

Office of Emergency Management

Director Jerry Tate

The Boulder Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is supported by both the City of Boulder and Boulder County. The mission of the Boulder OEM partnership is to develop, coordinate and lead a comprehensive emergency management program, enabling effective preparation for and efficient response to emergencies and disasters, in order to save lives, reduce human suffering and protect resources. OEM performs the full scope of emergency management duties and coordinates closely with the Colorado Division of Emergency Management and the North Central Homeland Security Region on matters relating to preparedness, response and mitigation.

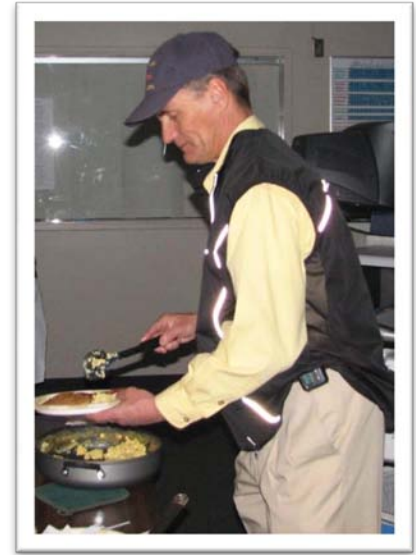


Figure 23 - Director Jerry Tate

Mitigation

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires that local governments have a Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (MHMP) in place that has been approved by the state and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In order for a jurisdiction to be eligible for certain pre-and post disaster federal funds the MHMP is an absolute requirement. Having a plan in place could provide Boulder County and its municipalities with millions of dollars of recovery funds should a disaster strike. An approved MHMP also opens the door for pre-disaster mitigation funds that are presently not available to jurisdictions without a plan.

The Boulder OEM has coordinated the completion of a MHMP that encompass all of unincorporated Boulder County as well as the town and cities located therein, with the exception of the City of Boulder, which has completed its own plan. Presently this plan has been approved by the State and has been deemed “approvable” by FEMA. Once the plan is formally adopted by each jurisdiction participating in the plan, it will receive final approval from FEMA.

Preparedness

OEM spends the great majority of its resources on preparedness activities including planning, training, coordination and the development of relationships between governmental and non-governmental entities. The following is a brief overview of some of OEM’s preparedness projects and activities:

Multi-Agency Coordination Group (MAC)

The MAC Group is the cornerstone of OEM’s preparedness efforts. OEM coordinates a monthly meeting that representatives from governmental and non-governmental organizations attend. The purpose of the meeting is to provide information to first responders and others that will enhance Boulder’s capabilities to respond to a disaster.

During the meeting attendees are grouped by emergency support functions – this is done to reinforce use of the ESFs in Boulder’s EOC as outlined in the National Response Framework. A MAC Group meeting normally has about 50 attendees including representative from several non-governmental organizations such as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Volunteer Connection and hospitals. Many city and county departments as well as the University of Colorado send representatives to the MAC Group meetings.

Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)

The LEPC is a partnership between facilities that use hazardous materials and emergency response agencies of Boulder County to promote safe chemical handling and storage practices. The LEPC also serves to enhance cooperation during emergency incidents, and to provide public education and information on community risks and protection measures. The LEPC is federally mandated and is supported by the Colorado Emergency Planning Committee at the State level. The Emergency Planning and the Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) and the Clean Air Act (CAA) both require facilities to report on hazardous chemicals they store or handle. The OEM, working with the LEPC, compiles these reports into a “Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan,” and makes them available to first responders and citizens. The OEM coordinates the LEPC meetings and the OEM Director co-chairs with an industry person. About 20 persons representing Boulder County fire departments and other entities such as NIST, Lexmark and Ball Aerospace usually attend these monthly meetings. Additionally, close coordination is maintained with the University of Colorado because there are significant amounts and types of hazardous materials on campus stored and used by the science and maintenance departments. Presently, one of the primary goals of the Boulder LEPC is to support the Boulder HAZMAT Task Force in becoming better prepared to respond to serious hazardous materials incidents.



Figure 24 - LEPC Logo

Special Preparedness Projects

The St. Vrain HHF Preparedness Project

The OEM strives to maintain a high level of initiative on making the community better prepared for a disaster by conducting special projects. In 2007, the OEM conducted a special project for residents living in the High Hazard Floodplain (HHF) of Boulder Creek. In 2008 the OEM and the Boulder County Sheriff’s Office initiated the 2008 Flood Preparedness Project. The goal of the project was to identify and reach out to the vulnerable population (VP) in the HHF of the St. Vrain Creek, where the depth and velocity of surging water during a flood would endanger lives. The project leaders reached out to many organizations that have VP clients in the HHF to form a collaborative partnership. The OEM staff, working with the BCSO, ran several articles in the Lyons newspaper pertaining to preparedness. There was also a mass mailing done to all residences identified in the HHF notifying residents of the potential threat and offering

individual planning assistance. A few citizens did ask for assistance, which the Boulder OEM provided. Additionally, Boulder OEM made presentations to citizens groups on preparedness.

