

MINUTES

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON DISASTER RELIEF AND RECOVERY

October 3-4, 2007
Room 519-N—Statehouse

Members Present

Representative Lee Tafanelli, Chairperson
Senator Ruth Teichman, Vice-Chairperson
Representative Louis Ruiz, Ranking Minority Member
Senator Janis Lee
Senator Roger Pine
Senator Derek Schmidt
Representative Richard Carlson
Representative John Faber
Representative Dennis McKinney

Staff Present

Kathie Sparks, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Amy Van House, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Jill Shelley, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Bruce Kinzie, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Judy Swanson, Committee Assistant

Conferees

Dennis Moen, Director, Wilson County Emergency Preparedness
Richard Boeckman, Barton County Counselor/Administrator
Interim Director, Shawnee County Emergency Preparedness
Janice Davidson, Director, Ottawa County Emergency Preparedness
Gwen Martin, Woodson County Commission
Becky McDonald, Director, Woodson Emergency Preparedness
David Wadell, Director, Woodson Emergency Management
William Guy, Director, Reno County Emergency Preparedness
Dick Scott, Administrator, representing Elk County Commission
Laura Hyer, Director, Bourbon County Emergency Preparedness
Judy Moler, General Counsel/Legislative Services Director, Kansas Association of Counties
Don Moler, Executive Director, League of Kansas Municipalities
Sheila Dale, Director, Osage County Emergency Preparedness
Pat Collins, Director, Riley County Emergency Preparedness

Jim Schmidt, Director, Butler County Emergency Preparedness
Chancy Smith, Director, Dickinson County Emergency Management
Bryan Armstrong, Director, Saline County Emergency Management
Duane Matthes, Edwards County Commissioner
Alan Radcliffe, Director, Franklin County Emergency Preparedness
Tony Fowler, Montgomery County Commissioner
Jim Miller, Director of Montgomery County Emergency Preparedness
John Boyd, Director, Pottawatomie County Emergency Preparedness
Mike Selves, Chairperson, Government Affairs Committee, Kansas Emergency Management Association
Terry David, Director, Rice County Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Medical Service

Others Attending

See attached list.

Wednesday, October 3 Morning Session

Chairman Lee Tafanelli called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. for the purpose of hearing testimony from officials in designated disaster areas review the experiences they had during recent disasters, and what would be beneficial to them in the future.

Dennis Moen, Director of Wilson County Emergency Preparedness, gave background information on the Wilson County flood ([Attachment 1](#)). They reported up to 24 inches of rain in 36 hours. Damages were incurred in Fredonia, Neodesha and Altoona. The main issue was getting good water into the affected areas, due to the loss of water plants. Damages were reported on roads and bridges, the courthouse basement, watershed projects, water plants, sewer plants, electrical plants, the power sub-station, streets, businesses, hospital, and residences. The biggest challenges were in Fredonia. Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Units (ROWPU) were the solution to the problem, and the Iowa National Guard was the easiest organization they have ever worked with. Within one and one-half days they put in a road for the tanker transports to bring in water. A fleet of tankers was put into place from the Iowa National Guard, truck drivers came to their rescue, and transported over 10 million gallons of water to Fredonia. The water plant came back online on July 27.

Incident Management Teams (IMTs) were quick in their response. Emergency management was done only by Mr. Moen, so it was difficult to get things going. An IMT arrived in the disaster area within four hours. There is limited IMT assistance however, because there are not enough people available. IMTs are only there for a short time since they are volunteers and must get back to their full-time jobs. The jurisdiction that supplies IMTs should be reimbursed in a timely fashion.

Instant Command Systems (ICS) work and must be used. More trained people must be added to the system. The filling out of forms is difficult, especially in a timely fashion in the middle of a disaster, as forms are cumbersome to use. Communication was a problem. Counties are not all on the same systems. The 800-Hz system used by Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT)

is too expensive for small counties to purchase. Mutual aid frequencies must be required by all radios in the public sector. KDOT's Communications on Wheels was excellent.

