

# Partners in Preparedness

ADDRESSING REGIONAL PRIORITIES BY WORKING TOGETHER TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

## Focusing on Home

THE GOAL OF THE JULY 2012 REGIONAL INTERAGENCY STEERING COMMITTEE (RISC) MEETING, held July 18th and 19th at Johnson & Wales University in Denver, Colorado, was to better prepare the professional emergency management community at home and in their careers for an emergency. The two-day event mixed presentations, networking, and training so attendees could share policies, skills, and tips to help their family, friends, neighbors, and communities prepare for a disaster.

The first day of the RISC meeting began with presentations by Paulette Aniskoff, Director of the Individual and Community Preparedness Directorate at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) headquarters in Washington, D.C. She presented the audience with a vision of the efforts being taken to effectively communicate the difficult but critical message of emergency preparedness. Following training and networking, Maralin Hoff made an artful demonstration of preparedness, providing a multitude of tips on how to prepare yourself and your family for an earthquake. Maralin's message has spread well beyond Utah, where she works with the Utah Division of Public Safety, and is broadly applicable to any emergency situation.



***"The Earthquake Lady", Maralin Hoff, shares basic preparedness lessons with RISC attendees.***  
- Carol Bartel / FEMA

The second day was initiated by Dr. Bethany O'Brien with a presentation on the progress that has been made in integrating agriculture and natural resources, Emergency Support Function 11, into recent response efforts. She emphasized this important topic because this area is especially sensitive to livestock emergency management policies due to its large agricultural sector. This presentation was coupled with a training session on animal emergency preparedness that focused on how individuals can prepare their pets for evacuation and disasters.

Finally, Dr. Jana Burke from the Rocky Mountain ADA Technical Assistance Center wrapped up the meeting with a presentation titled "Emergency Preparedness and People with Disabilities." Dr. Burke stressed the importance of including the community of people with disabilities in planning for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. This was an important encouragement to all attendees to help include this community – because they are family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues. Such efforts help attendees prepare themselves and spread the preparedness message, so they can come to the aid of others instead of needing the help of a friend, neighbor, or first responder.

Noting requests of previous attendees, meeting organizers provided six training courses for them to learn more about particular areas of interest to them. The specific trainings focused around the RISC theme of emergency management preparedness. The trainings included: food storage, fire safety, animal emergency preparedness, emergency management for executives, psychological first aid, and amateur radio emergency services

Survey respondents agreed that this was a successful RISC with a lot of takeaways. The RISC planning team will continue to strive for relevant and interesting topics delivered in multiple formats to help all stakeholders in FEMA's Region VIII stay engaged. Please visit [www.thecepp.org](http://www.thecepp.org) for access to all of the presentations and trainings from this and future RISC meetings.

# Preparing for People With Disabilities

## The basics you should know before you plan

AT THE JULY RISC MEETING, JANA BURKE DISCUSSED CURRENT ISSUES INVOLVING PREPAREDNESS and people with disabilities, the disabled community, an overview of common needs, specific preparedness issues and preparedness resources directed towards helping people with disabilities.

People with disabilities do not often identify as members of a disability community and are therefore rarely included in emergency planning. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires access to, and prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in, all aspects of emergency mitigation, planning, response, and recovery. On its Web site, the Department of Justice has provided checklists and other resources for planning and implementing preparedness schemes to include people with disabilities.

One of the major difficulties in planning for people with disabilities is being able to identify every sort of disability which might need to be taken into account. There are planning measures that go far beyond the obvious nature of making routes wheelchair accessible, such as catering to the deaf and blind who cannot heed conventional warnings. There are also those individuals with mental disabilities who need to be planned for. Ms. Burke identified the use of multiple methods of emergency communication, such as using visual and auditory warnings to reach a wider group of disabled persons than a single method would.

Phased evacuations represent a means of helping disabled persons before resources run out, as those with disabilities are all too often left behind. Tailored preparations must also be made for disabled persons in evacuation shelters.

There are a number of federal agencies and non-governmental organizations that provide online resources that aid in preparedness planning relevant to people with disabilities. The ADA National Network provides resources and training materials for agencies at all levels of government.



## Region VIII Snapshot

### Montana

- ▶ Responding and assisting with 518 fires that have burned a total of 500,000 acres as of July 18th, 2012.
- ▶ A Preliminary Damage Assessment Team is in Montana evaluating the cost of wildfire damage.
- ▶ A map showing the 2012 fires in Montana can be accessed at: [www.thecepp.org](http://www.thecepp.org).

### South Dakota

- ▶ Last year South Dakota was responding to floods, but this year the main emergency has been wildfires.
- ▶ Continuing to work on the State Disaster Recovery Plan. It is currently in draft form.
- ▶ Hiring new positions in the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Management.

### Utah

- ▶ National Guard Homeland Response Force was evaluated on July 18th, 2012.
- ▶ Utah Shakeout response exercise is complete. The State's version of Web EOC is being updated based on these lessons learned.
- ▶ Business Operations Center is being created to give local businesses an opportunity to fill resource needs.
- ▶ Recovery Exercise was held August 23rd, 2012.
- ▶ REPP program moves forward as the Blue Castle Nuclear Plant continues development.

