



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

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Property damage along Northwood Lake caused by the tornado that struck central New Hampshire last July. N.H. Department of Safety photo

ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF DEVASTATING TORNADO – Major tornados are not common in New Hampshire. Usually, high wind events in the state are small microbursts or straight line winds that can be destructive, or even deadly, but most people in the state would associate massive funnel-cloud storms with the Midwest and South. That changed on July 24, 2008 when an EF-2 tornado, with winds of up to 157 mph touched down in Deerfield, flattening homes along Northwood Lake and killing one woman. The storm cut a swath of destruction through neighborhoods and woodlands 50 miles long, running southwest to northeast, finally ending in Ossipee. It lasted a little more than one hour and 20 minutes. The storm damaged or destroyed 60 structures and approximately 8,000 acres of woodland.

FEMA ADMINISTRATOR MEETS REGIONAL EM DIRECTORS – Craig Fugate, administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, met in Boston on July 24 with directors or other representatives of state emergency management agencies from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Vermont. Administrator Fugate, a career firefighter and emergency manager from Florida, was appointed to his position by President Obama in March. He called the meeting with EM directors a critical step in strengthening the national emergency response team. He also stressed the importance of public preparedness and partners working together to improve emergency response and recovery. New Hampshire was represented at the meeting by HSEM Assistant Director Kathryn Doult.

STATES AND FEDS PREPARING FOR FALL FLU OUTBREAK – The N.H. Department of Health and Human Services continues to adjust and develop its response to the occurrence of H1N1 influenza. The virus continues to circulate, causing some outbreaks and sporadic cases, most recently in summer camp settings. An H1N1 task force has been established that includes stakeholders and experts from public health, emergency management, hospitals and community health partners. It is organized using Incident Command System organization under the Planning Section, and contains branches of Lab/Surveillance, Countermeasures, Clinical Guidance, Medical Surge, Continuity of Operations, and Public Information/Messaging. Key planning assumptions include the uncertainty of the dates for vaccine distribution and amount of H1N1 vaccine available in the fall. New Hampshire will receive H1N1 grant funds that will allow the state to further prepare for H1N1, including funding for the All-Health Hazard Regions, a media and educational campaign and purchasing of supplies for acute care centers.

The federal government is also ramping up its efforts to combat a flu outbreak this fall that could combine seasonal flu with the return of H1N1. A national summit meeting was held in Washington July 8-10 at which top federal officials spelled out the government's plans. New Hampshire was represented at the meeting by HSEM Director Chris Pope and Public Health Director Dr. Jose Montero. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius noted that the H1N1 outbreak this spring was relatively mild in that its fatality rate was low. But she said that could change. She said public health efforts across the country would focus on disease surveillance, community protection and mitigation, vaccination and communication with the public. She said H1N1 flu would continue to be a significant issue into the fall.

TABLETOP CONSIDERS BREACH OF MOORE DAM – Emergency responders from along the Connecticut River, state and federal officials and TransCanada Corporation took part in a tabletop exercise in Lebanon on July 18 to consider how they would deal with the failure of Moore Dam near Littleton. The earthen dam, completed in 1956, is 178 feet high and created the Moore Reservoir. Failure of the dam could release massive amounts of water into the Connecticut River and inundate communities downstream. Participants worked through problems related to timely notification of threatened communities, evacuation and loss of critical infrastructure. Similar tabletop exercises were held previously in Vermont and Massachusetts. A functional exercise for Moore Dam will be held on Aug. 26.

Participating in the tabletop were representatives of Lebanon, Hanover, Lyme, Orford, Bath, Grafton County Dispatch, State Police, Environmental Services, HSEM, DOT, American Red Cross, TransCanada and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

FEDERAL GRANTS AVAILABLE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT – The lack of funding is always a stumbling block for local programs in emergency management and just about anything else. But federal grant money is available from a variety of programs, which may be accessed from one website. Grants.gov is central storehouse for information on over 1,000 federal grant programs and provides access to approximately \$500 billion in annual awards. Grant funding opportunities can be searched by keyword, agency, open dates, etc. and you can subscribe for e-mail grant alerts through the site. Grants.gov was established in 2002 to improve government services to the public. The web address is: <http://www.grants.gov/index.jsp>.

HELP WITH EVACUATING PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS – Emergency evacuation plans need to make provisions for people who are unable to leave on their own. A publication from the U.S. Department of Transportation, *Routes to Effective Evacuation Planning*, is available to help develop those plans. Published in April 2009, the document focuses on evacuating people who need assistance in leaving an area, particularly people with disabilities, aging populations, people living in congregate or residential care facilities and those with other special needs. It is available for download at <http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop09022/fhwahop09022.pdf> .

DHS RETHINKS THREAT LEVEL COLOR CODE – Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano has appointed a task force to conduct a 60-day review of the color-coded Homeland Security threat advisory system. The color codes, which go from Green for Low to Red for Severe, has been in place since March 2002. The mission of the task force is to assess the effectiveness of the system in informing the public about terrorist threats and communicating protective measures within the government and throughout the private sector. It will make recommendations about the future of the system to the White House.

SEABROOK TO CONDUCT SIREN TEST – The Seabrook Station nuclear power plant will test its emergency warning sirens this fall, the second year such a test is being carried out. The test is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 18 at 12:30 p.m. Last year's test was carried out on a Saturday. This year's test will be done on a weekday when most people will be at work or school. Plant and emergency management officials in New Hampshire and Massachusetts will conduct a public information campaign to inform residents of the Seabrook Emergency Planning Zone about the test and remind them what to do if they hear the siren – that is, *to turn on their radio or television for more information*. Seabrook has 104 emergency sirens in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.