functions established by Presidential Decision Directive (PDD-63), May 22, 1998.)
- Information Resources Board chair. (See "Essay A.3 - Information Resources Board.")

- Policy officers for the development and maintenance of the agency's Information Resources Management Policy and Procedural Directive, FEMA Manual 1500.1
- FEMA liaison with the White House, Congress, Office of Management and Budget, and other agencies on federal, state, and local information resources management issues.
- FEMA Director Witt's designate in the review, evaluation, and approval of information technology invocations or declarations for national security and emergency preparedness.
- The agency's Council of Principals and Council of Representatives designees to the National Communications System, in accordance with Executive Order 12472.

Life Expectancy

Reliable and survivable information and telecommunications resources are critical to both day-to-day and emergency management response and recovery missions and functions. There is a firm requirement for the federal government to coordinate its emergency management activities among its departments and agencies, with state and local governments, and the private sector, while protecting these assets from interference and unauthorized access. FEMA has a key and a lead role in assuring the effective coordination of the federal government's emergency management activities through its administration of the Federal Response Plan, which governs the coordination of federal resources and activities following a disaster declaration. With FEMA as the lead agency for coordinating federal response and resources, its mission will continue to grow in the future, as will IT's need to continue to develop new information and telecommunications systems in support of the agency's overall mission.

Management Reorganization

Describe how your organization senior management was reorganized in 1993. Have major changes in your office's management structure occurred since then? If so, what was changed and why was it changed?

Response

The Information Technology (IT) Services Directorate was established on January 22, 1995, by consolidating and centralizing agency-wide information technology services. The restructuring consolidated and realigned several information technology services functions from throughout the agency. The restructuring was driven by the desire to support FEMA's all-hazards mission and establish new partnerships to better serve customers. The reorganization would accomplish these goals by facilitating the workflow within the organization and enabling the IT Directorate to more-efficiently accomplish its mission.

Project Description

Several circumstances provided challenges and opportunities for streamlining the IT Directorate, including:

- Appointment of a new IT executive associate director and deputy,
- Establishment of the enterprise-wide information system, National Emergency Management Information System (NEMIS),
- Logistics Management Institute assessment of information technology in FEMA,
- Information Technology Management Reform Act, Chief Information Officer (CIO) Act enacted by Congress,
- The appointment of the IT executive associate director as the chief information officer,
- The appointment of the IT executive associate director as the critical infrastructure assurance officer, and
- The encouragement of FEMA leadership in opening the door for change.

The initial establishment of the Information Technology (IT) Services Directorate in 1995 was a step in the right direction, however, in fiscal year 1997, the directorate required further refinement. The second reorganization of IT grew out of the new executive associate director's interest in improving and streamlining the way IT functioned. The 1997 reorganization established a program management group, which developed NEMIS and created three streamlined divisions: Management, Operations, and Engineering.

Life Expectancy

The IT Directorate is proposing another organizational change in 2000. This change would establish an information assurance function in support of the critical infrastructure assurance officer (CIAO). This would focus increased efforts on meeting the requirements of Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 63, and respond to anticipated recommendations of the FEMA Office of Inspector General's Information Technology Entity-Wide Systems Security audit. A major component of PDD-63 is the development and implementation of a plan by each federal department and agency to protect their critical infrastructures. It would include, but not be limited to, its cyber-based systems. In meeting the requirements of PDD 63, the agency would assure the protection, continuity, and viability of its critical infrastructure.

The proposed information assurance function is projected to:

- Identify and verify critical infrastructure assets
- Conduct a series of vulnerability assessments against these assets
- Develop corrective action plans to mitigate the vulnerabilities
- Assure that the agency has current response plans in place
- Recruit, retain, and educate FEMA and contractor personnel in the areas of physical and information security
- Assure that adequate cooperation exists with the various federal, state and local agencies involved in the protection of the agency's critical infrastructure assets
- Assure that adequate resources have been identified, developed, and/or procured to ensure the protection of the agency's critical infrastructure assets

- Review, and where necessary, revise existing agency policies governing the management and protection of critical infrastructure assets
- Ensure that the intent of PDD-63 is carried out through the mitigation of the vulnerabilities identified during this process, and to provide for a long-term program of minimizing the risks of new programs and the change process of ongoing programs.

The IT Directorate has been confronted by a major challenge to fulfill its mission and "get the job done" in an environment of:

- Shifting emphasis of IT mission and functions
- Tighter staff constraints
- Added requirements and renewed emphasis on information technology and its management
- Rapidly advancing technology
- Dramatic increases in the emphasis and dependence on IT systems and functions
- Dramatic increases in levels of attacks on IT systems by hackers and viruses.

The goal of streamlining the IT Directorate is to:

- Standardize products and services
- Increase resources and focus on information systems protection and assurance,
- Improve concentration on core business
- Clarify the organization structure in order to strengthen responsibilities and accountability
- Consolidate similar functions to improve efficiency
- Shift resources from lower priority activities to higher priority activities
- Align skills with remaining and new workloads in order to improve job satisfaction.

Cost Reduction

Give examples of your office's efforts to reduce costs from 1993 to 2000. Highlight specific successful efforts and be specific about where costs were actually reduced.

Response

The costs of designing, implementing, and fielding information systems has been a primary concern since information systems became an integral part of business operations in the 1950s. The major cost considerations with the early information systems were the equipment and environment. These information systems used large equipment that was built in small quantities and required a very controlled environment to operate. The cost of the software programs was inexpensive; and the processed data was still very limited in scope. The staffing required to maintain and operate the systems was inexpensive, too. Because of the significant initial cost of the equipment, each acquisition of information systems was justified and scrutinized before it was approved.

As technology evolved, the costs of the information systems changed. The equipment became more robust and compact, less costly, and mass produced. At the same time, the cost of the applications (programs) increased and the data requirements expanded. Consequently, when a new or replacement information system is now proposed, costs or cost savings are focused on the outcome that the system will produce. Maintaining a baseline of usable and effective information systems while providing the FEMA customers with enhanced information technology capabilities and better response time serves as the impetus behind the development and fielding of the current information systems that FEMA now uses to fulfill its all-hazard mission.

In 1993, the FEMA information technology operation was focused on providing the backbone telecommunications system, which included the telephones, related equipment and the National Warning System. Local area networks (LANs), personal computers (PCs), and network servers were more the responsibilities of the individual offices and staff elements. This separation and segregation of the information technology functions underwent a significant change with the advent of new FEMA leadership. The agency was reorganized in 1993. The information technology functions were consolidated with other administrative functions into a new directorate, the Operations Support Directorate. Then, less than a year later, the IT functions were centralized, forming a completely new directorate – Information Technology (IT) Services Directorate.

The functions and projects of IT are reviewed and analyzed based on a cost-benefit analysis. A good return on investment has been a central part of IT project consideration, from replacing an antiquated system to adding a new capability. Benefits include cost savings and improvements in customer service. Combining information technology functions into one directorate facilitates the streamlining of activities and gains new economies of scale. This made the infusion of new capabilities and technology more practical.

Since 1993, the Operations Support Directorate, and now the IT Directorate, has managed the consolidation of information technology systems, the addition of new capabilities, the reduction of costs, and further definition of an agency wide IT architecture. Collectively, they represent a major change in the way the information technology performs.

Project Description

Reducing IT cost is not a separate project, instead, it is becoming an important part of the normal IT project review and evaluation process. IT projects can range from maintaining the telecommunications system to adding a new capability such as the National Emergency Management Information System (NEMIS). The information technology systems are designed to support the agency in accomplishing its mission in a timely and efficient manner. Consequently, reducing costs occurs when the operations and maintenance costs for information technology systems go down, or when systems upgrades and improvements with enhanced capabilities are added at no additional cost, or when new systems are fielded that address user requirements. Since its establishment in 1995, the IT Directorate continually searches for cost savings, while simultaneously meeting the needs of its customers within the constraints of austere budgets.

The use and proliferation of personnel computers (PCs) continues to swell, becoming an essential part for most government operations. Though the Information Technology (IT)

Services Directorate cannot claim any credit for starting this revolution, it has contributed mightily to improving the effectiveness of PCs. As a standalone item, the PC is very useful. However, the usefulness of a PC is greatly improved by providing the capability to share information directly with other PCs. IT builds and administers local area networks (LANs) to make this sharing possible. The IT directorate began to consolidate and integrate the separate, standalone LANs into one system. Another part of this effort was the establishment a wide area network (WAN), which would allow LANs at different locations to communicate just like they were co-located in the same facility. This project took several years to complete. The result of this effort is improved job performance and services provided to the FEMA customers. This improvement is shown in the perception that the public has towards the agency and the ability of the agency to respond to disasters. The LAN/WAN systems enable FEMA to connect to any disaster field office within 24 hours of the establishment of a disaster field office. Improving customer service while increasing the capability of the operation without a budget increase represents a real cost savings.