Recovery plans are hard to generate. Temporary housing is a big issue. FEMA will not allow temporary housing back in the flood area, even though it is not in the flood plain. There is not enough housing close to the homes of victims. Bills are not being reimbursed quickly, and there is insufficient money in local reserves for damages. The state offers limited help, but Greensburg is getting most of the help. The state has no emergency contingency funds.

Discussion followed with Mr. Moen. There were no injuries in Wilson County. The Emergency Operations Center was set up immediately by Mr. Moen, and he brought in a command staff to assist. The population of Wilson County is 10,000. Fredonia has 2,500 residents; Neodesha has 2,500 residents; and Altoona has 250 residents. More training is needed for their emergency personnel, which could be accomplished by more funding for the Kansas Department of Emergency Management (KDEM) office. Training takes over a week in total. Mutual aid frequencies for radios are set by the federal government, and each county has its own assigned frequency. In response to Chairman Tafanelli, Mr. Moen said the one thing the state could do for emergency managers that would help the most would be to match federal EMTG grant funds, which go to directly support emergency managers. He felt the plan they had in place worked fairly well, but they did not have a water rescue plan. They relied on Shawnee County for that need. The big problem is that FEMA will not put its assets into an area that has been flooded.

Richard Boeckman, Barton County Counselor/Administrator, testified they had both a tornado and flood in Barton County (Attachment 2). Early in their disaster, FEMA led victims to believe the reimbursement process would be easy and substantial. Later, this created hard feelings. Total FEMA payments to Barton County will be approximately \$2,104,922. The FEMA representative did quite a bit of information gathering, but repeated the gathering three times, and that was very frustrating to local officials. A representative from KDEM helped Barton County rectify its claims to FEMA, because it had been told incorrectly how to apply for funds by FEMA. He suggested FEMA or KDEM prepare some type of checklist that could be made available to local entities in the event of a disaster. He did suggest the development of some type of cost accounting system that could be prepared and available to local governments before a disaster. Having this information in advance would make it easier for local governments to adapt the local cost accounting system into FEMA forms.

During discussion, Senator Teichman thanked Mr. Boeckman for his information and said she also had received calls from constituents concerning frustration with FEMA. The callers' biggest frustration was the timeliness in getting certain areas declared disaster areas. She expressed concern about the Cheyenne Bottoms area. Mr. Boeckman said the area is starting to dry out, but the roads are still an issue. The Catholic Church in Ellinwood had no insurance because it is a closed church. The church requested help from FEMA, but due to frustration with FEMA, church members withdrew their application.

Kathy Allen, Interim Director, Shawnee County Emergency Preparedness, testified the greatest need is public education to convince people to be prepared for disasters (Attachment 3). She indicated she had a very good relationship with FEMA. There is a handbook available giving direction for what FEMA wants to know. She said the profession of emergency management has never received the respect or attention it deserves. She provided a list of good and not-so-good experiences in Shawnee County with her testimony. Ms. Allen pointed out that KDEM is understaffed, and mission numbers were not issued by KDEM in a timely manner. Frustration has occurred because there is no state resource data base listing all emergency response resources in

each county. Finally, policies and procedures on mutual aid and reimbursements to responders were changed three times within the incident period.

Janice Davidson, Director, Ottawa County Emergency Preparedness, gave a timeline of the Ottawa County tornado, which was tracked for about 17 miles through the county (Attachment 4). She experienced wonderful response from all agencies in Ottawa County and surrounding counties. To discard debris, it was a 44-mile round trip haul, which made it difficult to accomplish. She found it difficult to contact anyone at the State Emergency Office. KDEM never responded to her. The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) assisted in getting a construction and debris pit dug on some waste ground belonging to KDWP so they could haul debris to it, saving both time and fuel. There was an issue with KDOT.

KDWP was quick to respond and brought four Americorp members to assist with debris cleanup. She noted U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran and Kansas Representative Elaine Bowers came to the tornado site, but they were not contacted by Kansas Senator Pete Brungardt or a representative of his office. She felt with the amount of state resources in Kansas, there should have been some KDOT or National Guard trucks and loaders available to send a few to Ottawa County, even though the Greensburg tornado required a lot of manpower and equipment. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) needs to be more accessible and accountable. It also needs to be better trained to answer questions. KDEM is under staffed and under trained. She said the "boots on the ground folks" did a great job in responding; it was the management side that seemed to drop the ball.