Special Needs Shelter

In 2008 OEM partnered with Boulder County Public Health, Boulder County Aging Services Division and others to develop a Special Needs Sheltering (SpNS) capability. The American Red Cross shelters are designed to accept members of the general population, but not those citizens with special needs related to mental or physical impairments. There were a number of accomplishments in 2008, including:

- ❑ Established a partnership with several city, county and non-governmental organizations to bring a comprehensive and cohesive plan to fruition.
- ❑ Identified 3 sheltering locations; North Boulder Recreation Center, Erie Community Center, and Longmont Recreation Center
- ❑ Secured grant funding to have all three facilities pre-wired to readily accept generators
- ❑ Added \$12,000 worth of supplies to the surge trailers that can be used at a SpNS facility
- ❑ Developed an Operations Plans for the SpNS
- ❑ Performed a drill at the North Boulder recreation center
- ❑ Made plans to exercise the SpNS during the 2009 Exercises.



Figure 25 - Unloading the Special Needs Shelter. Sgt Dave Booton (L), Lisa Widdekind, and Jerry Tate

Training and Exercises

Training plays a critical role in community preparedness. In 2007 OEM established a long term planning agenda developed jointly with the first responder community and Boulder County Public Health. This plan encompassed a wide range of activities as outlined in the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program and it was followed in 2008. During the past year the monthly MAC Group meeting was used to provide training seminars. Other training completed in 2008 included a Senior Officials Workshop, a Threat and Risk Assessment class, a mass casualty exercise with the hospitals, a hazardous materials workshop with the LEPC and an EOC operations exercise. During 2008 OEM also obtained a grant for \$125,000 to conduct a tabletop and a full-scale exercise. Both of these will be conducted in early 2009.



Figure 26 - Sgt Dan Barber

Emergency Operations Plans

In an effort to be consistent with the State of Colorado and the FEMA, OEM uses the emergency support function concept for its emergency operations plans. During 2008 OEM, working with a contractor, continued to revise its plans. The Basic Plan was completed and circulated to the OEM Directors for review. Additionally, 12 of the 18 Emergency Support Function Annexes were completed. The remaining six will be done in early 2009. OEM anticipates having all of these plans done by the time the exercises begin in March 2009.



Figure 27 – Emergency Operations Center

Warning Sirens

During 2008, OEM coordinated the acquisition and placement of five new sirens in Boulder County. Two sirens were installed in Lyons (one in Lyons and one west of Lyons in the Apple Valley area), one in Jamestown and another at the soccer fields nears 47th and Kalmia in Boulder. The fifth, to be installed in the Marshall area, will be completed in early 2009 after final approval has been obtained from the site's property owner, the University of Colorado. Additionally, two new encoders have been obtained that can activate any and all of the sirens. One has been installed in the county's communications center and the second will be placed in the city's dispatch center. This will provide redundancy where either facility can activate the warning sirens.

Citizen Corps Council and Citizens Emergency Response Team training (CERT)



Figure 28 - CERT Training

In 2008 the Boulder County Citizen Corps Council (BCCCC) undertook an analysis and strategic planning process in order to redefine and focus the efforts of the committee. The mission & purpose of the BCCCC was identified as follows: *The Boulder County Citizen Corps Council [will] empower citizens through education, training and volunteer service in order to make our communities safer, stronger and better prepared for terrorism, crime, public health issues and disasters of all kinds.*

New potential members and primary focus areas were identified. An open house is planned for early 2009 to kick off the new BCCCC.

OEM staff participated in a CERT Train-The-Trainer course in late 2007 and subsequently offered the first all citizens Citizen Emergency Response Training (CERT) class in Boulder County in April 2008, and the first CERT class in the City of Longmont in November 2008.

In addition, OEM has presented several preparedness trainings and participated in community outreach events, including:

- Providing training for the City of Boulder Park and Recreation staff, and assisting with emergency plans for all facilities and programs in the Recreation division.
- Conducting three “Be Ready” eight-hour preparedness training for citizens.

- Distributing preparedness materials at several community events such as Health Fairs, Boulder Creek festival and Louisville Public Safety Awareness week.
- Provided preparedness presentations for the Boulder Evening Optimists Club, the City Manager’s Advisory Council of CU Students, and the Boulder County Seniors & Law Enforcement Together (SALT) group.
- Partnering with Boulder Fire’s Safety Coordinator to present flashflood awareness and preparedness training at three housing sites in Boulder.

This program will continue to grow in 2009 as staff seeks further opportunities to promote preparedness and safety in Boulder County. OEM will again offer Be Ready and CERT training, as well as the first CERT for Teens class in February 2009. OEM staff continues to coordinate with the North Central Region’s Citizen Corps Council and Citizen Preparedness committees; currently, OEM staff is serving as co-chair on the NCR Citizen Corps Council.

