



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NEWS
The Monthly Electronic Newsletter of
Homeland Security and Emergency Management
N.H. Department of Safety, John J. Barthelmes, Commissioner
33 Hazen Drive
Concord, NH 03305
1-800-852-3792
newsletters@hsem.nh.gov

April 2009



Water on the Merrimack River rises on April 6 at the Sewells Falls Bridge in Concord. All of the state's rivers were near bank full due to snowmelt and spring rain, but only minor flooding was reported. See page 2.

Department of Safety photo

“PROBABLE” SWINE FLU CASE IN N.H. – Gov. John Lynch announced Thursday morning (April 30) that a probable case of swine flu had been detected in New Hampshire. The victim, an unidentified employee at Concord Hospital who lives in the Greater Concord area, is recovering at home. Gov. Lynch and Public Health Director Dr. Jose Montero, said the individual “did everything right” in wearing a mask and staying away from work, and was not in a position to infect anyone else. A sample has been sent to the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta to confirm if the patient has swine flu. Earlier in the week, three confirmed cases of swine flu were reported in Maine and two more in Massachusetts. In all, more than 100 U.S. cases have been reported in Arizona, California, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Nevada, Ohio, South Carolina and Texas. The outbreak started in Mexico, where more than 100 people have died.

Dr. Montero stressed the importance of basic hygiene and preventive measures, such as frequent hand washing and coughing or sneezing into a sleeve or handkerchief. He said anyone who feels ill should stay home from work or school to avoid infecting others.

Homeland Security Director Chris Pope encouraged local emergency management directors to contact officials of their local All-Health Hazard Region in case they need assistance in responding to the swine flu outbreaks. A public inquiry line has been established to answer questions about the disease. The number is 1-888-330-6764. The line is in operation from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Information on swine flu is also available at www.nh.gov/flu and www.cdc.gov/flu.

The new strain of swine flu virus, known as N1H1, is a combination of human, swine and avian flu viruses. Scientists do not know why the American victims appear to have much milder symptoms than Mexican victims. The Centers for Disease Control has declared a Public Health Emergency in the U.S.

N.H. AVOIDS MAJOR SPRING FLOODING – New Hampshire rivers and streams were full in early April as snowmelt and two rainstorms threatened to cause flooding. But the storms produced less rainfall than initially forecast and only minor flooding resulted. The Suncook and Contoocook rivers and the Connecticut River at Dalton prompted the most concern and the rivers did exceed their banks. No structural damage was reported. Most of the minor flooding occurred in floodplain areas.

Officials in Allenstown closely monitored the Suncook River, which has caused significant damage in previous flooding.

ICE STORM AID TO N.H. COMMUNITIES REACHES \$10 MILLION – More than \$10 million in federal Public Assistance aid has been disbursed to New Hampshire communities to help with cleanup costs from last December's ice storm. Most of the aid has gone to communities in the southern part of the state, although all 10 counties were included in the Jan. 2 Presidential Disaster Declaration. FEMA and HSEM are continuing to work to assist local recovery efforts in the state through FEMA's Public Assistance program.

This program provides funding to local governments and municipalities for the repair, replacement, or restoration of public facilities, as well as costs incurred for disaster cleanup or emergency actions taken to protect lives or property.

ICE STORM REVIEWS CONTINUE – The N.H. Public Utilities Commission and HSEM are wrapping up their series of public meetings, listening to comments on peoples' experiences during the December ice storm in an effort to evaluate the response by utilities. A total of 10 public meetings have been scheduled in towns across southern New Hampshire. The last one is scheduled for April 30 in Rochester. PUC Chairman Tom Getz said the commission is particularly interested in activities by the utilities in tree trimming, mutual aid, service restoration priorities and decisions on allocating work crews. Comments may also be posted on the PUC website, www.puc.nh.gov. The PUC expects to have a report on the ice storm completed in September.

An all-day after action review of the ice storm response was held Friday, April 24, at the National Guard Armory in Concord. Gov. Lynch kicked off the event with a thank-you message to all state, local and federal officials and other personnel who participated in the response. After an opening plenary session the group separated into smaller panels to consider specific issues and problems that arose and to make recommendations for improvements.

REP. BATULA HEADS EM COMMITTEE – Rep. Peter L. Batula, R-Merrimack, has been elected chairman of the Joint Emergency Management System Oversight Committee by members of the committee. Rep. Batula succeeds Rep. Mary Gorman, D-Nashua, who remains a member of the committee. Also returning to the committee are Rep. Joy Tilton, D-Northfield; Sen. Lou D’Allesandro, D-Manchester and Sen. Betsi DeVries, D-Manchester. Newly appointed members of the committee are Rep. David A. Welch, R-Kingston; Rep. Michael Rollo, D-Rollinsford; Rep. Robin Read, D-Portsmouth and Sen. Sharon Carson, R-Londonderry.

GOV. LYNCH NAMES NEW TAG – Gov. John Lynch has nominated Brig. Gen. William Reddel of Londonderry as the Adjutant General of the N.H. National Guard. Gen. Reddel would succeed Maj. Gen. Kenneth Clark, who retired earlier this month after four years as the Guard’s top commander. Gen. Reddel is currently chief of staff of the Air National Guard and is a full time pilot for U.S. Airways. He has flown combat missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Gen. Reddel’s nomination as adjutant general must be confirmed by the Executive Council.

AUTISM AWARENESS TRAINING FOR FIRST RESPONDERS AVAILABLE – An autism awareness program developed by Easter Seals, New Hampshire, was recently accepted in the N.H. Police Academy for cadet training. It is also a large part of a safety initiative that has been recommended to the Governor as part of the *NH Autism Commission Report of 2008*. A child with autism having to endure an emergency shelter would just be a recipe for even a greater disaster. Currently autism occurs in one in 150 children. For information on training, contact Viki Gayhardt, Autism Family Support Specialist at (603) 895-1522 or at viki@nhautism.com