In response to Senator Pine, Ms. Davidson said she works four days a week and is also the 911 Director of Ottawa County. In response to Senator Teichman, Ms. Davidson said the items that would help her most would be more accessibility to KDEM, more and better information from KDEM employees and more respect for emergency managers. This could be accomplished by KDEM going to counties and meeting with county commissioners. Chairman Tafanelli thanked her for her 19 years of service to emergency management.

Gwen Martin, Woodson County Commission, thanked the state for the timely and organized response to the disaster that occurred in June (Attachment 5). She would appreciate the state giving consideration to small counties before requiring full-time emergency directors. In their disaster, they experienced some road and bridge damage. FEMA is backing off of some of its promises. Steel culverts and rock are hard to find for the repair work they need to have done.

Becky McDonald, Director, Woodson Emergency Preparedness, shared concerns they experienced and offered possible solutions. The WEB EOC site was not monitored as it should have been. She would like to have classes offered on how they are going to interact with counties in a disaster, and these classes should be localized for easy attendance. EOC was not answering their phone as it should have been answered, and this was a source of great frustration. The state should designate a liaison in each county to contact, rather than the EOC during an emergency. Policies and forms should be posted before a disaster, not just e-mailed at the time of a disaster. A resource list should be available. Communication with EOC should be better. Emergency management directors should be full-time employees, but unfortunately it is an unfunded mandate to the counties. It is difficult to get volunteer training. Tasking numbers were difficult to get from EOC.

David Wadell, Director, Woodson Emergency Management, said communication was the major problem he experienced with the state. There needs to be more money for upper level staff, not volunteers.

Ms. Martin said they have been able to access Homeland Security grants. Next year counties can no longer receive these grants, the grants will go to the regional areas instead. They have

purchased infrared binoculars and other items. with those funds, but she thought the funds could have been better utilized by their former emergency director.

The meeting recessed from 12:25 p.m. to 1:38 p.m.

Afternoon Session

William Guy, Director, Reno County Emergency Preparedness, gave background information on the tornado and flooding experienced in Reno County (Attachment 6). Because the county had two floods so close together, there was concern they could not prove to FEMA and the state that the original damage had occurred. His office had pictures of previous damage, which was beneficial. Things that went well for him included good local coordination, deployment of forces, the IMT concept, and FEMA community teams.

However, there were problems with communications with the EOC. EOC did not answer its phone, and was understaffed. Deployment of forces was an issue because of the Greensburg tornado. Levee failures happened. State and Federal personnel came into the area without notifying the local emergency management office. Counties cannot afford the money it would take to switch over to an 800-Hz communications system, so communications remain difficult because each county has its own system.

Areas he felt should be changed or improved upon are additional elected official training, additional funding, and additional personnel. During discussion, he said he did not know why state and federal officials failed to report to local personnel. Levees are being brought back to pre-disaster position, but they must be put back under the Corps of Engineers' specifications, and there are no funds to do that. He did not know if the Corps would take the levees back even if they were put back in condition. In response to Chairman Tafanelli, Mr. Guy said a trust fund would help entities when those entities reached the threshold of a federal disaster area. He said elected officials must realize they have a responsibility during a disaster, and suggested training could be done through Kansas Association of Counties or the League of Kansas Municipalities. Only 38 counties have full-time emergency managers.

Dick Scott, Administrator, representing Elk County Commission, said unfortunately the Elk County Emergency Preparedness Director was unavailable for the first week of its disaster (Attachment 7). Public opinion would be that FEMA did a good job, but was held in Elk County too long. Elk County has received \$67,003 from FEMA and the state. The biggest disappointment experienced was that to get state assistance on rural secondary system roads; there must be \$5,000 damage at one site.