Integration of the LANs and WANs provided the physical infrastructure for improving the efficient use of PCs as part of normal operations. The complement to this effort has been to provide a standard office applications software suite and a centralized "help desk" for the FEMA staff. IT had the lead responsibility for coordinating the selection of the standard suite. A standard suite of software enables the staff to better communicate and coordinate activities. In addition to making the personnel more productive, there is a cost savings from acquiring a single FEMA-wide software license. When changes are made, upgrades occur, or new releases take place, the entire staff can have their PCs updated with minimal impact, thus providing greater efficiency than standalone or unique systems. Further cost savings occurred when IT set up a help desk that provides timely answers to common questions and challenges concerning the software applications and related problems. Help desks have become essential to the operation of businesses with a large number of PCs, saving both time and money on computer problems. IT promoted and implemented standardization and one-stop response capability, while staying within its established budget. The savings resulting from these activities is reflected in both the internal and external FEMA customer levels. Thus, these agency-wide efforts reap similar benefits by providing emergency managers the immediate ability to exchange and coordinate information relative to all types of critical events, including tornadoes, hurricanes, and earthquakes.

The National Warning System (NAWAS) was initially implemented in 1966 to serve as an attack alert system to warn the population regarding all levels of attack and related emergency events. Since that time, the system has been migrated into a dual-purpose entity, and is used extensively on a day-to-day basis for all categories of emergency response and coordination events.

NAWAS in its original configuration as engineered in the late 1960s incurred expenditures generally averaging \$7.5 million a year. During the last five years, an aggressive effort has been employed to reduce these costs along with enhancing the day-to-day usage of the system. FEMA has employed two strategies in this regard. The principal strategy has been to utilize the very low competitive rates available on government-wide Federal Telecommunications Services 2000 contract. FEMA has taken advantage of the evolution in the telecommunications industry to both upgrade the system

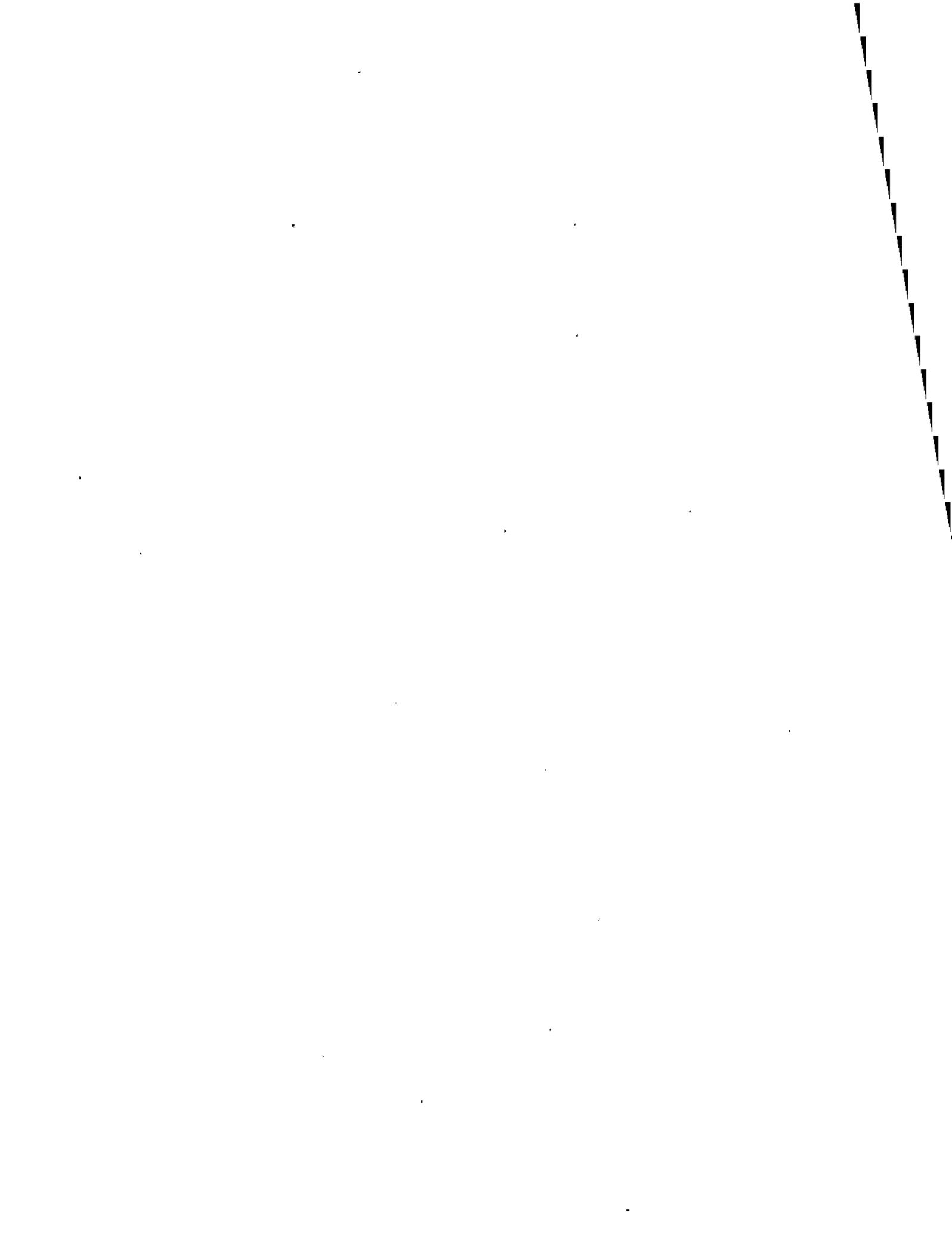
and greatly reduce the cost of the handsets and configuration management nodes in the system. IT has acquired all necessary equipment to manage the leased circuits, and all telephone sets required to use the capabilities. This technology allows FEMA to integrate low prices with intelligent network configuration technology and approaches to provide significant cost savings. That potential has been realized, with the system costing less than 40 percent of its original annual cost and delivering greatly improved performance. The response backbone provided by NAWAS is in continuous use by state and local entities throughout the nation, which praise the system as a life saving hotline for emergency responders. NAWAS allows the myriad state and local entities to conduct efficient and effective operations, including the ability to share critical information with other government offices and the public 24 hours a day.

FEMA's mission is to reduce the loss of life and property and to protect U.S. institutions from all hazards. This requires a robust communications capability that can operate and support the mission during day-to-day activities as well as in emergency situations where resources, infrastructure, and telecommunications are damaged or limited. The FEMA Switch Network (FSN) was designed, built, and fielded to provide voice, data, and video services to support the FEMA mission. Initially, the FSN supported the classified programs and administrative requirements. However, beginning in fiscal year 1993, the primary purpose of the network was expanded to include supporting all-hazard emergency management activities.

The FSN has improved services in two critical areas. Beginning about 1993, the FSN was enhanced by the addition of satellite capability, which can provide dial-tone service within minutes after arrival at a disaster scene. This capability is especially important when an island disaster occurs and a substantial portion of the communications infrastructure is destroyed. The FSN has significantly improved FEMA's ability to respond to customer requirements. Specifically, before 1993, disaster victims would have to wait in long lines at disaster application centers to fill out paper applications for assistance. This process involved mailing paper applications to a processing center and waiting as long as two to three months for a disaster assistance check to arrive. Now, using a toll-free registration number, disaster victims can call directly to a national processing service center and apply for assistance over the phone in minutes. Once registered, qualified applicants can receive an assistance check in less than one week. Over time, the cost of operating, maintaining, and enhancing the FSN has decreased – even though support and performance has improved. In fiscal year 1993, the FSN effort cost \$20 million. However, by 2000, the activity cost dropped to \$9.3 million. The \$10.7 million cost savings occurred in three areas: network operations, leased circuits, and leased telecommunications equipment and maintenance.

Life Expectancy/Future of Final Product

It's an ongoing and never-ending task to increase both the effectiveness and efficiency of the FEMA information system. The effort necessitates diligence and an understanding of where information technology is headed. Fortunately, continuous improvements in information technology have provided additional means to improve performance, often at a reduced cost. The IT directorate continually strives to meet the needs of its customers and FEMA.



INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Special Essays

Discuss the purpose of the Director's formation of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, and the strategy the Director of FEMA and Office Director have developed to utilize IGA as a tool for outreach. Discuss how this strategy has developed partnerships and strengthened relationships with outside clients, educated clients on disaster programs, promoted disaster prevention and resistance and better served the American public through informed state and local government officials.

Intergovernmental Affairs: Purpose and Strategy

The federal role in emergency management has increased steadily in recent years. However, the intergovernmental context of disaster management remains as important as ever. Only the affected local jurisdictions can provide the kind of direct assistance that most disaster victims require immediately after a disaster. While comprehensive emergency management legislation has been passed at the federal level, these programs are only as effective as local policies and leadership make them.

FEMA Director James Lee Witt is well aware of the importance of the local aspect in disaster management, having served in state and local government. This has made him a vocal advocate for strong partnerships between FEMA and state and local governments. Although the intergovernmental function existed for some time at FEMA, it was limited in staff and assigned to various directorates and offices throughout the agency. Given his commitment to intergovernmental partnerships, Director Witt formed the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs on Jan. 18, 1999, as an independent office that reported directly to him.

