

NEWSLETTER



EMAO strives to advance public safety for Ohioans through effective collaborations with local, state, and federal partners.

AUG 2024 VOL. VIII



Defiance goes to Emmitsburg: A FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT OF COUNTY-SPECIFIC EOC TRAINING ON-SITE AT EMI



There is a myth, or maybe it's an old wives' tale, that Defiance County doesn't get bad weather because of the two rivers that come together in the City of Defiance. They say the weather splits at the Ohio line and goes to the North or South of us. We have the Maumee and the Auglaize Rivers that come together in downtown Defiance. The truth is, historically there was the 1913 Flood which was 26 feet above flood level. We have dealt with repetitive flooding at the confluence of the rivers. The City of Defiance has utilized the mitigation funds to purchase flood-prone properties and expand Kingsbury Park. Although we have dealt with a few tornadoes over my tenure (23 years), we have not had a disaster that reached the minimum qualifications to bring in FEMA or State Assistance. We are very thankful for that. The downside to our luck is that we have never fully activated our EOC. We have only had partial activations that lasted a few hours. When our LEPC was discussing potential training needs, EOC training was suggested. Ohio EMA NW Emergency Specialist Anita Stechschulte specifically suggested we apply for FEMA EOC training. Our first step was to get local buy-in. Anita and I presented the idea at our next LEPC meeting where we had three Commissioners and several other elected officials in attendance. We had three newer Commissioners, several new fire chiefs, and other new officers in the county. Our local law enforcement has also had turnover recently. We felt this was a good time to bring these new people together, outside of the county, for both networking and training purposes. We stated the importance of attending in-person at Emmitsburg to eliminate distractions, such as phone calls, emails, etc. Our LEPC encouraged us to proceed with the application. We knew it was a long shot. This is a nationwide grant, and only 12 applications are chosen. Eight of those selected are direct delivery (in your jurisdiction), and four are to be held in-person at Emmitsburg. The application process seems daunting but it was not that bad. It is no more than 7 pages to complete. The chief official of your jurisdiction (in our case a commissioner) wrote a letter of request with my supporting documentation, and it was forwarded to Ohio EMA. Then, Executive Director Sima Merick wrote her letter of endorsement, and our packet was forwarded to FEMA Region V. They reviewed our packet, ranked it, and then it was sent to Emmitsburg for the final analysis of all ranked applications. The deadline was February 1.

We received an email on April 25, 2022 from EMI that we were selected! The technical name of this course was: Community Specific FY23 Integrated Emergency Management Course (IEMC - E0930) Delivery. We were informed that our class was scheduled on August 21-25, 2023 (this is our fair week). We then started a list of those who wanted to attend. We were allowed to send up to 70 people to fill the class, and we wanted people that would be called in the event our EOC was activated. We extended invitations to the following: City of Defiance departments (fire/PD/Engineers/Water/Streets), Villages of Hicksville, Ney and Sherwood, all Defiance County fire departments, three hospitals, 911 Dispatch, Sheriff's Office, Hicksville Police Department, Defiance County Auditor and Health Department, CSX Railroad, Richland Power Plant, First Energy, National Weather Service and the Defiance County Commissioner's Office. We also saved 5 spots for Ohio EMA. Our first virtual meeting with EMI staff was June 2022. We discussed our goals for the class and what they expected from us. They wanted us to put together a planning committee and our Kick-off meeting was set for July 2022. After that meeting, we had monthly virtual meetings to go over course modules, exercise objectives and players. We also picked a scenario from their list. They provided meeting minutes from each meeting. In January 2023 they provided a Defiance specific link to register for the course. We were to send this to those who committed to attending the class. We created a spreadsheet we to track everyone's name and FEMA SID. In March, two of the EMI instructors flew to Defiance for two days. They wanted to see our EOC and tour our county to get a feel for the environment they were designing the exercise for. Even though this was delivered in Emmitsburg, they wanted it as realistic as possible for those participating. While in Defiance, the EMI instructors also went over our EOP, Transportation Study, and spoke with our Hazmat Chief. (Article cont. on next page.)



Defiance County, Ohio - Integrated Emergency Management Course (IEMC)
Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, MD - August 2023





Defiance goes to Emmitsburg (cont.)

A FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT OF COUNTY-SPECIFIC EOC TRAINING ON-SITE AT EMI

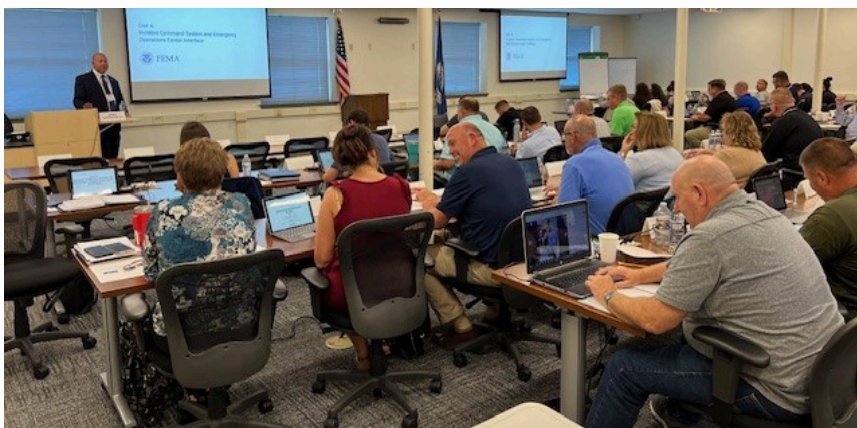
As August approached, we created a timeline. By Feb 24th everyone should be registered for the course. By July 14th airline tickets needed purchased. Travelers had the option to drive but there was a cap on mileage. Most of us drove county vehicles so we would not submit for reimbursement, but those who did drive their personal vehicles found the process quite simple. By August 1st Shuttle Service reservations needed made if you needed transportation from the airport. By August 19th meal tickets needed purchased (no more than 2 weeks prior to the class and no later than 2 days prior to arrival). Most of us used the county credit card for the meal tickets, and for gas and toll charges so we had no out of pocket expenses. The county also allowed this credit card to pay for the airline tickets. Keep in mind, FEMA only reimburses the student. There must be an understanding that any reimbursement be paid back to their appointing authority.

We arrived on a Sunday. The cafeteria had a buffet ready for us. We had 3 meals a day in the cafeteria throughout the week. Each participant had a private dorm with an attached bathroom. Our class was in the same building each day. We had breakout rooms. There were 39 of us that were divided into 3 groups. Monday was all classroom instruction. Tuesday and Wednesday we had a half day classroom then 3-hour tabletop exercise scenarios in our groups. Thursday we were all back together for a full day EOC exercise. I chose a couple of our students who were seasoned players to be our evaluators since FEMA does not evaluate the exercise for us. Because we made sure they wrote the scenario to meet our LEPC exercise requirements, we were able to get credit for a Functional EOC Exercise.

This was a great experience for so many reasons: we ate each meal together, we hung out each evening in the Pub, we were able to socialize with the 911 Dispatchers who are always behind the radio and never out of the office, we were able to get to know many new people in our county. To top it all off, on karaoke night we found out Andrew Elder has an incredible voice!

So many people were nervous going into the class because they didn't know what happens in an EOC. Now they are confident they can come in and fill any position needed. During the functional exercise, a Deputy managed resources like a pro! People saw what needed to be done and did it. They found a new and improved sense of solidarity and confidence. I would encourage anyone that needs training or wants to build a cohesive EOC to consider applying to the experience in Emmitsburg. I also recommend you utilize your OEMA regional staff. We could not have gotten through this process without the assistance and support from Anita Stechschulte.

Article written by: Julie Rittenhouse, Defiance County EMA Director



Making training a "virtual" reality

The Fairfield County Healthcare Coalition, co-chaired by the Emergency Management Agency and Health Department, is in the process of purchasing equipment and licensing for The Ohio State University's SALT (Sort, Assess, Lifesaving Interventions, Treatment/Transport) Triage virtual reality program.

On May 30, 2024, OSU staff brought their virtual reality equipment down to provide a local train-the-trainer course. Department designated Fire/EMS and EMA personnel went through the simulation and learned how to use the equipment and software. They were also trained in how to debrief participants and troubleshoot the VR system. The program received positive feedback from participants and there is excitement to be able to provide this training locally.

This project provides first responders with additional hands-on training in triage that they would have otherwise only received in real-world situations. The program is not a pass/fail, but a simulation with an individualized report and debrief afterward to discuss actions taken. The Coalition is hoping to provide first responders with continuing education credit for taking the training.

