Preparedness

Emergency Management

Response

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A Look Inside

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NJ Municipalities welcomes member articles, information, and op eds. Contact Managing Editor Amy Spiezio at aspiezio@njslom.org or go to njslom.org/magazine if you’ve got a story to tell.

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**Initiation by Fire**
The destructive results of lightweight wood construction inspire a call for preventative changes in fire codes
Michael McPartland, Mayor, Edgewater

**Ready to Respond**
Pre-establishing your relationships and communications for emergency management
Howard Butt, Emergency Response Specialist, & Tpr I Thomas Walsh #6484, New Jersey State Police, Office of Emergency Management, Support Services Unit

**Lending a Comforting Hand**
Dealing with the deeper issues of disaster recovery
Adrienne Fessler-Belli, Ph.D., LCSW, State Director, New Jersey Department of Human Services Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services Disaster & Terrorism Branch

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J. Christian Bollwage, Mayor, Elizabeth

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Be Ready, Willing, and Able When the Next Disaster Strikes

Emergency planning and preparations need to be a priority right up until the time when emergency response and emergency management become necessities. If there was ever any doubt about that, it has been entirely erased by the recent experiences of New Jersey local officials and their citizens, who have endured a rising tide of unusually distressing events that could never have been exactly foreseen.

Consider the January snow storm. While it was known for days that a storm was coming from across the country, the exact magnitude of the tide and snowfall could not have been exactly known. The result was destruction from record storm tides and snowfalls. How do you prepare for that?

This issue of our magazine includes articles that focus on all three emergency essentials—preparation, response, and management. Those articles also serve as reminders that emergencies need to be dealt with, not only by public safety and public works departments, but by every aspect of municipal administration, including your League of Municipalities. It follows that every part of every public agency needs to prepare. And the crucial component of preparation is the development of a plan.

The League assists municipal emergency management by communicating information. Creation of dedicated web pages makes a central point to retrieve documents related to an emergency event. Email communication pushes information out as it develops. Afterwards, communication to the State and Federal authorities helps keep municipal needs as a priority to be addressed.

The dictionary defines emergency as “an unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state that calls for immediate action” or “a usually distressing event or condition that can often be anticipated or prepared for but seldom exactly foreseen.” It defines preparation as “the action or process of making something ready for use or service or of getting ready for some occasion, test, or duty.” Response “implies the satisfying of a question, demand, call, or need.” And management, the dictionary tells us, includes the “judicious use of means to accomplish an end.”

Whenever you define something, you limit it. Emergencies need to be limited. But we need more than a dictionary for that. We hope these articles help you to think about those unforeseen events that can still be anticipated and prepared for. And we hope that they will enable you to expand your definition of preparation, response, and management.

Michael Darcy
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What our graduates say:

“Being in a cohort, made us supportive of one another and assisted us with staying on top of key assignments. We became a family! We encouraged each other during the rough times, family incidents, tough assignments, and ensured we all graduated on time.”

– Chante’, 2015 graduate

“In addition to the knowledge and skills attained from the challenging coursework, I was able to approach my transition into a leadership role in government with greater confidence and a more informed perspective.”

– Mike, 2013 graduate
Long before storms were named—or labelled with catchy tags like stormageddon—municipalities dealt with recovering from major emergencies, natural and man-made. In 1939 New Jersey was among the states getting back to normal after the New England Hurricane of 1938, which destroyed much of the Atlantic City boardwalk and left Wildwood’s streets in three feet of water at its height.

In the 1939 spotlight, however, was the ongoing recovery from a bigger storm, The Depression. Helping people grow their own food in municipal gardens became an ongoing bridge to stability in a challenging time.

Long-term stability has great importance in the March 2016 issue of New Jersey Municipalities, which focuses on the preparedness portion of emergency management. Communication through emergency technology such as websites is encouraged today, just as citizens were encouraged to use their telephones to report forest fires in 1939.

Mayor Michael McPartland also discusses his experience with the Edgewater Apartment fire and the importance of safety-oriented construction codes, just as the focus turned to building highways utilizing “Safety with Light” 77 years ago.

**Gardens—An Important Municipal Project**

The supervision of municipally operated gardens in many cases is directly responsible for the success or failure of a garden project...There are usually retired farmers available in every community who could qualify. However, anyone chosen to act as a supervisor must be tolerant, firm, quiet of manner, and must at all times be willing to help, and show inexperienced growers how to overcome problems which may present themselves.

—C.H. Nissley, Extension Horticulturist, Rutgers University

**New “Safety With Light” Program Launched**

The “Death Trap Removal Program” conceived and put into effect by Highway Commissioner E. Donald Sterner, and which stresses as one of its major phases the reduction of high night accident zones through safety lighting, has given ample proof not only to New Jersey but to the entire country that a “Safety With Light” program returns a big premium to any municipality that participates. This premium is paid in lives and dollars.

—Lawrence B. Tipton, Safety Chairman, New Jersey Junior Chamber of Commerce

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**Forestall Forest Fires**

Many a meal will be missed and many a night of sleep lost by loyal, courageous firewardens all because of someone’s carelessness. You can help. Prevent forest fires by being careful. If you see a fire burning, go to the telephone and the operator will connect you with the nearest warden.