The mission of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) is to establish and strengthen agency partnerships with state and local officials. IGA achieves this by serving as a liaison to state and local governments in the administration of FEMA's programs, policies, and initiatives. IGA also proactively manages FEMA's intergovernmental relationships by building partnerships with national and regional associations and organizations that represent state and local officials. In so doing, IGA helps to maximize the effectiveness of the agency's efforts to carry out its mission to save lives and protect property across the country and helps local officials help their communities to become disaster resistant.

IGA's Belief in Customer Service Through Outreach and Casework

IGA has carried out its mission through direct contact with state and local officials and through partnerships with their national and regional associations and organizations. IGA has served as the agency's liaison to state and local officials with the keenest eye toward customer service. In responding to inquiries and concerns of state and local officials, IGA helps the efficiency and effectiveness of FEMA's programs, policies, and initiatives. Not only do these positive relationships help solve individual problems on the ground, but they also create a receptive and enthusiastic audience for FEMA's message of disaster resistance and an all-hazards approach to emergency management. By working

with national and regional associations and organizations that represent state and local officials, IGA is building partnerships that maximize the power and reach of the FEMA's efforts and message. Through these associations, IGA reaches large groups of key state, regional and local decision makers to advance the cause of effective emergency management and disaster resistance. These partnerships can also help advance the agenda of the agency in the national policy arena, as well as help address specific and important issues related to operational response and recovery.

Upon formation by the director, IGA began serving as a single and comprehensive point of entry for state and local officials into headquarters. In this way, IGA has been able to ensure that any concern or question from a state or local official gets addressed comprehensively and with an agency-wide perspective. IGA has relied upon internal partnerships with the program offices and regional offices of the agency to make sure that such matters are fully and appropriately addressed. IGA seeks to ensure that the state and local perspective is adequately considered by FEMA, whether in the development of a policy action, agency correspondence, or program implementation.

These customer service contacts also give IGA the opportunity to further educate state and local officials about the programs, policies, and initiatives of FEMA. These state and local officials provide feedback on how the agency is doing and how programs could be better implemented to meet the customer needs. State and local officials also give IGA an opportunity to emphasize effective emergency management and how actions taken before disaster strikes can save lives, protect property, and help ensure a community's well being.

IGA also coordinates with the national, regional, and state associations and organizations to participate in workshops and panel discussions to educate local and state officials on FEMA programs, policies, and initiatives and allows FEMA to hear the concerns and experiences of emergency management from their members. In addition, IGA sponsors outreach booths at the annual conferences of these associations, resulting in literally hundreds of contacts with state and local officials. The booths give FEMA the opportunity to answer questions officials may have about specific disasters; they provide an opportunity to educate officials about agency programs and initiatives; and they offer a forum to make state and local decision makers aware of Project Impact: Building Disaster Resistant Communities. These national, regional, and state organizations offer IGA an effective way to reach their members. These organizations have been great assets to FEMA in distributing information and gathering concerns. This active participation with national, regional, and state organizations provides opportunities for Director Witt and other senior management to speak to at their conferences, demonstrating FEMA's commitment to the concerns of state and local officials and reinforcing the agency's belief in customer service.

The two aspects of customer service – case work and outreach – can come together in powerful ways. These two tools were combined in the aftermath of Hurricane Floyd as IGA was able to utilize its partnerships with national associations such as the National League of Cities and with regional organizations, namely the North Carolina League of Municipalities and the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners and the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, to help provide effective customer service. IGA worked closely with leagues and associations to arrange speaking engagements for the director after the disaster to reinforce the agency's message. IGA worked with the

North Carolina League to dispel rumors and provide accurate disaster-specific information on FEMA programs. Due to its relationship with the New Jersey League, IGA was advised of its concerns, which helped IGA respond to those issues and also provided an opportunity for Director Witt to address the mayors of New Jersey. These opportunities have a direct impact on the agency's ability to meet its strategic goals while focusing directly on disaster victims.

Good service isn't only about satisfied customers. It's also about effective emergency management through understanding and sharing local and federal perspectives. Through positive contact with state and local officials and through building partnerships with national associations and organizations, IGA has endeavored to maximize the effectiveness of the programs, policies, and initiatives of the agency. IGA has been the point of contact for the leadership of national, regional, and state organizations, and these organizations have provided FEMA with links to the local and state officials, who are making communities across America safer places to live and work.

IGA's Belief in Public Policy and Partnership

Through responsive customer service and the building of strong and effective partnerships, IGA seeks to better serve state and local officials on behalf of FEMA's mission. These partnerships are vitally important avenues to create educational opportunities and implement the agency's programs and initiatives with state and local leaders. But they have also played an important part in public policy. While comprehensive emergency management legislation has been passed at the federal level, these programs are only as effective as local policies and leadership make them. Therefore, the ability that national and state associations and organizations have to examine those policies and their support of such policies is of vital importance to the agency. IGA works to understand the views of local and state officials through the organizations and associations that represent them. IGA also informs and educates their members on FEMA programs, policies, and initiatives and uses their feedback to assist agency leadership in the decision making process. IGA works to represent the agency's perspective as these groups develop their position papers, resolutions, and policies as well. By discussing community risks, local leadership is able to make informed decisions on the policies they set within their organizations on emergency management and prevention. In so doing, these national and state organizations and associations have helped to advance the policy objectives of FEMA toward building safer, and more disaster resistant communities.

In reaching out to state and local officials, IGA has strong interaction with governors, mayors, and county officials, as well as countless other elected, appointed and implied community leaders, about the programs and initiatives of the agency. This has helped Intergovernmental Affairs and FEMA as a whole to understand how these programs are working in their communities across America. These partners have demonstrated their effectiveness in spreading the agency's message and the greater effectiveness of programs that are part of the local agenda.

IGA has kept national, regional, and state organizations advised and connected with upcoming emergency management proposed rulemaking. IGA meets with them to explain the proposal, the reasons behind it, and to encourage them to comment. When partners have concerns or ideas on how operations can be done more effectively, IGA

works with internal partners in the agency's program areas to meet with partners and review their concerns directly. IGA is proactive in this arena, meeting with governors' representatives, state associations and national organizations to keep them well advised of FEMA's policy process and encourage their comment policy and rulemaking.

The importance of state and local perspective in the public policy arena was acknowledged and heightened by the president's signature on a new executive order on Federalism. In order to further strengthen the agency's partnerships with state and local officials, Director Witt appointed the director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs as the agency's Federalism official. In implementing the executive order and ensuring that state and local officials are consulted when FEMA takes policy and rulemaking actions, IGA has been able to work closely with state and local officials and their representative associations and organizations, resulting in more thorough and substantive rulemaking.

In conclusion, the formation and building of IGA was important because the agency needed to better serve and understand FEMA's primary customers - local and state officials. Director Witt, as a former local and state official, understood the importance of their support and advice when working to accomplish the missions of FEMA. His vision advanced a local official's ability to determine community risks and subsequent plans to reduce loss - resulting in safer and more disaster resistant, sustainable communities. The director understood that prevention would not take root without local leadership.

As an office IGA understood his vision and worked with other entities to bring the local perspective on emergency management policies and initiatives to bear, furthering the priorities of the agency; expanding the reach of the agency's messages, and making the programs, policies, and initiatives of the agency more effective in meeting emergency management and disaster resistance needs of communities across the country. IGA accomplished the director's intent despite a limited budget and staff and are continuing to expand on his vision. The office is accomplishing its mission with strong beliefs in customer service, timely casework, an understanding of public policy, and the ability and skills to reach the masses of local and state officials through national, regional, and state organizations and associations; disaster-based and non-disaster-related.

Mission Shift to an All-Hazards Disaster Response

Describe how your office's mission and functions have evolved since FEMA changed its focus to an all-hazards disaster response. Describe the evolution of your division's mission and functions from 1992-2000.

Intergovernmental Affairs and the All-hazards Perspective

The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) has been imbued with the all-hazards perspective in emergency management since its formation in 1999. When Director James Lee Witt established IGA he charged the office with proactively engaging state and local officials to build and strengthen partnerships. This provided a new opportunity to advance and solidify the agency's all-hazards focus in its programs, policies, and initiatives. IGA has played a key role in strategically communicating this all-hazards message to state and local decision makers, as well as to national associations and organizations that help define and shape public policy nation-wide.

When IGA was formed by the action of the director in January 1999, it focused on establishing external relationships, especially with national and regional associations and organizations, such as the National Governors' Association, National Conference of State Legislatures, United States Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities, National Association of Counties, National Association of Town and Townships, National Association of Development Organizations, and state municipal leagues, associations, and regional development councils as well as the International Association of Emergency Managers and the National Association of Emergency Managers. Through such organizations, IGA found new and important audiences for the agency's message of being prepared for all types of hazards and taking preventive action before disaster strikes. Working in partnership with FEMA's program offices and regional offices, IGA has been able to provide FEMA information to state and local officials, and the national and state organizations that represent them, to help them better understand disaster response and recovery programs before they are actually confronted with a major disaster. IGA has also helped convince governors, mayors, county officials, and regional leaders of the importance of pre-disaster mitigation so they can proactively help protect lives and property when disaster does strike.

