



# EMAO NEWSLETTER



May 2026

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

## Is Your County StormReady?



Article by Alex McCarthy and the EMAO Weather & Climate Caucus

At a recent meeting of the EMAO Weather and Climate Caucus, we focused our discussion on the StormReady program and some of the ways that it is meant to help foster community severe weather preparedness. The StormReady program was originally conceived following a devastating tornado in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1998 with an intent to certify community severe weather preparedness. Severe weather events were often attributed by the media as "surprise" events, however the National Weather Service felt that fostering weather preparedness would go a long way towards reducing the impacts of tornadoes and severe storms.

One of the goals of our Caucus is to help encourage more counties to consider applying to be a StormReady County. We know that there are a few different reasons why counties may be hesitant to pursue this designation, but the workload is not that heavy, and local National Weather Service forecasting offices that serve Ohio are willing and interested in helping out to support the process.

**To pursue this recognition, there are five main components that you should have in place:**

1. Have both a 24-hour warning point and an EOC
2. Have multiple ways to receive severe weather forecasts and warnings, and have multiple ways to alert the public
3. Create a system that monitors weather conditions locally
4. Promote severe weather readiness through seminars and outreach events
5. Have a formal hazardous weather plan



Conveniently, many counties across Ohio already have these in place. If you are interested in pursuing StormReady recognition for your county, or would like to learn more, all you need to do is reach out to your Warning Coordination Meteorologist at the National Weather Service and they will be able to walk you through the process.

For more information you can also visit:  
<https://www.weather.gov/stormready>

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**June 1, 2026**

Call for Presentations Due

**June 5, 2026**

EM Fundamentals Course

**September 29, 2026**

Fall Conference  
(Quest Conference Center)

**December 3-4, 2026**

EMAO Winter Conference  
(Salt Fork)



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## Unique Opportunities for Collaboration

### Fairfield County Training with Salvation Army Adult Day Services

On March 6th, Fairfield County EMA conducted severe weather training for Salvation Army Adult Day Services (ADS). Along with standard preparedness guidance, the session focused on the unique considerations and challenges of protecting ADS participants during severe weather events. ADS are community programs providing daytime care for older adults and people with disabilities. Participants may have mobility, cognitive, or medical challenges, making these facilities a vulnerable population during emergencies.



#### Why EMs Should Care

- Emergencies involving ADS can escalate quickly into medical or logistical crises.
- ADS programs often fall through the cracks because their emergency preparedness codes are usually less specific and less enforced than children's daycares, which can leave gaps in readiness.
- Awareness and support help protect participants, staff, and volunteers while strengthening the broader community response.

#### Planning Considerations for EMs

- Impact on Resources: Participants may need specialized transport, medical support, or sheltering assistance.
- Coordination: Knowing ADS locations, staff contacts, and vulnerabilities allows integration into alerts, drills, and response plans.
- Continuity Challenges: Staffing gaps, supply shortages, utility disruptions create ripple effects for local emergency operations.
- Risk Awareness: Facility layouts, safe areas, and participant needs influence evacuation and sheltering strategies.

#### How EMs Can Support ADS Staff and Volunteers with Guidance & Training

- Roles and Responsibilities: Help staff clarify emergency duties.
- Scenario-Based Drills: Encourage realistic exercises, taking into account mobility limitations, cognitive impairments, etc.
- Medication and Equipment Handling: Offer guidance on medications, oxygen, and assistive devices.
- Communication Planning: Support protocols for notifying families, participants, and emergency responders.
- Review and Refresh: Facilitate plan updates, post-drill debriefs, and refresher sessions.



### Sandusky County Agricultural Safety Day

On March 26th, Agricultural Safety Day was hosted by the Sandusky County Farm Bureau in conjunction with the Ohio Farm Bureau (OFB) and National Education Center for Agricultural Safety. This was a free event to attend, worker's compensation credits were offered, and it was very well attended.

Sandusky County EMA got involved due to the regular collaboration with the Sandusky County Farm Bureau and all public safety agencies. This training was considered a much-needed critical safety education opportunity for first responders, public safety officials, farmers, and community members.

OFB provided everyone the opportunity to refresh themselves on tractor roll over incidents and what response capabilities may be needed to handle such an event. The complexity increases in large agricultural areas with new, technology-driven equipment being implemented everyday. Attendees also

heard about changes within the tractor industry and to learn cribbing do's and don'ts. The hands-on portion gave public safety officials and first responders the opportunity to practice equipment stabilization. Fire service personnel practiced cribbing on a tractor for safe extrication of an individual involved in a tractor roll over. EMS personnel talked through what response would look like for them trying to assess and triage an individual while fire worked on extrication. EMA had the opportunity to talk through what response planning or resource allocations could be needed during a tractor roll over incident.

Multi-disciplinary training opportunities such as this are invaluable. Each area of expertise is able to familiarize themselves with their partners and stakeholders method of operating and their priorities. Proactive engagement can significantly improve safety and readiness for the entire community.

**Articles by Laura Johnston (Fairfield County EMA) & Director Lisa Kuelling (Sandusky County EMA)**



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## Featured Exercise

### TABLETOP: WOOD COUNTY

On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Wood County EMA held a tabletop exercise with one of their reporting facilities. The tabletop had approximately 50 attendees from a wide variety of agencies and stakeholders (including a casino). The event wrapped up with a facility tour for those interested. This site and scenario was chosen due to new individuals in key roles within both the facility and local public safety agencies, and a new extremely hazardous substance on-site.