—William J. Seidel, Deputy State Firewarden
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24th Annual Mayors’ Legislative Day Educates, Opens Communications

Mayors from all around New Jersey gathered for the League’s 24th Annual Mayors’ Legislative Day held at the Statehouse Annex Feb. 3. League President Joseph Tempesta, Mayor of West Caldwell, began the day by welcoming Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno. The Lt. Governor highlighted the importance and need to work with local businesses to continue economic growth.

Lt. Governor Guadagno also noted that she was heading down to Cape May the following day to assist municipalities recovering from Jonas.

CABINET OUTLOOK After the Lt. Governor spoke, League President Mayor Tempesta asked key Christie Administration leaders to discuss their priorities for the coming year.

Department of Transportation (DOT) Acting Commissioner Richard Hammer spoke about need to reauthorize the State’s Transportation Trust Fund. He emphasized the costs we all pay for inadequate maintenance of our roads, bridges, and railways.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Bob Martin focused on DEP’s efforts to expedite reviews and to streamline processes in order to assist municipalities in navigating DEP. He also discussed the Department’s continuing response to Super Storm Sandy, including efforts to assist municipalities that were devastated.

Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Chuck Richman discussed the status of affordable housing, electronic submission of documents, and new housing initiatives. He listed resources that the DCA has made available to help meet the needs of municipalities and of individuals impacted by Hurricane Sandy. He also discussed the Department’s continuing efforts to develop reasonable Affordable Housing policies and procedures, again asking Mayors to urge their Legislators to address Fair Housing Act reforms. In addition, Commissioner Richman brought Mayors up-to-date on the Department’s efforts to address homelessness, particularly regarding initiatives to end homelessness for veterans.

Board of Public Utilities (BPU) President Rick Mroz spoke about the need to hold utilities accountable for unacceptable maintenance and timely repair of equipment, conduits, and rights of way, and of the need to modernize utility operations.
**LEGISLATIVE POLICY ROUNDTABLE** A lively legislative policy roundtable discussion, moderated by NJ Spotlight writer John Reitmeyer followed the Cabinet Outlook. The panel included Senate President Steve Sweeney, Senate Republican Leader Tom Kean, Assembly Speaker Vince Prieto, and Assembly Republican Leader Jon Bramnick. These State-level leaders were joined by League Second Vice President, Mayor Jim Cassella of East Rutherford, and League Third Vice President, Mayor Colleen Mahr of Fanwood covering a variety of topics.

- **Transportation Trust Fund** One topic that generated enthusiastic support from State Legislators and Mayors alike was the need to reinvigorate the Transportation Trust Fund and to supply a greater level of aid to local governments.
- **Diversion of Energy Tax Funding** Agreement was expressed to end the State diversion of Energy Tax funding. Legislators stated their agreement that the Energy Taxes do belong in local coffers and their hope to begin to address the problem, soon.
- **Pensions** The need to protect the integrity of local pension systems, to provide municipalities with predictability regarding affordable housing requirements, and the need to promote economic recovery also received favorable comment. Of particular note was Senate President Sweeney’s strongly worded assurance that he would not support comingling of local and State pension system assets.

**HA LL OF FAME** The program also included the presentation of certificates to the new class of inductees into the League’s Elected Officials’ Hall of Fame. These dedicated men and women have completed at least two decades of service to their fellow citizens in elected local office. (See story next page) Mayors’ Legislative Day is an annual highlight of the League’s continuous efforts to keep local elected officials informed on what’s happening in the State Capital and how that can affect you and your constituents.
The League inducted 18 new members into the Elected Officials Hall of Fame during the 24th Annual Mayors’ Legislative Day held Feb. 3 at the State House Annex in Trenton. This honor is reserved for those governing body members, active and retired, who have served 20 years in elected municipal office.

The 2016 Elected Officials Hall of Fame inductees are as follows:

Councilman John C. Archibald, Jr., Atlantic Highlands Borough
Councilman Peter C. Eagler, Clifton City
Councilman William Holt, East Orange City
Deputy Mayor Daniel Coranoto, Hampton Township
Councilman Michael Dolaghan, Harrison Town
Councilman Raymond Kerwin, Lincoln Park Borough
Mayor Derek Armstead, Linden City
Councilman Elliot C. Beinfest, Linwood City
Council at Large Frank Perri, Jr., Northfield City
Mayor Donald J. Ruschman, Park Ridge Borough
Councilwoman Doris Bugdon, Port Republic
Councilwoman Shirl Ewald, Rockleigh Borough
Mayor John E. Ekdahl, Rumson Borough
Council Earl Gage, Salem City
Council James Waddington, Salem City
Councilman Chris F. McIntyre, Wayne Township
Councilmember Peter Grefrath, Westwood Borough
Council President Brian J. Sperling, Wrightstown Borough

Congratulations to our most recent members!

For a full list of the current members of the Elected Officials Hall of Fame, visit njslon.org.
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