Laura Hyer, Director, Bourbon County Emergency Preparedness, said she had responded to three federal disaster declarations in the last three years in Hancock County, Mississippi; Greensburg, Kansas; and also the Southeast Kansas flood event (Attachment 8).

She reviewed lessons she learned from these experiences:

- The National Incident Management and the Incident Command System work, but training must be done, and she suggested training could be tied to grants to make sure it is completed.
- Damage assessments must be provided quickly to KDEM to begin the process of receiving federal individual and government assistance. FEMA has to wait on local officials' numbers before it can go into action.
- WEB EOC as a reporting tool needs to be expanded. Also, it must be monitored on the receiving end for it to be successful.
- Farmers and ranchers are not covered in many instances by FEMA. Congress needs to allocate funds for them.
- Representatives of FEMA should be clear on what FEMA offers in assistance, as continuity is lost when personnel demob and transfer positions.

During discussion, Ms. Hyer said more personnel and funding are needed for disasters. Cross-training at the county level could alleviate some of the staffing issues. Representative Faber requested staff get numbers, if possible, on the estimate of damage done to farms. County extension officers will be invited to the next Committee meeting to discuss the farm losses. FEMA must interface with others; therefore, the management format must be in place. In comparison to Mississippi, Kansas did an excellent job. Representative McKinney thanked Ms. Hyer for her assistance in Greensburg. Senator Lee complimented Ms. Hyer on her excellent presentation and knowledge of the process. Representative Carlson said he thought cross-training of county officials was an excellent idea. Senator Teichman said it would behoove Kansas to have its own contingency fund.

Judy Moler, General Counsel/Legislative Services Director, Kansas Association of Counties (KAC), said in the aftermath of the Greensburg tornado, KAC was able to have a representative on the ground to help coordinate with counties that wished to send aid in the form of equipment, personnel, and expertise. This worked well for cutting through red tape and getting aid to Kiowa County/Greensburg in an expedited manner ([Attachment 9](#)). There were some complaints regarding FEMA that were forwarded to the Western Association of Counties regarding the ice storms in western Kansas. The biggest complaints were the inequity of treatment of different counties, as well as the massive amount of paperwork required for FEMA reimbursement. Ms. Moler said KAC is going to extend an invitation to Laura Hyer to speak at its conference concerning informing commissioners. In response to Chairman Tafanelli, Ms. Moler said KAC offers training to its members, and also includes information in their newsletter. She said they would be willing to work on standardization for reporting with members.

Don Moler, Executive Director, League of Kansas Municipalities, focused his testimony on the interaction of the state and local governments and a request that the state consider including cities and the League in all future disaster planning ([Attachment 10](#)). The League dispatched two attorneys to Greensburg who provided initial local government counsel for the city. Cities are an integral part in the provision of police, fire, and EMS in times of emergency; they are not an integral part of the state plan. Senator Teichman said she appreciated the League contacting the Highway Patrol to allow trucks to get through to the disaster. They are doing training online, through communications, to the cities. The League has training planned for its conference next week. Senator Teichman expressed concern that plans need to be followed, not just drawn up and shelved. Mr. Moler said the FEMA manual has been simplified so people will read and use it. The paperwork

is almost defeating, especially in smaller units of government, because there are not enough available personnel to fill out all the forms.

Written testimony was received from the following:

- Mark McManaman, Administrator, Pratt County Emergency and Medical Services, Greensburg response summary ([Attachment 11](#)).
- Osborne County Commissioners and Juanita Arnold, Director of Osborne County Emergency Management, reviewing Osborne County's two disasters ([Attachment 12](#)).
- Rick Frevert, Coordinator, Lyon County Emergency Manager, reviewing Lyon County disaster and recovery ([Attachment 13](#)).
- Kenny Bernard, Ellsworth Correctional Facility, expressing positive remarks about FEMA and KDEM ([Attachment 14](#)).

Jill Shelley, Kansas Department of Legislative Research, provided a map of Kansas counties showing which counties were contacted for today's Committee meeting, and who agreed to appear before the Committee ([Attachment 15](#)).

The Committee recessed from 3:10 to 3:40 p.m.

