Japanese Resilience Project: Research and Student Exchange Initiatives

IAEM Partners with IIGR on Emergency Management in Japan and Asia

By Leo Bosner, Senior Fellow, IIGR, and Kathleen Henning, CEM, UMUC Faculty

The International Institute of Global Resilience (IIGR) was founded in 2012 in the wake of Japan's triple earthquake, tsunami and nuclear power plant disaster of Mar. 11, 2011. IIGR is dedicated to strengthening emergency management and disaster resilience worldwide through education and research. Since 2012, IAEM and IIGR have partnered to help promote the Japanese Resilience Project.

A IIGR seminar on EM-related topics took place Oct. 1, 2013, in Potomac, Md. Included were Kathleen Henning, CEM, UMUC Faculty and outgoing IAEM-USA Region 3 President; Leo Bosner, IIGR; and graduate students from Kumamoto University.

Webinar Held March 2013

Past projects have included a webinar in March 2013 that promoted the concepts of resilience, CEM® certification, and the FEMA IS100 and IS200 training materials produced by EMI. Kathleen Henning, CEM, Faculty, University of Maryland University College, was the lead instructor, with remarks provided by Ellis Stanley, IAEM Global Chair, and Daryl Spiewak, CEM, Lead Trainer for the CEM® Commission (and introductions from Leo Bosner and Dr. Maki Fumaki, IIGR.) The webinar reached sites across Japan.

New Feature Begins in this Issue: “IAEM Training & Education Corner”

The new “IAEM Training & Education Corner” will briefly highlight new training and education courses and programs that are of interest to IAEM members. Read the first offering on Page 13, and watch for this feature in future issues of the IAEM Bulletin. The Training and Education Corner also will be posted on the IAEM-USA Training & Education Committee web page.

—Lyn Gross, CEM, Chair, IAEM-USA Training & Education Committee
Sheriff’s Office Affiliated EM in Carroll County, Georgia: An Approach Benefiting 110,000 Citizens

By Sheriff Terry Langley, Carroll County (Ga.) Sheriff’s Office; Professor Bill Lowe, Jacksonville (Ala.) State University; and Director Tim Padgett, Carroll County (Ga.) Emergency Management Agency.

Carroll County, Georgia’s Emergency Management Agency (CCEMA), has struggled to find the right organizational structure to accomplish its duty to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate threats from hazards and disasters. Since 1980, the population of the county has doubled to more than 110,000 residents. Since 1979, Carroll County Emergency Management was handled on a part-time basis as an additional duty of the deputy fire chief. While a county’s disaster response and recovery would become a top priority, preparedness and mitigation activities often were delayed or postponed due to busy fire prevention responsibilities. Since 1990, Carroll County has been the site of 11 Presidential Disaster Declarations and three Georgia Declared Emergencies.

Reorganization of County EM to Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness

In June 2012, the Carroll County Commission and mayors of the county’s cities placed emergency management under the county sheriff’s office. The EMA Director is now focused full-time on emergency management activities, has positional authority to assign duties to uniformed sheriff’s deputies, and has access to more funding and grant sources. Homeland security is also under the authority of the sheriff’s office. The decision was viewed as the best approach to streamline efficiency and effectiveness under one chain-of-command.

The benefits to the county’s citizens were immediate, greatly enhancing their disaster resilience. The sheriff, chief deputy, and major of law enforcement recently attended training at the Emergency Management Institute (EMI). It’s a tremendous operational benefit for Carroll County Emergency Management that the elected sheriff understands and supports comprehensive emergency management. It’s always a powerful statement when elected officials make the journey to Emmitsburg, Md., to strengthen their own knowledge, skills and abilities.

Using Criminals’ Money to Fund EMA Operations

As county tax revenues continue to be uncertain and the federal government’s sequestration alters program and policy decisions, emergency management agency directors have had to be creative with their budgets. With fewer tax dollars coming in, but prior contract obligations still demanding funds, it is challenging for EMA directors to identify creative solutions for current and future initiatives.