IGA's mission is to strengthen and build upon these relationships to seek out new and creative ways to work together to further the goals of the agency and to help local entities help themselves to become more disaster resistant. The mission has evolved from IGA's solid base of outreach (listening, educating, and resolving customer concerns, as well as marketing FEMA's message through the aid of national and state organizations) to a partnership with organizations and associations that represent state and local officials through policy development and cooperative agreements.

For example, in the beginning IGA worked with governors' offices to provide updated information on disaster activity in their state. Then IGA sponsored booths at national and state conferences to answer questions and provide information to state and local officials on disaster programs. As relationships solidified, there was development of workshops, newsletters, and an all-hazards emergency management guidebook for governors. Currently, IGA is working with the National Governors' Association to develop policy forums and academies for governors and senior state policy makers to explore effective emergency management and prevention techniques to protect federal, state, and local investments in our nation's communities.

IGA has evolved in concert with 15 base national organizations and 100 state associations, municipal leagues, and regional development districts. IGA seeks to understand member concerns and organizational goals and address those concerns to develop a track record of responsiveness. These relationships with state and local officials and the organizations that represent them have helped FEMA share an all-hazards emergency management approach with state and local officials in a unified effort to take action before disaster strikes to safeguard the citizens and vitality of their communities.

Management Reorganization

Describe how your office's senior management was reorganized in 1993. Have major changes in your office's management structure occurred since then? If so, what was changed and why was it changed?

Management Changes in the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs

Over the course of Director James Lee Witt's tenure at FEMA, he has become increasingly convinced of the need to take action before a disaster strikes. After witnessing the ravages of one disaster after another in communities across the country, the director has become committed to the idea that things can be done to prevent the impact of disasters before they occur. However, the director realized that such pre-disaster mitigation programs would only be as effective as local policies and leadership make them. To fulfill his vision that communities could become disaster resistant, he knew that he would have to launch a strong and concerted effort to reach state and local officials to communicate the hope and promise of this all-hazards approach to emergency management. The agency needed an office specifically assigned to manage intergovernmental affairs to help carry out this mission.

The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) was created by Director Witt on Jan. 18, 1999. As the director had previously served in both state and local government, he understood the importance of state and local officials in emergency management and sought to ensure that their concerns were fully addressed and their expertise and commitment brought to bear as FEMA responded to disasters and promoted pre-disaster mitigation. In order to fulfill his vision of how FEMA could work in a productive partnership with state and local officials to protect lives and make communities disaster resistant, Director Witt enlisted the most experienced and skilled team for this new office. The director chose senior management for IGA with a proven track record of building an effective external affairs operation. Having built the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) into a valuable part of the agency's operations, this management had the skills necessary to successfully manage the new intergovernmental mission. A key component of OCLA success has been the ability to think in a strategic manner to serve members of Congress and advance the mission of the agency. The management assigned to IGA brought this knowledge base with them and applied it in the operation of the new office. Since its formation, IGA has worked in partnership with OCLA and other agency external affairs components at both headquarters and regional levels to provide a comprehensive and effective external interface for FEMA. In providing responsive customer service and in building strong partnerships, IGA has enhanced the effective delivery of the agency's disaster relief programs and advanced the goals of building disaster resistant communities across America.

Customer Service Improvements

How has your office implemented FEMA's customer service policy? Please cite specific examples of research and/or surveys conducted by your office related to customer service. Also, cite specific changes that were made in the way your office does business as a result of the research and surveys that were done. Finally, give

examples of specific improvements in the way your office has serviced its customers since 1992.

Intergovernmental Affairs and Customer Service Policies

The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) was formed as a direct result of Director James Lee Witt's goal to better serve the American public through a coordinated and organized delivery of services to state and local government officials. FEMA has a long tradition of close relationships in the emergency management arena. IGA was formed in an effort to strengthen these ties and enlist state and local officials in a partnership for strong all hazards emergency management and prevention efforts. IGA has carried out this mission imbued with the director's vision of customer service that focuses on serving people rather than merely running programs.

IGA has achieved the director's goal by working with state and local officials and the national and state organizations and associations that represent them. By keeping state and local officials informed, citizens throughout the nation are better served. Not only has IGA reached out to state and local officials on FEMA's programs, policies, and initiatives, IGA has also provided these officials with the information they need in order to craft their own policies and messages in order to better serve and protect those they represent.

During disasters, IGA serves as a liaison to state and local officials and their national and state organizations in order to respond to questions and provide updated and accurate information from the agency. By providing strong proactive service to state and local officials and their national and state organizations, IGA has been able to build partnerships with states and local governments and their national and state organizations to assist and enhance the effective delivery of the agency's programs and initiatives.

During non-disaster periods, IGA continues to function as the agency's liaison to state and local officials and their national and state organizations, responding to inquiries and facilitating responses to questions or concerns in a comprehensive, agency-wide manner.

IGA has also implemented an outreach strategy to proactively provide services to customers, rather than waiting for them to come to the agency. IGA has achieved this through partnerships with the organizations and associations that already serve state and local officials through organized channels and memberships. IGA has established working relationships with these groups to integrate the messages of the agency into established lines of communication. Organizations such as the National Governors' Association, National League of Cities, United States Conference of Mayors, and the National Association of Counties welcomed this approach of sharing ideas and information. In this way, IGA has served state and local officials and helped their organizations better serve their members as well. Through these partnerships, IGA has been able to address the specific needs of the agency's intergovernmental customers, delivering a custom-developed service that meets specific and locally defined needs.

Throughout IGA's customer service and outreach activities, the office works in close cooperation with the program and regional offices of the agency. In this way, IGA helps address questions and concerns raised by those outside of FEMA in the most appropriate and responsive manner. IGA assists the agency's program and regional offices in their efforts to carry out programs and activities.

This kind of outreach proved to be very productive and effective in the aftermath of Hurricane Floyd in 1999. During Hurricane Floyd, IGA worked with the North Carolina League of Municipalities, the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners and New Jersey State League of Municipalities to identify and respond to the needs of local officials who were affected by this disaster. Because each state had different needs, the partnership with state-level organizations allowed IGA to have a better perspective on the services that needed to be delivered. The clients defined their needs and IGA, through internal partnerships, delivered the tools they needed to help their constituents through the difficult process of recovery.

In North Carolina, IGA worked in partnership with the North Carolina League of Municipalities and the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners to sponsor a series of meetings for county and municipal officials. By using the channels of communications already established by these organizations IGA was able to reach every elected local body in the affected areas. These meetings were organized to educate the local officials on FEMA and state disaster recovery, mitigation, and prevention programs and initiatives. Through these meetings, FEMA and state representatives could also identify any shortcomings in information dissemination and program implementation, and address them through concentrated media releases and outreach strategies.

This approach to responsive and proactive customer service also provided a foundation for more permanent relationships with these organizations. Through these sustained relationships, IGA facilitated speaking engagements for Director Witt to address the membership of both the North Carolina and New Jersey municipal leagues to give local officials an opportunity to discuss issues directly with the FEMA director. In addition, IGA sponsored information booths at their conferences, providing an opportunity to interact with scores of local officials from across each state, respond to their questions and concerns, and provide educational materials on disaster assistance programs and on disaster resistance initiatives.

One of the tools IGA has used to implement its proactive customer service strategy is the sponsorship of outreach booths and resource centers at organizational conferences as well as participating or conducting workshops for their members. In 1999, IGA organized and staffed booths at the conferences of the United States Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities (2), National Association of Counties (2), National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), Illinois Municipal League, North Carolina League of Municipalities, New Jersey State League of Municipalities, and the National Association of Towns and Townships as well as a host of workshops.

In 2000, IGA attended the same conferences with resource centers, while adding the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, Virginia Municipal League, NADO annual conference, Neighborhoods USA, the White House Empowerment Conference, and the International Association of Emergency Managers to the list. At these booths, IGA and regional staff provide information on the programs, policies, and initiatives of the agency. The booths provide an opportunity for officials to ask specific questions or express their concerns, and IGA is then able to relay this input to the regional offices that coordinate these officials. During the workshops, IGA worked side by side with local officials to talk about how communities could prepare before a disaster strikes and the steps that need to be taken during a recovery. By being available at these conferences, IGA has

been able to better serve state and local officials and create more lasting, two-way partnerships with organizations and their members.

Another tool that IGA uses for sustained customer service is the dissemination of informational advisories. In New Jersey, IGA worked in conjunction with the municipal league to develop an advisory that gave them simple steps they could take to get ready for future disasters in their locality. The advisory included preparedness and preventive steps they could take as well as key messages they could deliver to their constituents. It was so well received in New Jersey that IGA adapted it and sent it to all of the governors' Washington offices, national associations, state municipal leagues, and state county associations. Across the country, national, state and local organizations used this advisory for their own publications and message crafting. The International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) reprinted the New Jersey advisory with special recognition for the fact that it guided local elected officials to their local emergency managers as a first step in the preparedness process. This advisory proved to be successful because it not only served to answer the questions and address the needs of local officials, but it also bridged the gap between them and local emergency managers. National organizations can also distribute FEMA's message through their publications which reach a national audience. One example is the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO). NADO designated an entire issue of their magazine to cover emergency management issues. This tool provided FEMA with another way to reach state and local officials in regard our programs, policies, and initiatives. These examples demonstrated the successful implementation of the IGA mission to reach new client groups through the assistance of national and state organizations while strengthening the fabric of emergency management as a whole. Director Witt's commitment to providing the most effective and mutually beneficial customer service to state and local officials was demonstrated when he designated the director of the office of Intergovernmental Affairs as the agency's Federalism official under the president's new executive order on federalism. This executive order requires that state and local officials be consulted when the agency takes policymaking actions that affect state and local governments. IGA was charged by the director with the implementation of the executive order at FEMA. As such, IGA endeavors to keep state and local officials, as well as their national, regional, and state associations and organizations apprised of regulatory and policy making activity in the agency. This ensures that the executive order is fully implemented, strengthens the agency's partnerships with state and local interests, and provides good customer service to state and local officials. It also helps the agency administer its policies and programs more effectively by hearing state and local concerns early in the process so they can be addressed if possible.