Response

EOC Activations

There were no significant emergency EOC activations during 2008; however, in August OEM issued four Mode 2 notices giving responders warning that weather conditions exist for flash flooding. We also had a brief activation on April 20, 2008 for the Settlers’ Park fire.

The EOC was activated in a planned activation from Sunday, August 24 through Thursday August 29, 2008 during the Democratic National Convention to support Boulder County personnel who were working that event. This activation also served as an opportunity to test and practice with the equipment in the new EOC, as OEM had just moved in to the new facility in early August.

On January 7, 2009, there was a significant EOC activation as a result of the Olde Stage wild fires. This activation lasted two days.

WEB EOC

In early 2008 Boulder OEM acquired the software WebEOC in order to help manage the EOC during critical incidents. This tool enables the EOC to operate efficiently and to keep track of tasks and events. During 2008, Boulder OEM trained more than one hundred users on the system and today more than 200 persons have user access. The system has been used three times since its acquisition. It was used during the Settlers’ Park fires in April, during the Democratic National Convention EOC activation, and again in early January 2009 for the Olde Stage wild fires. It has contributed to the EOC becoming better organized and enabled better tracking of events, resources and tasks.

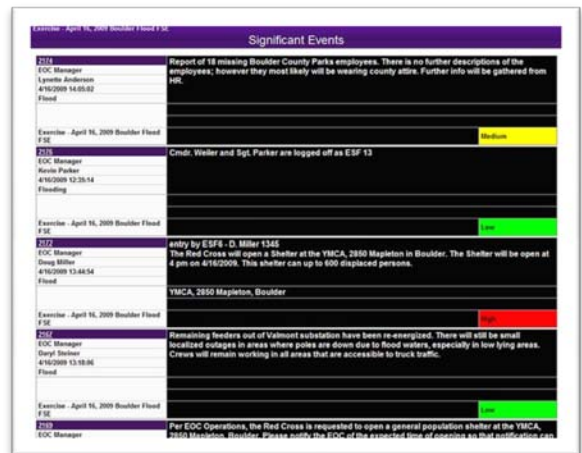


Figure 29 - WebEOC Interface

Expanded Dispatch Control Center

OEM has been working to develop a concept called the Expanded Dispatch Control Center (EDCC) for use during EOC activations. During disasters the city and county dispatch centers can be quickly overwhelmed by callers seeking and/or providing information. The EDCC is a plan to handle a high volume of calls from citizens during a disaster. The second purpose of the EDCC is to implement a Multi-Agency Coordination System (MACS) that enables the dispatch centers in Boulder County to work together seamlessly with field incident command and the Boulder Emergency Operations Center (BEOC).



Figure 30 - O.E.M. Logo

Grants

- As mentioned above, in early 2008, OEM developed an initiative to create a sheltering project for citizens with special needs. One important component of this endeavor was to identify shelters sites within the county that would meet the need. Three sites were identified; the North Boulder Recreation Center, the Longmont Recreation Center and the Erie Community Center. All of the sites were excellent except that none of them had generators and were not equipped to readily receive one. A Homeland Security grant request in the amount of \$113,850 has been awarded to Boulder that will enable all three to be pre-wired with a tap box and transfer switch. When completed, this will save considerable time during an emergency making a building ready to receive citizens with special needs.
- A grant request in the amount of \$24,000 was received to enable OEM to contract with a vendor to work on the Emergency Operations Plan. A contractor, well versed in emergency management practices, was identified and helped the OEM and the lead city/county departments finalize their annexes.
- A grant request in the amount of \$11,000 was received to make citizen preparedness booklets. These booklets are presently being customized for Boulder County and will provide citizens with information on how to prepare for and react to emergencies
- Previously mentioned above was the grant that was received from the North Central Region to conduct exercises in 2009. This grant, in the amount \$125,000, is being used for a contractor, SAIC, to facilitate the exercises.

Coordination

A very significant amount of OEM's human resources are expended performing coordination activities at the local, regional and state level. The following is a list of the organizations and entities with whom OEM routinely coordinates:

Locally

- University of Colorado Emergency Operations Group
- Health and Medical Response (Hospitals)
- Boulder County Fire Chiefs
- Mountain Fire Chiefs
- Boulder County Fire Fighters Association

Regionally

- North Central Region
 - Board of Directors
 - Authority Committee
 - Governance Committee
 - Critical Infrastructure Committee
 - Citizen Preparedness
 - EOC Operations
 - Incident Operations
 - Volunteer/Donations
 - Exercise Committee
- Foothills Regional Emergency & Trauma Advisory Council
- West Metro Emergency Managers

State

- Front Range Emergency Management Forum
- Colorado Emergency Management Association

The Boulder OEM is involved in other activities relating to coordination. OEM strives to represent the city and the county in a professional manner that not only brings credit to Boulder, but also takes advantage of available opportunities to gain resources to enhance public safety. More information on OEM can be found at www.boulderoem.com.