# Findings to Action to Impact

## FEMA shares the latest findings in community preparedness

PAULETTE ANISKOFF, DIRECTOR OF FEMA'S INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS DIVISION, discussed FEMA's, and other agencies', responsibilities in responding to Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8). The resulting PPD-8 campaign is a research-based campaign designed to increase effectiveness of preparedness messaging, education and outreach. Ms. Aniskoff stressed interagency partnership as one of the key concepts of the campaign. An objective of the PPD-8 campaign is to enter preparedness into the mainstream media by way of the Earned Media method. Earned Media corresponds to publicity through promotional campaigns which are not paid advertising. Earned Media and the objective of expanding preparedness awareness in general have made significant strides with the advent of social media outlets. The preparedness campaign will deliver a unified message tailored to the local level, culminating in a nation-wide drill.

Agencies and individuals will be able to support the campaign by joining the National Preparedness Coalition (<http://community.fema.gov>) and posting community events and best practices on the site. Another way to support the campaign is by participating in ShakeOut drills.

ShakeOut is specifically tailored to earthquake-prone regions, which points out preparedness initiatives based on locality. Ms. Aniskoff suggests that participation in ShakeOut drills will help spread the word about preparedness, and that the increased use of customized preparedness drills might lead to a national drill.

FEMA is using a Web program called IdeaScale to receive ideas and feedback from stakeholders. Interested parties can go to <http://fema.ideascale.com/> to post to different topics for discussion online.

Ms. Aniskoff concluded her presentation by discussing IS909, Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) and Youth Preparedness. IS909 is an online course sponsored by FEMA that presents a model for community preparedness and helps organizations develop simple preparedness activities for all of their members. CERT is FEMA's national training program to prepare every community member to safely assist their families, neighbors, co-workers, or anyone who needs help in the event of a widespread emergency when professional responders may not be able to reach everyone as soon as help is needed.

**Paulette Aniskoff, Director of the Individual and Community Preparedness Division of FEMA, shares the latest findings from the National Preparedness Survey with RISC attendees. Findings of the survey will impact how preparedness messages are delivered in the coming years.**  
-- Carol Bartel / FEMA

### Colorado

- ▶ The Waldo Canyon Fire led to the largest evacuation and was the most destructive wildfire in state history.
- ▶ Colorado remains vigilant during a still threatening wildfire season.
- ▶ The restructuring of the Offices of Homeland Security and Emergency Management to CO Department of Public Safety continues.
- ▶ Local Hazard mitigation Plan Development is continuing (92% of Colorado Population is currently covered by a Local Plan).



# Mountain Emergency Radio Network

## An Amateur Radio-based VHF Network for Boulder County

BEGINNING LATE MONDAY MORNING ON LABOR DAY OF 2010, a fire started in Fourmile Canyon, nestled in the foothills of western Boulder County, Colorado. Within an hour the fire would explode into a blazing inferno fueled by dead timber and wind gusts to 60 mph. For an entire week, local, state and federal firefighting resources would be put to the test both from the air and ground. However, when it was over, 169 homes would be lost in the most costly forest fire in state history up to that time.

One of the organizations that played a role in the firefighting effort was the Boulder County Amateur Radio Emergency Services, or BCARES.

Following the Fourmile Canyon Fire, BCARES looked at the technical options available to establish an alternative communications network that would survive a subsequent event of that scale. The ideal solution had to have minimal costs, use available equipment, be technically feasible, offer broad coverage, be easy to use, and be widely available. The solution was the VHF radio frequency spectrum, the same spectrum that is used by first responders in both rural and mountain environments. Following several months of mountain community meetings with mayors, town officials and fire chiefs, BCARES received approval to install repeaters in fire stations that met the technical requirements.

After an initial announcement made through local newsletters, word-of-mouth and emails, approximately 30 individuals expressed a desire to obtain the necessary license and become a member of a unique community of Amateur Radio enthusiasts. Two training classes were set up, with the first to be held in the town of Nederland and the second in the town of Gold Hill.

The idea to provide free radios was the perfect incentive for the mountain community residents to commit to earning the Federal Communications Commission license necessary to operate on the network. To assist in the dissemination of real-time emergency information, the radios were also programmed to receive fire and Emergency Medical Services dispatch channels. Once all the participants were on the air, BCARES conducted an initial test to familiarize the new radio operators on the proper procedures the BCARES organization will use during a declared emergency.

It is believed that this pilot program will serve as a model for similar community emergency networks where the loss of infrastructure is not just possible but in fact probable during an emergency event.

To read the remainder of this article by Allen Bishop visit: [www.thecepp.org](http://www.thecepp.org).



Regional Interagency Steering Committee

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Bldg. 710  
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## Next Meeting

Focus: Medical Services in  
Emergency Management

When: November 7th and  
8th, 2012

U.S. Veterans Affairs  
Department  
155 Van Gordon St.  
Lakewood, CO 80228

## Looking for More Info?

For copies of meeting presentations, obtain information in an alternate format, or to find additional copies of this newsletter, go to:

[www.thecepp.org](http://www.thecepp.org)

[www.colorado.feb.gov](http://www.colorado.feb.gov)

For additional questions, please contact Lynn Pisano-Pedigo at 303.235.4855 or [lynn.pedigo@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:lynn.pedigo@fema.dhs.gov).

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