One example of IGA's federalism activities is demonstrated by the cooperative efforts with the Response and Recovery directorate on new insurance requirements for public buildings under the agency's disaster programs. This potential change in policy would have an effect on state and local entities across the country by creating new requirements for localities to be eligible for Public Assistance program funds following disasters. In order to carry out the office's federalism and customer service responsibilities, IGA has kept state and local interests informed of actions taken in consideration of a new policy on this issue. In partnership with the National Governors' Association, IGA

organized a series of meetings at the Hall of States in Washington, D.C. to discuss the draft proposal for a new regulation. In these meetings, IGA and FEMA officials met with governors' offices, national associations, local risk managers, state emergency managers, localities, hospitals, schools, and others. These discussions gave affected entities the opportunity to voice their views and ask questions of FEMA officials involved in crafting this rulemaking. They also gave the agency the opportunity to hear and consider the concerns raised by state and local officials, and keep those interested up to date on the status of the process.

IGA continues to keep local officials informed throughout the process in further meetings, faxed informational notices, and speaking engagements. IGA also organized agency speakers to address members of the California League of Cities in Washington as well as representatives from the California State Legislature. IGA continued to respond to new requests for information on the Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and provided responses from senior agency representatives. In a spirit of openness and cooperation, IGA encouraged interested parties to submit their comments on the Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking by reminding all of the office's contacts when the established deadline approached. Key national organizations put out IGA advisories, as requested to encourage comment. These outreach efforts also proved to be a conduit for recruitment of new external partners. The regulatory process, which is often an adversarial relationship between federal agencies and external parties, was changed to an open forum for the sharing of ideas and information on policy needs and how they could best be implemented.

Since its creation in 1999, IGA has endeavored to provide state and local officials with the most responsive and proactive customer service possible. This effort has assisted the agency in effectively implementing its programs, policies, and initiatives by responding to questions and concerns at the local level. It has helped build sustained and productive partnerships with national, regional, and state associations and organizations. And it has helped advance the mission of the agency to safeguard lives and property, and to help communities across the country to protect themselves from the devastating impact of disasters.

Cost Reduction

Give examples of your office's efforts to reduce costs from 1993 to 2000. Highlight specific successful efforts and be specific about where costs were actually reduced.

Intergovernmental Affairs: Reducing Costs

The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) has endeavored to meet the goals of the office and the agency in the most fiscally responsible manner possible. Through the utilization of external partnerships and internal cooperation with other agency offices and directorates, as well as the use of technology and even recycling office supplies, IGA has been able to fulfill the goals of the office in a cost-effective manner. In setting the outreach goals and strategy for the office, IGA has made a concerted effort to identify and pursue opportunities to work with state and local officials that will provide the greatest and longest lasting impact for the successful implementation of the agency's

programs, policies, and initiatives. Given the relatively small size of IGA as an office, it has nonetheless set out an ambitious agenda to reach state and local officials to provide information about FEMA's programs and initiatives, communicate the important benefits of pre-disaster mitigation measures, and provide good customer service to these officials, who are some of FEMA's most important partners and customers.

One of the most potent tools that IGA uniquely offers in the effort to accomplish FEMA's goals is a comprehensive, creative, and energetic management of the agency's relationship with national and regional associations and organizations that represent state and local officials. By fostering and building these relationships, IGA has taken FEMA's intergovernmental outreach efforts to a new level. These associations and organizations provide national and statewide forums to introduce and advance the programs and messages of the agency through attendance at their national conferences, participation in their policy committee activity, and sustaining a working relationship year round. This maximizes outreach potential for the agency, provides the biggest bang for the buck for limited office staff and financial resources, and exposes the greatest number of local decision makers to the ideas, know-how, and experiences that can help protect lives and property across the country.

One of the primary messages that IGA communicates to state and local audiences is also one of financial responsibility. This is Project Impact: Building Disaster Resistant Communities as spearheaded by FEMA Director James Lee Witt. Pre-disaster mitigation save lives and spare families and communities the trauma of the devastation that natural disasters can cause. Making communities disaster resistant is also fiscally sound, as the resources spent up front to help prevent the damaging impact of disasters, both socially and economically, and saves money in the long run by breaking the costly cycle of disaster-rebuild-disaster. IGA reaches out to state and local officials to show how disaster resistance makes sense for the lives it saves, the local economic vitality it protects, and the recovery burdens that it saves – locally and nationally – in helping to prevent the impact of disasters before they occur.

IGA has also controlled its costs and maximized its efforts by working in partnership internally with the other offices and directorates of the agency. IGA works with program offices to respond to inquiries from state and local officials, coordinates the agency's external relations with other service offices such as the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs and the Office of Public Affairs, and integrates the expertise of the regional offices into the activities of national and regional associations and organizations. By working together with other offices and directorates, IGA helps the agency effectively and successfully achieve its goals, utilizes the agency's resources in the most efficient manner possible, and builds internal cooperation and customer service within the agency. Technology has also played a big part in IGA's effort to control costs. Rather than sending expensive mailings to the office's contacts and constituent organizations – taking up considerable staff time, supply costs, and postage – IGA has used e-mail and the Internet to distribute advisories and informational documents to more than 1,000 clients in the ever-expanding IGA database. IGA has also implemented a monthly advisory alert on agency programs and initiatives to state municipal leagues and county associations via e-mail, cutting costs considerably, improving customer service, and proactively spreading FEMA messages.

By cultivating strong external relationships, promoting fiscally sound public policy, cooperating with internal partners, utilizing technology, and recycling office supplies, IGA has endeavored to effectively and efficiently assist the agency in the successful accomplishment of its mission to protect life and property nationwide from all types of hazards.

Results-Oriented Incentives

How has your office adapted new ways of motivating employees and improving program performance? Specifically, which methods of reward or accountability practices have been implemented? Cite specific criticism and praise that prompted such changes in your office, if applicable.

Intergovernmental Affairs and Results-Oriented Incentives

In order to improve program performance for the agency, the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) identified means and strategies through which the office could assist the agency in accomplishing its strategic goals.

IGA assists in the agency's goal of protecting lives and preventing the loss of property from all hazards by performing intergovernmental outreach and liaison functions for the agency's Project Impact: Building Disaster Resistant Communities, repetitive loss, flood map modernization, and safe room as well as other critical initiatives. IGA also supports conferences and briefings for governors, mayors, county officials, and national organizations and associations to promote prevention and hazard reduction efforts. And IGA supports ongoing development and implementation of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, flood map modernization, and other mitigation programs, including project notifications and intergovernmental engagement and support of community projects and activities to educate officials on the direct benefits of the agency's programs and initiatives.

In order to help ensure positive results in the agency's efforts to reduce human suffering and enhance the recovery of communities after disaster strikes, IGA provides intergovernmental liaison, in conjunction with FEMA's regional offices and Community Relations cadre, in response to major disasters, emergencies, fire suppression declarations, and National Flood Insurance Program requests. IGA also supports White House disaster policy and interagency recovery task force initiatives. IGA further promotes the engagement and implementation of the agency's prevention and disaster impact reduction initiatives with governors, mayors, county officials, as well as other elected and appointed officials, and with national organizations and associations.

In addition, IGA helps to ensure that the public is served in a timely and efficient manner by maintaining lines of communication and outreach with intergovernmental constituencies with interest in FEMA programs and initiatives. IGA also implements timely customer service approaches to intergovernmental correspondence and inquiries and all other written educational and outreach materials on Project Impact: Building Disaster Resistant Communities, safe rooms, and seasonal disaster preparedness and prevention packets as needed by intergovernmental constituencies. And IGA conducts

outreach to engage intergovernmental constituencies in the agency's policy and rule development and implementation process.

Throughout IGA's customer service and outreach effort, the office has embraced the all-hazards philosophy to emergency management and prevention efforts. By identifying what the office needed to do to help the agency implement its programs and accomplish its strategic goals, IGA helped accomplish positive results for the agency, the administration, and the county as a whole, in the mission to protect lives and property and help communities across America become disaster resistant.

Use of Technological Innovations

Describe how your office has employed the use of new technology since 1992. Also describe ways in which old technology has been used in a new way, if applicable. How have these technological innovations affected your office's performance.