An example of unique funding available to CCEMA, due to its being within the sheriff’s office, was access to seized criminal asset funds. When criminals are arrested, their assets and property can be seized and auctioned. The proceeds can be used for virtually any law enforcement-related purpose. Purchasing vehicles and firearms, as well as paying for training courses, computers and cameras are all traditional uses of seized funds.

Days after the Sandy Hook national tragedy, Sheriff Terry Langley directed his EMA director and command staff to enhance security at a remotely located public school. All other county public schools are located within or adjacent to municipalities, ensuring a rapid law enforcement response to a school violence event.

However, one school is located in a very rural section of the county, extending law enforcement response times. After a comprehensive school security assessment, Sheriff Langley authorized and installed more than $35,000 in security enhancements. Furthermore, administrators, teachers and law enforcement officers practiced active shooter exercises of the security system within 120 days after the Sandy Hook Shooting.

The result was that children, teachers and staff are safer and better protected until law enforcement officers arrive. There are virtually no fiscal planning expenditures that could have happened this quickly, except by an elected county sheriff using discretionary seized drugs funding.

Finally, funding cooperation in both the county commissioners and sheriff’s office resulted in the investment of $30,000 to purchase enhanced severe weather siren activation equipment. Previously, when the National Weather Service issued a warning, Carroll County EMA had to activate all sirens within the county’s 503 square miles. Now sirens alert only for those residences within the threatened areas. The result has been increased citizen confidence in the weather siren system.

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IAEM Training & Education Corner

Take Advantage of Training Opportunities

By Robert C. Bohlmann, CEM

I recently experienced a very exciting week at the Emergency Management Institute (EMI). This was not my first time at EMI. I had served as an adjunct instructor many times, but had not been a student for several years. The course was one that attracted a broad spectrum of professional emergency managers. I knew the “drill,” but others in the class had never been to EMI. Some came to class with anxiety that was rapidly quelled. Introductions helped break the ice. From that point forward, I experienced the very special way learning unfolds at EMI.

By noon, friendships at my table were already becoming evident. Conversations were lighthearted, with a joke or two shared. Lunch provided a time to mingle and share experiences. Professional discussions took place in class and beyond. By mid-week, the bond at my table had extended to the entire class.

Exercises and discussions brought out varied professional opinions. Friendly disagreements were permitted, expanding perspectives. As I sat there, I realized how much I was learning from the instructors and students sharing ideas. Some were experts in matters that I had only touched on in my career. What a great opportunity! By the end of the course, as we all exchanged business cards, I realized how significantly my professional network had grown.

I encourage emergency managers to take advantage of the opportunity to engage in training. Never be “too busy” to enhance your career and make lasting professional contacts. You’ll be professionally refreshed with a completely new outlook.

Call for Entries: NAGC Awards

Has your federal, military, state, regional, county, municipal or other governmental entity communicated this year? The answer has to be yes. Have you done this internally and/or externally? You probably said yes to both of these questions. Now is the time to be recognized for your communications.

The National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC) has issued the Call for Entries in its Blue Pencil & Gold Screen Awards Competition. Enter as many categories as you choose—the number of opportunities to share your best work, innovation, creativity, and use of technology may surprise you.

There are more than 40 categories with a vast range of opportunities for you to showcase your work. A few of the categories are: publications, media relations, photography, graphic design, video, electronic communications, social media, and branding/rebranding. The early submission deadline is Dec. 6, 2013. The final deadline is Jan. 10, 2014. Learn more at www.nagconline.org.

Contribute to the IAEM Bulletin

The IAEM-Global Editorial Work Group invites all IAEM members to consider sharing their emergency management knowledge and expertise with their fellow members by writing an article for the IAEM Bulletin.

Members outside the United States are encouraged to help with international content so that the IAEM Bulletin can offer more value to non-U.S. readers. Also, articles from Student members are welcomed. Please limit your articles to no more than 750 words, and read the Author’s Guidelines at www.iaem.com/Bulletin.