



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NEWS
The Monthly Electronic Newsletter of
Homeland Security and Emergency Management
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N.H. DOT crews work to clear Route 118 at the Warren/Woodstock town line after up to 40 inches of snow fell over a five-day period. High winds left snow piled in drifts of up to 15 feet. The snow will ensure good spring skiing this year. The storms caused power outages in the southern part of the state, but most customers had their power restored within hours. Things were much worse in Maine, where 17 shelters and warming stations were opened in six counties due to extended power outages. N.H. DOT photo

COMMENTS ON ICE STORM RESPONSE SOUGHT – The Public Utilities Commission and HSEM are seeking comments from officials and members of the public on the state and utility response to the December ice storm. A series of public meetings will be held at a number of locations around the state in March and April and comments may be submitted through the PUC website, www.puc.nh.gov. A meeting will also be scheduled for emergency management directors and other officials. The results of the information gathering will be used as part of an after-action report on the event. The locations and times for the meetings will be announced shortly.

Meanwhile, Public Service Company of New Hampshire has released a report on the storm, which it says was the biggest it has ever had to face. A link to the report follows: http://psnhnews.com/psnhnews2/images/file/PSNH_Ice%20Storm%20Report_2008.pdf

ICE STORM AID TOPS \$1 MILLION – Federal assistance to New Hampshire communities for damage and expenses related to the December ice storm has exceeded \$1.2 million, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The state received a Presidential Disaster Declaration on Jan. 2 for all 10 counties. That made the state, municipalities and certain non-profit organizations eligible for Public Assistance. FEMA and HSEM held a series of applicant briefings in January to assist local officials in preparing their claims.

FEMA REJECTS FULL FUNDING – The Federal Emergency Management Agency has turned down New Hampshire’s request for 100 percent federal funding of assistance for ice storm damage. The state was approved for Public Assistance, debris removal and emergency protective measures for ice storm damage from Dec. 11-23, 2008. Under those programs FEMA usually provides 75 percent reimbursement. But Governor Lynch requested 100 percent funding because of the disasters the state experienced last year, which included a series of floods and a tornado in addition to the ice storm. In a letter to the governor, Acting FEMA Region I administrator Nancy Ward said the effects of those previous disasters were not severe enough to warrant 100 percent funding.

DEADLINE APPROACHES FOR SBA ICE STORM CLAIMS – Private non-profit organizations in all 10 New Hampshire Counties that suffered damage during December ice storm may apply for assistance from the U.S. Small Business Administration, but deadline is rapidly approaching. Applications for physical property damage must be in by March 3. The deadline for economic injury claims is Oct. 2. Eligible non-profit organizations include schools and colleges, museums, libraries, food kitchens and homeless shelters. They may borrow up to \$2 million to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment or other business assets at low interest rates. More information is available at www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance.

NOW IS THE TIME TO GET FLOOD INSURANCE – New Hampshire residents have experienced five major flooding events since the fall of 2005, including two last year. The best way for residents to protect themselves is to get flood insurance from the National Flood Insurance Program. This program, backed by the federal government, is available to property owners, renters and business owners. Insured properties do not have to be located in a floodplain, but to be eligible, they must be within a community that participates in the NFIP. Flood insurance takes effect 30 days after the policy is issued, so waiting until a flood is imminent is not a good idea. The average cost of a \$100,000 flood insurance policy in New England is about \$800 per year.

More information about the NFIP is available at www.floodsmart.gov.

N.H. HOSTS TRI-STATE DIRECTORS MEETING – The emergency management directors from New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts held their quarterly meeting at the N.H. Fire Academy on Feb. 10. The primary focus of the meeting was better communications among the states and means to share information using WebEOC or other disaster management software. The Vermont Yankee nuclear plant, New Hampshire and Massachusetts all use WebEOC as a primary platform. Meetings by the Tri-State Directors address concerns relative to the state emergency management agencies and the nuclear power plants located in New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts. Representatives from the respective state public health agencies, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, FEMA and other states are also participants.

In the meantime, a “shake-down cruise” for the Vermont Yankee drill/exercise cycle was held Feb. 25. The New Hampshire EOC brought up Vermont Emergency Management’s Disasterland website during the drill for better situational awareness and to get an idea of how this would be helpful.

HSEM PERSONNEL CHANGES – Katya Brennan, program assistant in Tech Hazards, has been named Exercise Training Officer, effective Friday, Feb. 27. She also serves as a deputy Public Information Officer. Congratulations Katya! Also, two veteran HSEM staffers have left for other positions in the Department of Safety. Senior Field Representative Joann Beaudoin is now a Training Officer at the N.H. Fire Academy and Tammy Vaillancourt, formerly Assistant Chief of Planning, has started her new duties as an accountant in the DOS Division of Business Administration. Good luck to Jo-Jo and Tammy.

GUARD AND HAZMAT TEAMS TRAIN AT THE ROCK – A dangerous chemical vapor wafted through a computer show at Rockingham Park, sending more than 100 people to area hospital with headaches, dizziness and coughing. That was the scenario for a weekend exercise earlier this month involving the N.H. National Guard Civil Support Team and the Southeastern Hazardous Materials Mutual Aid District. Twenty-two Guard members and about 40 hazmat team members from 15 communities along I-93 swept the area, looking for the chemical agent. The responders worked on coordinating their efforts, including communications and response procedures. The exercise was part of the recertification process for the Civil Support Team.