Intergovernmental Affairs and New Technology

The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) has utilized technology to maximize the office's efforts to build and strengthen the agency's partnerships with state and local officials and their national and regional associations and organizations. Through the use of new software, data scanning, e-mail, and the Internet, IGA has been able to provide the best possible customer service and reach the widest possible audiences to educate state and local officials about the programs of the agency and spread the word about FEMA's efforts to help communities become disaster resistant.

As a relatively small office, IGA has relied on technological innovations to provide fast and responsive customer service. IGA was one of the first offices within FEMA to establish a database for the entire office. Categories were established to compile contact information so that information was shared throughout the office, enabling expedited and informed responses to inquiries.

IGA has also utilized technology as an innovative outreach tool. IGA has used the office databases to tailor outreach products to specific audiences, such as municipal leagues or county associations. This form of technology-based communication has also broadened the reach of IGA's outreach efforts. National organizations as well as state associations have been able to integrate or reproduce IGA's advisories and notices for dissemination to their own memberships, vastly expanding the audience that IGA is able to reach with the important messages of the agency.

IGA has used technological innovations to fully integrate the agency's messages into all of the office's efforts to build and expand upon partnerships with state and local officials. During hurricane season, IGA integrated the agency web page into the office's outreach strategy. As hurricanes bear down on specific states or regions, IGA can compile e-mail updates to governors, mayors, and other affected officials quickly. These e-mails contain links to the agency web site where offices can see regular maps, informational updates and potential warnings. IGA has been able to widen the net on those who can be alerted during these events as contact time has been whittled. This directly contributes to achieving the agency's strategic goal of preventing loss of life and property.

IGA has also been able to utilize tools such as the Internet to stay fully informed and up to date on localities to better serve their needs. During the last hurricane season, IGA was able to utilize web sites from partner organizations to collect data on affected counties and provide FEMA Director James Lee Witt with contact information and background for local officials in those counties. This brought a new perspective on the agency disaster response as local information could quickly and easily be compiled by using new technologies.

IGA has also used technological innovations to build better internal working relationships. IGA has posted relevant information on state and local officials on the IGA bulletin board on the internal FEMA web site. By maintaining this information, IGA has assured that everyone in the agency has access to current and accurate information relative to state and local officials.

The use of technology by IGA has also supported the office's commitment to work as a team in carrying out the goals and missions of the office and the agency. The common use of information and databases has meant that each member of the staff can provide timely service, improving the cohesion and strength of the IGA team and enhancing the ability of the office to creatively, and energetically build partnerships with state and local officials and their national and regional associations and organizations to pursue the agency's mission.

Partnerships

What groups, organizations, companies or contractors are you now working with outside of FEMA. Summarize these partnerships and cite when and why each partnership began and how the working relationships have evolved. Provide insights about the partnerships in terms of how they have assisted your office in carrying out its functions and/or how they have contributed to FEMA's overall mission.

Intergovernmental Affairs and Partnerships

In the 20 months since its creation, the office of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) developed partnerships with the National Governor's Association, Southern Governors Association, Western Governors Association, National Conference of State Legislatures, United States Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities, National Association of Counties, National Association of Town and Townships, National Association of Development Organizations, National Association of Regional Councils, National Rural Development Council, Neighborhoods USA, International County Managers Association, International Association of Emergency Management, National Emergency Managers Association, as well as, 100 state associations, state municipal leagues, and regional development organizations.

The relationship with these national and state association and organizations evolved because IGA realized their importance in understanding local and state concerns and giving us the platform for local and state officials to understand and participate in our initiatives, programs, and policies. National and state associations and organizations continue to be a force in shaping national policy. As FEMA partners, these organizations

and associations can review, test, and market our initiatives to the state and local leadership.

This relationship also evolved on the belief that the best customer service during a disaster is adequately prepared state and local jurisdictions. IGA knew this could be accomplished by the education of grassroots levels of government and their organizations and in state and local government. Through strong customer service with these groups and their members, in the areas of casework, educational outreach, and policy IGA developed a link to expand FEMA's ability to reach the state and local officials who implement policies and programs through the national or state organization that represents them.

Since IGA's creation in 1998, the office developed partnerships with these organizations by listening to members' concerns and engaging them in agency programs and initiatives in a venue directly related to their agenda and mission. Director James Lee Witt and other senior management spoke at 24 national and state organizational conferences talking about FEMA's policies, programs, and initiatives. The director also met with key leadership of national organizations and key elected officials to listen to and address their concerns and to educate and inform them of the vision of FEMA and how their leadership can directly play a part in making communities across America more disaster resistant. IGA also facilitated and lead 25 workshops or panels at national or state organization's conferences in which IGA addressed concerns and continued to market FEMA's message. In addition, we accomplished this interaction with state and local officials through educational booth outreach at numerous annual and legislative conferences. IGA and partners in the regions have spoken individually to thousands of state and local officials about FEMA programs, policies, and initiatives. These outreach events were the foundation of IGA partnership with these national and state organizations.

The next phase offered opportunities for FEMA, in the form of resolutions of support for agency initiatives, national organizational policy that understood relationship between prevention and emergency management, articles in organizational newsletters and magazines (one organization committed an entire magazine to emergency management), joint award presentations, keynote addresses, production of guides for local and state officials in prevention, response and recovery, and terrorism, and cooperative agreements with key organizations to underscore FEMA's message with direct educational and outreach opportunities.

The National Governor's Association (NGA) and National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) are two of the 15 national organizations that IGA cites as examples of how partnerships have advanced FEMA's mission. NGA's partnership with FEMA in areas of policy forums and the production of guides on terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and prevention demonstrate their commitment to emergency management. NADO also showed this commitment to emergency management by developing an individual taskforce at the request of its members. Both organizations have also used their newsletters, magazines, and advisories to promote FEMA's message. They have also provided their expertise as a third party to move forward issues in emergency management such as prevention. NADO is assisting in the peer mentoring aspect of Project Impact and shares its expertise in enhancing flood map proposals. These are specific examples of how organizations support FEMA programs through their

own marketing and review of them, which makes the accomplishment of FEMA's overall mission more efficient.

We have also worked with contractors to find better ways to reach our customers. We have attained a portion of an existing agency contract with Ketchum. Our portion of the contract is grassroots outreach. We will use this contract to further implement the agency's message with more technology advanced methods to state and local officials and our organizational partners to further the understanding of our policies, programs, and initiatives in the upcoming year.

In the last 20 months IGA has been able to partner with 15 national organizations and over a hundred state associations, state municipal leagues and regional development organizations, partnership and opportunities that did not exist prior to the formation of this office or were not fully realized. The input of these organizations and associations is so important to this agency because only the affected local jurisdictions can provide the kind of direct assistance that most disaster victims require immediately after a disaster, and mitigation, prevention and preparedness policies are only as effective as the local policies and leadership make them.

Deregulation

What was your office's role, if any, in helping to get rid of unhelpful regulations within FEMA? How has deregulation efforts at FEMA resulted in the development of new innovations by employees in your office? How did deregulation improve your office's ability to respond more effectively during disasters?

The role of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs in the regulatory process is to ensure that the views of state and local officials are represented, taken into account, and addressed when the agency takes policymaking actions. Toward this end, on Jan. 28, 2000, FEMA Director James Lee Witt designated the director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs as the agency's federalism official charged with implementing the President's executive order on federalism (E.O. 13132). This executive order emphasizes consultations with state and local officials and enhanced sensitivity to their concerns. It establishes specific requirements that the agency must follow as it develops and carries out policy actions that affect state and local governments.

As an agency, FEMA already works closely with state and local governments on a day-to-day basis. State and local officials are not only one of the primary customers for FEMA's disaster preparedness, response, and mitigation programs, but also are essential partners in the implementation of the agency's programs, policies and initiatives.

Further, these national and state organizations that represent state and local officials at the national level played a key role in the issuance of the Executive Order on Federalism.

Having been assigned the national organization portfolio by the director a year earlier, the role of IGA in carrying out the executive order on federalism in the agency's regulatory process has been all the more important, strategic, and beneficial to the agency as a whole. It is in this spirit – which also reflects the spirit of the executive order itself – that the director charged IGA with implementing the executive order on federalism so as to further strengthen and develop these partnerships with state and local officials.

An example of how IGA has effectively ensured that state and local perspectives are addressed in the agency's regulatory process is the issue of insurance requirements in the Public Assistance program. In conjunction with the Response and Recovery Directorate, IGA has ensured that state and local officials have been consulted throughout the process of considering changes to those requirements. IGA organized a number of meetings with governors' Washington, D.C., offices, national associations, and other interested parties to discuss the advance notice of proposed rulemaking for insurance requirements in the Public Assistance program. IGA has also maintained a database of hundreds of contacts in order to keep interested parties informed of developments on this issue. IGA's goal is to keep state and local officials informed of regulatory activity and ensure that they are able to have their concerns heard so that the programs and policies of the agency will function in the most effective and efficient manner possible, thus directly contributing to the accomplishment of the agency's strategic goals.

Director Witt's Leadership

Describe Director Witt's direct involvement with your division or sub-office during and after the major reorganizations took place. How has he been directly involved during major disasters or events since then? How has he been directly involved during non-disaster periods? Please provide specific examples.