Jason Bolt, Director, Stafford County Emergency Services, reviewed Stafford County's eight tornados' damage and recovery ([Attachment 16](#)). There was one fatality and six injuries. The fatality was a volunteer firefighter/policeman. Recommendations for the initial response period include: increase state funding for groups like MERGe (Major Emergency Response Group) teams; pursue legislation giving MERGe the legal designation needed to direct emergency responses; and encourage local entities to review mutual aid agreements with surrounding jurisdictions. Farming suffered the hardest in Stafford County. There was damage to 87 houses, per FEMA. He recommended developing an emergency guidebook; distributing it to all governmental micro-entities (townships, and others); and encouraging new guidelines that place a higher emphasis on agricultural losses. It took three days for Red Cross to arrive.

State assistance was good, but education is necessary to make sure locals know proper emergency numbers and what is available. He recommended encouraging the development of CERT (Community Emergency Response Teams) as a local resource, and to encourage relief agencies to designate a single state-wide point person as a liaison to serve in the state EOC. Communication was a big problem with outside relief agencies. He recommended more courses be available for county fiscal agents to learn the FEMA process ahead of time, and to encourage federal lawmakers to fill in the gap for family farms. He encouraged more work with FEMA to develop resources to assist in the long-term recovery, and to push for more grant funding to help small family farming operations.

During discussion, he recommended all counties participate in the flood programs. There should be one person who should be appointed to distribute information. Senator Teichman noted insurance companies wanted farmers to set irrigation systems back up to determine if they were a loss or not, and farmers did not have time to do this. It is questionable if the Red Cross was more of a benefit or a problem in their area. Red Cross turned away donations without checking with local people first. They said they turned away food distribution because of red tape. MERGe teams

worked extremely well. They integrate with incident command and do not duplicate services. In response to Representative Ruiz, Mr. Bolt said communication was a big challenge. There is a framework for good communications in Kansas; however, the big problem occurs within the first three hours after a disaster. He reiterated other conferees' remarks that different radio bands are the problem among counties. An 800-Hz band radio in every emergency vehicle within the state would be the answer to having effective communication, but cost is the big issue. KDOT has no office in Stafford County. He feels strongly there should be an office in Stafford County.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

October 4 Morning Session

The Committee reconvened at 9:07 a.m. with a focus on county emergency managers from counties that were declared federal disaster areas.

Sheila Dale, Director, Osage County Emergency Preparedness, testified Web EOC was not stable ([Attachment 17](#)). Osage County had local problems during their disasters, and elected officials need training. Emergency managers need to be full time. Corrective actions which need to be taken include more training, and more funding for EOC, for state aid, and for disaster relief. Contact information needs to be updated. All department heads of all local and state offices need to be trained in the EOC. More knowledge in filling out the paperwork for disasters is needed locally. Long-term recovery plans need to be written. Development of better communication between the local agencies is needed, and a provision for reimbursement for mutual aid should be enacted.

In discussion with Committee members, Ms. Dale said her emergency plan was written in the 1990s. She said the Kansas Department of Health & Environment (KDHE) told her they would look into her concerns about not being able to comply with its requirements. Chairman Tafanelli said he would like to know KDHE's response.

Pat Collins, Director, Riley County Emergency Preparedness, said Riley County just went through Centers for Disease Control assessment of their local plan, which was done according to the KDHE template, and they failed miserably. He said it is nearly impossible to comply. His big concern during the disaster was that he could not even get a telephone answered at KDEM ([Attachment 18](#)). More people are needed so that the normal daily functions of emergency management get completed. In 1993, the Governor's Task Force for Disaster Management looked favorably at the Florida UTF (Universal Trust Fund) plan for disaster funding. It funded the largest disaster responses in the nation by collecting one dollar from each residential insurance policy, and three dollars from each business policy.

During Committee discussion, Mr. Collins said the regional concept of having an IMT in each region is a way to handle situations when multiple counties are affected at the same time or within a short period of time. These teams are comprised of numerous responders. IMTs are based on management of the incident versus MERGe teams, which are just the emergency medical response portion. Chairman Tafanelli said the National Council of State Legislatures (NCSL) looked at UTF plans in the 1990s as a funding mechanism.