The goal is that once the equipment and software are obtained, is to allow our local trainers to travel to different Fire/EMS departments and provide onsite training. Law enforcement agencies have expressed interest in going through the simulation as well.

The purchase of equipment and licensing is made possible through grant funding the Coalition received from COTS. This training opportunity is an example of collaboration between the Fairfield County Healthcare Coalition, EMA, Health Department, local Fire/EMS departments, COTS, and The Ohio State University. To learn more and see the VR training in action visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBqIDpCFXhU>



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Flying Pigs? NO PROBLEM!



Hamilton County Emergency Management played a pivotal role in ensuring the safety and smooth operation of the 26th Flying Pig Marathon held on May 4th-6th. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated and staffed on both Saturday and Sunday to coordinate responses and support various missions essential for the event's success. This document provides an overview of the involvement of Hamilton County Emergency Management in the Flying Pig Marathon. Article written by: Ben Casteel, Hamilton County EMA

Staffing the Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
 The Hamilton County Emergency Management team diligently staffed the Emergency Operations Center throughout the duration of the event. This involved continuous monitoring of activities, coordinating responses, and liaising with numerous agencies involved in ensuring the safety and security of participants and spectators.

Collaborative Efforts
 One of the key aspects of our involvement was fostering collaboration among various agencies involved in the event. Hamilton County Emergency Management served as a liaison between the City of Cincinnati, multiple other agencies including the National Weather Service, City of Cincinnati Emergency Communications Center, Hamilton County Communications Center, The Tri-State Health Collaborative, ARES, and Flying Pig Staff. This collaborative effort was essential in addressing any issues that arose during the marathon.

Experience and Response
 Both days of the event presented unique challenges, but through effective collaboration, all issues were swiftly and calmly resolved. For instance, on Sunday, a level 2 Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) was declared. Field teams were immediately activated to respond, and hospitals were put on standby as per the Mass Casualty Plan. The plan was executed seamlessly, and the incident smoothly transitioned back to a non-MCI steady state status. This incident highlighted the effectiveness of coordinated response efforts and the importance of pre-established plans.

Success through Collaboration
 The success of the 26th Flying Pig Marathon can be attributed to the collective efforts of personnel, teams, and plans from multiple agencies. Hamilton County Emergency Management, along with its partners, worked tirelessly to ensure the safety and security of all participants and spectators. Through effective communication, coordination, and response, potential challenges were mitigated, and the event concluded successfully.

Conclusion
 Hamilton County Emergency Management's involvement in the 26th Flying Pig Marathon exemplifies our commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of our community during large-scale events. By leveraging collaborative efforts and effective planning, we were able to address challenges as they arose and ensure a positive experience for all involved. Moving forward, we remain dedicated to fostering partnerships and implementing strategies that enhance emergency preparedness and response in our jurisdiction.

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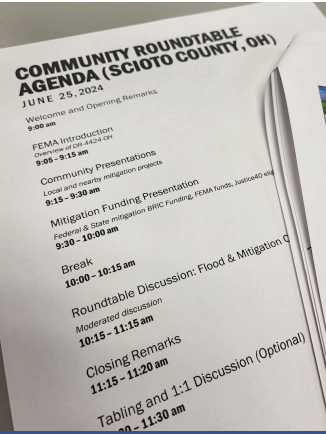
Officers: Thomas Smoot (Summit), President
 Sarah McNamee (Marion), President-Elect
 Alex McCarthy (Delaware), Vice President

Michelle Clements-Pitstick (Clark), Secretary
 Jette Cander (Crawford), Treasurer
 Jeff Klein (Wood), Past President

RESILIENCY ROUNDTABLE: FEMA Region 5



On June 26th, the FEMA Region 5 Resiliency Roundtable was hosted in Scioto County. This was a full event, with representatives from Adams County EMA, Brown County EMA, Clermont County EMA, Gallia County EMA, Highland County EMA, Hocking County EMA, Jackson County EMA, Warren County EMA, Ohio EMA, FEMA, as well as other local officials. The roundtable brought local officials together to talk about the threats to each individual's communities, continued mitigation efforts, hazard mitigation funding opportunities, and how FEMA may assist. Many good, candid discussions were had and everyone in attendance was appreciative of the opportunity to get together.



SAVE THE DATE

EMA WINTER CONFERENCE
 DECEMBER 5-6, 2024
 SALT FORK STATE LODGE AND CONFERENCE CENTER

EMA SPRING CONFERENCE
 DATE TBD