Director James Lee Witt formed the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) on Jan. 18, 1999, in order to strengthen FEMA's ties with state and local partners and associations, as well as with the Offices of Intergovernmental Affairs at the White House and other federal agencies. The director's reorganization of the agency had already established stronger ties and communication through emergency management channels at all levels of government. However, as a former local and state official, Director Witt also saw that emergency management across the country could benefit from the support of state and local elected and appointed officials at all levels. Therefore, Director Witt established IGA to communicate more effectively with these state and local officials, thus improving the agency's ability to effectively carry out its programs, policies, and initiatives. The director felt prevention would "never take root" if we were not working more closely with state and local elected officials. He believed prevention needed to be a goal of all the elected leaders, not only the emergency manager.

During major disasters, IGA serves as a liaison to proactively provide information on disaster activity to our partners in state and local government. In 1999 and 2000, 35 states, territories and protectorates had offices in Washington, D.C. With the responsibility for daily communication between federal agencies and the state and territorial officials, IGA's relationship with these offices has helped facilitate the director's communication with and engagement of governors as well as with local officials in the agency's strategic goals and mission.

IGA has also developed and utilized its relationship with national and regional associations to help the director respond to major disasters. When Hurricane Floyd affected many areas along the eastern seaboard, IGA had in place relationships with organizations and associations at various levels that helped facilitate the director's

communication with state and local officials affected by this disaster. Through the North Carolina Municipal League, IGA organized the director's keynote address to mayors from across the state to discuss the devastation caused by Hurricane Floyd, the process for recovery, and the measures that could be taken to help prevent such damage in the future. In addition, IGA organized the director's keynote address before the New Jersey State League of Municipalities annual conference to address the mayors and leadership of New Jersey on similar issues. In partnership with the National Governors' Association, IGA also facilitated a briefing for the Washington, D.C., offices of governors affected by Hurricane Floyd in order to provide governors' offices updated information on the disaster and the recovery and prevention process.

During non-disaster times, these national organizations provide a platform for the director to engage state and local officials and advocate their participation in FEMA's programs and initiatives. He has met with key leadership in national organizations and many local leaders across the nation talking about how we could work together to make communities more disaster resistant and how FEMA can serve those who implement our programs and policies better. Since 1999, IGA has secured 23 national organizational speaking events in 20 months for the director. These national platforms have allowed him to continue the message of disaster prevention among state and local leadership and thus meet the strategic goals he has set for the agency. He has had individual meetings with national organizational leadership, and has met with mayors, governors, legislators, and county commissioners and judges to hear their concerns and work to address them.

The director's leadership and vision have provided the foundation for a strong and visible intergovernmental presence within the agency. This presence contributes daily to the achievement of the agency's mission and strategic goals.

Directorate and Office Leadership

(For Department Heads Only) How did your leadership as director contribute to changes in your office or directorate? What were your primary objectives and how did you attempt to accomplish them? What were your successes?

The formation of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) provided a significant leadership challenge. Drawing from my experience as a professional staff member of the Congressional committee which held the hearings leading to the formation of FEMA and as Director of FEMA's Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs, I eagerly accepted the challenge.

The mission assigned to me by Director James Lee Witt was to strengthen the Agency's ties with State and local officials. In order to accomplish this mission, I set the goals of the office to be the provision of responsive and effective customer service to state and local officials and the building of strong partnerships with national, regional, and state associations and organizations. To achieve these goals, I established a comprehensive office structure, set out an ambitious agenda, and brought on board very experienced and motivated staff.

IGA consists of a total of only seven positions. The management of IGA consists of the office director and deputy director. Two disaster specialists cover response and recovery

issues and serve as a liaison to state and local officials on disaster-related matters. A mitigation specialist is responsible for mitigation, flood insurance and Project Impact related issues. An outreach specialist manages relations with the national, state, and regional associations and organizations that represent state and local officials. And an administrative specialist provides administrative support and expertise for the director and the office staff.

Although a small staff with limited budget and resources, IGA has successfully provided responsive customer service to state and local officials. IGA has served as a liaison to these officials, giving them a central point of contact in the agency through which any of their concerns or questions could be addressed. IGA has also provided responsive customer service to state and local officials by providing updated information in the case of disaster response and recovery to the affected governors and other officials. In non-disaster periods, IGA has proactively provided state and local officials with educational advisories and updated information on the agency's programs, policies and initiatives. IGA has also been able to use partnerships with associations and organizations to broaden the audience for the messages of the agency. In this way, IGA has educated state and local officials and been responsive to their concerns and needs, and in so doing has helped the agency effectively administer its disaster assistance programs and spread the word about the benefits and importance of pre-disaster mitigation measures.

IGA has also successfully built partnerships with the national, regional, and state associations and organizations that represent state and local officials. FEMA's contact with national and state organizations was very limited prior to the formation of this office. In the 20 months since its creation, IGA has been able to partner with 15 national organizations and over 100 state associations, municipal leagues, and regional development organizations to directly contribute to the achievement of the agency's mission and strategic goals. Through these partnerships, IGA has secured a venue to reach a greater number of state and local decision makers in order to provide educational outreach on the agency's programs and promoted using their leadership to make their communities more disaster resistant. These partnerships have also been vital in the strategic development of this office. Through policy committees and joint initiatives, IGA has been able to wed the messages and priorities of the agency with the activities of these groups and enlist strong partners to effectively carry out the agency's mission to protect lives and property and to find ways to make communities across the country disaster resistant.

The success of the office is a testament to the importance and potential of partnerships with state and local officials. I was honored to get this assignment from the director, I am pleased to have had the opportunity to lead such an exceptionally talented staff, and I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish for the agency and for the American public.

Future Direction

(For Department Heads Only) How do you see your office/directorate evolving in the next ten years?

Director James Lee Witt charted a new course in intergovernmental relations when he formed the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) at FEMA. His vision was one of responsiveness and partnership with state and local officials. With his background in state and local government, the director saw the importance and the power of these relationships. If he was going to change the way America thinks about disasters – to promote action before disaster strikes, rather than only responding to catastrophe – state and local officials were going to have to be part of the effort. The director saw FEMA as an agency that could represent how the federal government could and should work. In order to improve the implementation of the agency's programs and communicate his vision of emergency management, the director formed the IGA to strengthen the agency's relationships with state and local officials. Since its formation, IGA has demonstrated the power and potential benefit that these relationships offer by providing responsive customer service and building strong partnerships with the associations and organizations that act on the national stage on behalf of state and local interests.

The director's vision of disaster resistant communities is a powerful message for state and local officials who represent the cities and counties in harm's way. Through individual contact with state and local government officials, IGA has been able to communicate the hope and promise of disaster resistance to those who make the decisions that are needed to accomplish these goals locally. In the future, IGA will build upon this effort and spread the message even farther by working with more state municipal leagues and county associations throughout the country, as well as regional organizations.

The effectiveness of FEMA's disaster assistance programs continues to improve and communities can now recover faster and better when an affected town or city is provided comprehensive intergovernmental customer service. Assigning an intergovernmental affairs liaison to as part of the response to a disaster assures a coherent and effective management of relationships with affected state and local officials. This improves the effective implementation of FEMA's programs and provides reliable avenues to be able to communicate ways that a community can build back stronger and better, thus preventing future loss.

In the future, IGA will also demonstrate the potential to advance the public policy agenda of the agency through continued partnerships with national, regional, and state associations and organizations that represent state and local officials. IGA has the potential to integrate the vision, message, and policies of all hazards emergency management and disaster resistance into expansive areas of public policy. IGA will strive to make disaster resistance part of the national efforts to promote sustainable development and livable communities, such as the National Governors' Association's smart growth initiative. IGA can bring the message of disaster resistance to disadvantaged and under served communities, which are often times, the communities at greatest risk from disasters. IGA can deliver the message of disaster resistance to each and every community across the country throughout its partnerships.

The director has set out on a course of effective, responsive and productive intergovernmental relations for the agency. The future of the office holds tremendous potential and to help make a reality a vision of America that is safer, stronger and more prosperous through disaster resistance.

Disaster Operations

Describe your office's role on the EST. Summarize an experience your office had working on the EST during one major disaster or emergency since 1992. What exactly did you do and what kinds of challenges did you encounter? Be specific and aim to leave the reader with a good understanding of what function your office fills on the EST, as well as the challenges you face.

The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) has a unique role in the response to disasters as the agency's liaison to state and local officials. IGA is responsible for supporting FEMA Director James Lee Witt, senior FEMA officials, program areas, and regional offices in being responsive to the state and local officials who are affected by disasters. IGA lends a vital and strategic perspective in this customer service which helps the agency effectively administer its programs, contributes to the building of partnerships with state and local officials and their associations and organizations, and contributes to the effort of helping communities recover from disasters in a way that in the end they will be more disaster resistant.

In the response phase of disasters, IGA provides the important customer service of keeping state and local officials and their national and regional associations and organizations informed of the current disaster situation. IGA responds to inquiries to answer specific questions in relation to a disaster and provides general information about the disaster declaration process and available disaster response and recovery programs. This customer service helps keep the informational needs of the officials affected by disasters satisfied in a comprehensive and effective manner, while also allowing other agency components to focus on their mission critical functions in the response efforts. This responsiveness also supplies affected officials and organizations with accurate information that they can use in their own public releases and advisories, avoiding potential rumors or misinformation and enhancing the effective administration of disaster relief programs.