Jim Schmidt, Director, Butler County Emergency Preparedness, said “all disasters are local disasters” (Attachment 19). Following 9-11, there has been a shift to focus solely on homeland security at the expense of focusing on the hazards that are more logical. Natural disasters are far more common. Representation from KDEM is not available to participate in local emergency plans through drills and exercises. A big issue is KDEM not answering their phone during an emergency. Butler County experienced helpful and very responsive FEMA representatives. They had little support from KDEM. Watershed damage has occurred, and they have no funding for repair. Failure to repair the damage may result in failure of these structures in future flood events.

In response to Representative Carlson, Mr. Schmidt said KDEM should come up with the solution for an appropriate level of staffing. Every day maintenance should be done on dams, because when a catastrophe event occurs, it is beyond locals' ability to pay for the damage. There needs to be a mechanism for this type of expense when a dam is compromised. Butler County gets \$8,000 in federal grants from CERT, which is used for training, training equipment, and field equipment. If the state were to pay local people to fill specific roles, it would augment EOC. FEMA reimbursement would be questionable if this were to be done. Mr. Schmidt said after 9-11, states and counties received Homeland Security Funds, and Butler County provided back-up things for infrastructure, *i.e.* generators, and communications upgrade. They need a new building, and there is no funding for that. The state is not furnishing any funds for training, but training is provided by the state. There is no opportunity for local manager training. Part of the problem is that in many cases, they are volunteers and cannot get to Topeka for several days to do training because of full-time job commitments. Training is only done on state and regional level. The county emergency manager must be KDEM certified, and continued training is required to maintain the certification. Everyone does not do this, even though it is required. Unless state-level assistance funds are received, there is nothing to force emergency managers do the training. Unfortunately, the training is only done between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Chancy Smith, Director, Dickinson County Emergency Management, testified that two days after the damage in his county by the first flood, all of their damage was plotted in “GIS” with maps (Attachment 20). They then had a second flood which washed out all of the repaired damage from the first flood, plus the damage that had not been fixed was worsened. Dickinson County Emergency Management is full-time staffed with one full-time director. Until two years ago, it was a half-time position with the director also having numerous other duties. He is pleased his county has a proactive county commission, which has a concern for safety and preparedness.

Mr. Smith expressed a concern that it took far too long for the state to request the second disaster declaration for their flooding. The response came over a month after they were told it was started. There are still many bugs to work out in WEB EOC. It was apparent the KDEM'S office was overwhelmed during the disaster. Communication is the key.

Chairman Tafari expressed appreciation to all conferees for taking the time to share their experiences and suggestions with the Committee.

Representative Teichman moved to approve the minutes of the September 24 Committee meeting. Representative Ruiz seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Discussion was held concerning the next Committee meeting. The following will be invited to attend: Coffeyville Resources (oil company), county extension offices, counties affected by last winter's ice storms, Adjutant General's Office, county health nurses, and the Mental Health Association.

The Committee recessed from 10:45 to 11:25 a.m.

Chairman Tafanelli will send a letter to the Legislative Coordinating Council requesting an additional meeting day on December 19 for the Committee to meet for finalization of its report to the Legislature.

Representative Jill Quigley was introduced to the Committee. She is the newest Representative in the Kansas Legislature.

Written testimony was received from Larry Robinson, Alternate/Interim Emergency Management Coordinator, Linn County, stating FEMA and SBA have completed disaster assessments on all applications for individual assistance, and KDEM is still reviewing commercial areas (Attachment 21).

The Committee recessed for lunch from 11:35 a.m.-1:25 p.m.

Afternoon Session

Bryan Armstrong, Director, Saline County Emergency Management, testified they had to fax their disaster declaration to the State EOC three times (Attachment 22). Flooding caused problems with the county computer network being able to access the Internet, so the WEB EOC program could not be used. He reviewed things that went well during their disaster, including coordination of response, resource management, state and FEMA assistance, damage assessment, public warning, public health, and communications, with the exception of communications with the state.