A unique piece to the puzzle is that the county line divides the facility property. The facility reports to Wood County LEPC/EMA, but many of the downstream and surrounding impacts of a release would significantly impact Lucas County. Questions arose of which county dispatch 9-1-1 calls would go to, which hazmat team would respond, and how to ensure everyone is on the same page.

The facility also sits directly next to a casino that can have upwards of 3,000 individuals on site on a busy night. Representatives in attendance from the casino were able to provide valuable insight of how responders' decisions would impact their operations and capabilities. The facility also sits along a large river, is near residential neighborhoods, schools, and a fairly busy downtown area. It is also near the expressway and other main roads very heavily travelled.



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## special MEETING

Tuesday, May 12th at 9:00 a.m.

Per the EMAO Constitution, EMAO President Alex McCarthy has called an EMAO Special Meeting on Tuesday, May 12, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. to fill the vacant Treasurer position. There is currently 1 candidate seeking this position:

**Ethan Raby (Greene County)**

Register for this virtual meeting using the link below. Please refer to the EMAO Constitution to determine if you are eligible to vote.

To Register for the meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/RlgO9Y-hRuaVGf0RpeTkaQ#/registration>

OHIOANS TO PROTECT  
PUBLIC SERVICES

The Emergency Management Association of Ohio Executive Committee formally voted to join the Ohioans to Protect Public Services Coalition.

This broad based coalition has united to explain the serious consequences of eliminating all property taxes on homes and businesses, with no plan to replace the revenue. The coalition has numerous resources available on their website so we encourage you to review.

[Click here to learn more](#)

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Ohio Legislature is on break until after the May elections returning through early June. They will reconvene for a short period in September, October returning after the November election. Any legislation not passed by the end of 2026 will need to be resubmitted and start the process again.

The amendment to abolish property tax has just over 300,000 signatures with around 413,000 additional total signatures needed. It is not expected to be on the ballot this year. If it is on the ballot, they will need to start the entire process over with none of the signatures. Ballot language and other tasks will need to start over should they decide to try again. Check out a counter initiative called Ohioans to Protect Public Service in which EMAO has supported: <https://www.protectpublicservices.org/>

Legislative Co-chair Ryan Shackelford (Portage County) created a 2-part survey for the EMAO membership. Part one focused on general county preparedness capabilities and ability to respond. Part two is policy EMAO Executive Board and committees should focus their efforts on to assist the membership. The Legislative Committee will have several tasks including templates for conducting a Legislative Round table for local sectors, how to promote emergency management to elected officials and talking point for current hot topics.

Update provided by Jeff Klein and Ryan Shackelford





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## SECTOR UPDATES

Scan to submit a sector update for the next newsletter



<b>Central Sector</b>	Last meeting was March 9th. Instead of a speaker they had a large discussion on what stakeholders or stakeholder circumstances were causing issues in your local county. We wrote our stakeholder or stakeholder issue on a piece of paper and put it into a hat. Then the secretary drew them out randomly and we had a group discussion on how people have solved the same issue in their area. This discussion was to group source some ideas for dealing with difficult people and solving problems we all encounter. Next meeting is May 11 <sup>th</sup> in Knox County.
<b>Northeast Sector</b>	Last meeting was held January 30 <sup>th</sup> in Medina. Most sector EMA's are currently conducting their annual chemical exercises, and following the state property tax issues in their counties. Next meeting will be held May 15 <sup>th</sup> in Wayne County.
<b>North Central Sector</b>	During this meeting we discussed a lot about the Spring Conference, likes, dislikes, etc. We had the opportunity to have NWS-Cleveland Office host our March meeting and educate us on their Flood Inundation Mapping. We had several representatives from OEMA, ODJFS and Ohio Homeland Security join us for this meeting. Next meeting will will be a joint meeting with Northwest Sector at Hancock County.
<b>Northwest Sector</b>	Met on March 11th in Fulton County. Jeff Klein delivered a presentation about EMAO being a professional organization and dove into the benefits of being involved in it. Next meeting will be 5/15/26 a joint meeting with North Central at Hancock County.
<b>Southeast Sector</b>	A subcommittee was appointed to review the sector's by-laws; proposed updates will be presented at the next meeting. Mitigation Branch representatives were in attendance to make a presentation and answer questions. EMPG was again a hot topic. The new Grants Specialist will be invited to our next meeting on May 19th at Athens County.
<b>Southwest Sector</b>	Met on March 12th in Warren County. Local disaster-relief partners (i.e., Masters of Disasters, American Regulators, Code3, Ohio LandSAR) were invited to discuss capabilities, provide any updates, and do a touch base ahead of the spring storm season. Next meeting will be a joint meeting with Western Sector on May 14th.
<b>Western Sector</b>	The Southwest Sector last meeting was January 27, 2026 virtually due to a winter storm. Team Rubicon gave a presentation and discussed their organization and services they offer. The next meeting will be a combined West Central and Southwest Sector meeting on May 14, 2026 at Warren County.

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## Spring Conference Photos



Executive Director: Michelle Fitzgibbon  
88 East Broad Street, Suite 1450  
Columbus, OH 43215 (614) 378-2156

Officers: Alex McCarthy (Delaware), President  
Jason Troyer (Holmes), President-Elect  
Ryan Shackelford (Portage), Vice President

Sarah McNamee (Marion), Past President  
Garrett Blevins (Fairfield), Secretary  
Vacant, Treasurer