The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs also provides important support from the headquarters level for regional activities in the response and recovery from disasters. For example, IGA cooperated with FEMA Region II to help respond to the concerns of local officials in New Jersey who were affected by Hurricane Floyd. IGA participated in the town hall meetings sponsored by the region across the state in response to concerns that were being raised by local officials and the state's congressional delegation. IGA was thus able to work in coordination with the region to direct concerns that arose at the headquarters level back to the region so that they could be addressed as part of the region's comprehensive effort to respond to this disaster. IGA also employed the strategy of working with state associations by partnering with the New Jersey State League of Municipalities. IGA facilitated Director Witt's keynote address at the league's annual conference held shortly after the disaster where he was able to address the local officials affected by this disaster and respond to their questions and concerns. In addition, IGA sponsored an information booth at the conference where many more officials were able to ask questions on their specific concerns. Working with the New Jersey State League of

Municipalities has led to a long-term partnership that has provided a venue for sustained outreach to local officials in New Jersey and a conduit through which concerns of local officials can be raised and IGA can facilitate effective responses through the appropriate channels. IGA is currently working with the New Jersey State League of Municipalities to publish a local officials guide to emergency management and prevention.

The office has further enhanced intergovernmental activities in disasters by supporting disaster assigned employees who have been assigned the responsibility of the intergovernmental portfolio. Whether assigned to community relations, congressional affairs, or public relations staff in the disaster field office (DFO), IGA provides organizational support and intergovernmental expertise to the disaster-assigned employees who provide liaison to state and local officials in the field. Designating a specific intergovernmental liaison in a field office or DFO has great potential benefit for a federal coordinating office and the effectiveness of FEMA's programs overall.

Assigning someone the specific responsibility of managing relations with local officials brings focus to these relationships and provides an FCO with a single, comprehensive source of information on relations with local officials. For example, IGA has supported the intergovernmental activities of the congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs disaster assistance employee in the Office of Cerro Grande Fire Claims, which has been charged with processing the claims resulting from the Cerro Grande Fire in New Mexico. The designation of an intergovernmental liaison in the Cerro Grande Office has resulted in a comprehensive, efficient, and effective management of the office's relations with the local officials affected by this fire. It has provided invaluable staff resources for the director of the office and ensured that the any concerns and questions from local officials are communicated and addressed quickly and accurately. It has provided an avenue for communication for the office to disseminate information to interested parties on the fire relief programs and for local officials to provide feedback as to their needs and concerns. This sustained relationship provides a reliable, continuous, and effective interface between FEMA and those the agency is serving.

The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs also offers an invaluable resource for direct deployment in the field. A prime example was the response to Hurricane Floyd. FEMA Region IV requested an intergovernmental liaison from IGA to assist the regional director (RD) and the federal coordinating officer in the response and recovery process. As the hurricane began to threaten the Atlantic coast, the IGA liaison assisted the RD in responding to state and local officials as they called the regional office for assistance and advice. In support of FEMA's state counterparts, the IGA liaison was able to put local officials from across the east coast states in touch with the proper people in their state emergency management agencies. The IGA liaison was also responsible for assisting the RD in outreach calls to threatened localities to offer support and guidance to local elected officials along the coast. As the hurricane continued north from Region IV, the IGA liaison assisted the RD in arranging visits to affected areas in South Carolina. In coordination with the director's office, IGA, and regional office, a trip was arranged for the director and RD to meet with the governor of South Carolina to tour affected areas of Horry County, S.C. Planning for this event consisted of making arrangements for travel and transportation in the effected area and coordinating with local elected officials and gathering background briefing materials for FEMA senior management.

When agency officials identified the severity of storm damage in North Carolina, the RD deployed the IGA liaison to the disaster field office in Raleigh, N.C. In a disaster situation, there are many needs for intergovernmental assistance. FEMA has developed a very effective and active partnership through the emergency management sector. However, local and state elected officials have concerns, requests for information, and other needs that can be addressed effectively by someone specifically assigned to serve as an intergovernmental liaison.

As part of the executive offices of the federal coordinating officer, IGA was able to assist in the effective implementation of FEMA's disaster assistance programs by being responsive and proactive with regard to the needs and concerns of local officials. IGA responded to questions and casework from state and local officials, working in partnership with other FEMA and state components in the DFO. IGA was also proactive in reviewing field reports with the community relations (CR) lead in the DFO to identify local officials who needed special assistance or added support in the disaster recovery process. For instance, when CR identified an official who did not understand the application process for Public Assistance, IGA was able to get in touch with this official, give them a brief overview of the application process, put them in touch with FEMA/state Public Assistance representatives in the DFO and dispatch field personnel to the locality to meet with the official. IGA worked closely with the Office of Public Affairs to review media accounts of the disaster recovery process as well. By identifying local officials cited in the media, who needed special assistance, IGA was able to give the same services as with the CR reports and analysis. Often, an official would be quoted in the press with incorrect information on programs or services. IGA was able to quickly respond by calling the official directly, giving them correct and up to date information. Officials were then able to be a partner in the recovery process by correcting misconceptions, giving up-to-date and accurate information to their constituents. IGA did not supplant any area of the DFO functional areas, but by utilizing the services and expertise of different external relations areas, IGA was able to bring resources to bear in a coordinated response to local officials' needs. The same example can be used to describe the relationship with congressional affairs (CA) components in the DFO. Because many local officials contacted their members of Congress for assistance, IGA and CA could coordinate response efforts to provide good customer service to local officials as well as the Congressional delegation in a consistent manner.

Perhaps the most effective intergovernmental strategy implemented during the Hurricane Floyd experience was the effective and long-lasting partnership that was built between FEMA and the North Carolina County Commissioners Association and North Carolina League of Municipalities. Working in partnership with the league and association, IGA scheduled meetings across the state, sent newsletters and information faxes, and sponsored information areas at the league annual conference in order to provide local officials complete and accurate information on FEMA's disaster assistance programs. In enlisting the assistance and input of their own organizations, IGA was able to provide local officials with the information they needed in order to respond effectively to and meet the needs of their communities.

The outreach meetings IGA coordinated in partnership with the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners not only educated the local officials on FEMA and state disaster recovery and mitigation programs, but they also allowed FEMA and state

representatives to identify the shortcomings in information dissemination and address them through concentrated media releases and outreach strategies. This enabled FEMA to address recurring issues and questions by using the league and association newsletters, information faxes and emails to quickly correct misconceptions and give local officials useful tools to enable us to better deliver our services. One such example occurred at the meetings in Jacksonville, N.C., in October 1999. Someone in the audience made an incorrect statement about the availability of National Flood Insurance (NFIP) for buildings outside the 100-year flood plain. In further conversations, the league and association representatives identified these NFIP misconceptions as a common problem that may have stifled the purchase of flood insurance in many parts of the state. IGA quickly enlisted the assistance of the Federal Insurance Administration and released a letter from the Federal Insurance Administrator to correct this misconception. The league and association quickly released advisories to their members informing them of the availability of flood insurance to anyone in a participating community across the state. This began a process by both organizations to encourage the purchase of flood insurance statewide.

The partnerships IGA established with state associations during the initial phases of the response to the disaster also provided a foundation for more permanent relationships with these organizations. Later in the recovery phase IGA and the region sponsored informational booths at each group's annual conference, providing support and information to local officials who had been affected by the disaster or had other questions about FEMA programs and initiatives. IGA also facilitated Director Witt's attendance at the conferences as well, giving him the opportunity to listen to concerns of local officials, provide moral support, and speak about the agency and state goals to build back better and stronger.

IGA also offers the director a distinctive resource that can be called upon when the need arises in different circumstances. In response to the wild land fire that devastated much of Los Alamos, N.M., and adversely affected much of the surrounding area, Congress passed the Cerro Grande Fire Claims Act to compensate those who had suffered losses as a result of the fire. Although this law was separate from Stafford Act programs and went beyond the scope of regular disaster assistance programs, Congress called upon FEMA to administer this compensation. This Act provided unique circumstances for the agency. In response, the director called upon the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs to organize a meeting for state, local, and tribal officials at FEMA headquarters in Washington, D.C., in order to discuss the implementation of the Act. This enabled the agency to establish an open and cooperative working relationship with the affected state and local officials from the beginning of this process. It also provided the foundation for a cooperative relationship with the agency's state and local partners as the Office of Cerro Grande Fire Claims was established, opened from operations, and began providing compensation to the survivors of this fire.

IGA demonstrated through coordinated participation in these recent disaster activities that there is an important place in disaster response for open and direct communication and support between the agency and state and local officials. This experience also demonstrated that there is a great potential for information dissemination and education before and after disasters, to reach all local officials and to help all localities to become more disaster resistant. By working with state and local officials and their representative

organizations, IGA has been able to clearly identify a potent role for intergovernmental affairs in the disaster response and recovery process that helps the agency fulfill its vital mission while working to make every community more sustainable and disaster resistant.