The State EOC was understaffed and staffed with inexperienced personnel. Many calls to the State EOC went to voice mail because no one was answering their phones. Because of Internet problems, the WEB EOC is ineffective. He found State EOC lost requests in the shuffle, and were not answered in a timely manner.

The only negative issue with FEMA was that the initial teams did not coordinate with local officials. After the second flood, it took over a month from the time they were declared to get the Governor to request a Presidential Declaration.

Mr. Armstrong said he is a full-time emergency manager and has a full-time deputy and part-time secretary. In response to what would be helpful to small counties in coming up with their plan, he said it would be beneficial to use regional Homeland Security Coordinators. The first training center will be in Saline County and it will allow cross training between the National Guard and others. The training will include search and rescue, firefighter, emergency hospital and others. They use a Reverse 911 System, which is when the 911 operator makes automated calls warning people of a disaster. The cost was about \$10,000 initially to install this service, plus an annual fee. Representative McKinney requested Mr. Armstrong provide staff with more information on the Reverse 911 System. Representative McKinney also assured Mr. Armstrong they were not forgotten by the Governor, but that the Governor wanted to make sure FEMA guidelines were followed before the declaration was made.

Mr. Armstrong said mitigation funds have not been requested by the counties. There may be requests this year. They are looking into doing cross-county training. They use 440-Hz frequency

and it was successful because they could communicate with other systems. The 800-Hz is cost prohibitive for them to purchase, but they can link to it.

Duane Matthes, Edwards County Commissioner, presented testimony from Richard Neilson, Director of the Edwards County Highway Department and Emergency Preparedness (Attachment 23). Attached to his testimony was a letter to President Bush, thanking the government for its assistance. The main concern they had was the lack of consistency from FEMA. Once they toured the damaged sites with FEMA, they had no other communication to find out how the residents of Edwards County were getting along. They have 400-Hz system, and have not received promised funds for interoperability.

Mr. Matthes expressed concern that storm shelters cannot be installed because of FEMA regulations. This is a federal issue. He attached storm shelter information to his testimony.

Alan Radcliffe, Director, Franklin County Emergency Preparedness, reviewed Franklin County disasters, along with how he was able to assist in disaster areas throughout the state (Attachment 24). He expressed concern that KDEM lacks trained personnel and ability to answer phones during a disaster. The mutual aid law should allow for reimbursement when entities go beyond their neighboring cities or counties. Full-time emergency managers should be funded. Mr. Radcliffe said overall, the response to the disasters from the federal and state level was adequate in Franklin County.

In response to Senator Lee, he said Franklin County population was 26,000, with a budget of \$145,000 for emergencies. He is concerned about grant funds drying up. Homeland Security money is being used to fund the training for IMTs. The Northeast region appropriated \$100,000 for training and \$25,000 of those funds is for equipment. This year, they are allocated \$200,000 and more equipment will be purchased. In regards to counties sharing equipment, he said this funding originally went to the counties, but now it goes to the regions. The IMTs were the Topeka project. Franklin County does not have a CERT team. They are finding they cannot get volunteers since they are becoming a bedroom community of Kansas City. The region cannot actually own equipment; the county must take that responsibility. They meet monthly to coordinate regional efforts. There are some counties which do not want to participate in the regional concept. Senator Lee would like to see the regions share with the entire state, and feels there probably should be some state funding involved. The equipment can be on a resource list with KDEM. Franklin County has 800-Hz capability in their dispatch center, but they do not have the 800-Hz equipment.

Tony Fowler, Montgomery County Commissioner, testified the biggest obstacle to the NIMS structure was the lack of training that was experienced by individuals who were being tasked to perform in a real environment (Attachment 25). This created skepticism of the chain of command that is vital to the success of the Incident Command System. Local jurisdictions did not understand why they were being required to follow the chain of command from city to county to state in order to access available assets and resources. Communication was the stumbling block. Decisions take time and the more agencies that are involved, the longer it takes to make decisions and solve problems. The ones to suffer are the victims of the disaster. The organization that FEMA puts in place is a vast and ever-changing operation.

Mr. Fowler recommended:

- Continue training of all personnel at jurisdictional levels;
- When structuring IMTs, all members should not be from the same discipline;

- Mapping of the entire Verdigris River Basin is essential; and
- More attention needs to be focused on the IMT teams to insure they are aware of FEMA reimbursement policies.

In response to Representative Carlson's inquiry as to whether he felt he was prepared, Mr. Fowler said he has information from the county emergency management director, but has not studied it yet.

Jim Miller, Director of Montgomery County Emergency Preparedness, in response to Representative Faber, said current maps are not good maps, and they must be requested. The Corps of Engineers and FEMA are both responsible for the maps, and they are currently studying this issue. The Corps said the Verdigris River Basin is the worst mapped area in the country, and it will probably take several years to complete a new map.

John Boyd, Director, Pottawatomie County Emergency Preparedness, reported when he requested helicopter support, KDEM told him there would be a charge for that service (Attachment 26). There was a disconnect between KDEM information and news releases, and FEMA at the Joint Field Office. He said he had many positive comments about the disaster process, including the National Guard "Scout" concept, KDEM preliminary damage assessment, and public assistance teams, timely service on the part of FEMA. In response to Representative Carlson, Mr. Boyd said he has always enjoyed an outstanding relationship with his County Commissioners and state legislators.

Mike Selves, Chairperson, Government Affairs Committee, Kansas Emergency Management Association, testified he has been involved in the emergency management profession for the past 19 years (Attachment 27). Effective coordinated local efforts depend on two basic factors: First, minimum essential county-level program of emergency management and preparedness; and second, local elected officials must have at least a basic understanding of the purpose and objectives of an organized and systematic program of emergency management and support the efforts of county coordinators. The State Emergency Management agency should establish minimum standards for local emergency management programs, assess local preparedness efforts, work with local agencies to develop strategies to meet or improve standards, provide state-level liaisons during major disasters, provide program guidance, and ensure federal funding is targeted for support of local emergency management agencies.

Mr. Selves made the following recommendations:

- Urge the Legislature, Governor and Adjutant General to join in seeking to develop a more active and effective emergency program within the Division of Emergency Management;
- More training for KDEM and county agencies; and
- Provide more general funds match to KDEM.

He also thought it would be beneficial to consider establishing a trust fund like the one Florida has to help following major disasters.

Staff provided the Committee with a copy of 1994 HB 2800, which would have set up a trust fund based on the Florida law (Attachment 28). It is not known how much money this surcharge would produce annually.

Terry David, Director, Rice County Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Medical Service, said MERGe was formed by a group of EMS leaders within the 19 counties in the south-central region of Kansas following the 1991 Andover-Wichita tornados (Attachment 29). During the 2007 disaster, the most significant issue he had to deal with was the disconnect between commanders at the scene in Greensburg and the State Emergency Operations Center, specifically obtaining "mission numbers" to assign to incoming EMS crews. At one point, it resulted in EMS crews refusing to commit to cover operational periods until they were assured a mission number. However, Mr. David noted he received excellent service from the Kansas Highway Patrol, National Guard, and KDOT. The individual assistance portion of recovery was frustrating, as he had very little information provided by FEMA or anyone else.

He said the single largest problem with Emergency Management in the State of Kansas is the lack of individual counties to take it seriously. They tend to be reactive, rather than pro-active and have not committed enough money to hire people to get the job done. Senator Lee requested information on the Homeland Security grant process. A handout from the Kansas Highway Patrol on the process was distributed, and the KHP will appear if additional information is needed (Attachment 30). Senator Lee also requested the Kansas Insurance Department give an estimate on how much money would be realized if the 1994 bill would be enacted. Chairman Tafanelli requested Mike Selves update the figure.

There being no further business, Chairman Tafanelli thanked Committee members for their participation in the meeting. The next meeting will be held on October 26, 2007.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Prepared by Judy Swanson
Edited by Kathie Sparks

Approved by Committee on:

October 26, 2007
(date)