

March 2016

# City of Dallas Office of Emergency Management Quarterly Newsletter



## Inside this issue:

### Message From the Director—Rocky Vaz, Office of Emergency Management

Building A Safer Dallas	2
Fall Flooding	2
Active Shooter Training	2
Go-Kits	2
CERT Training in Full Swing	3
JCTAWS, Training & Exercises	3
Save the Date!	4
OEM Welcomes New Staff	4

The first quarter of 2016 follows one concept—Transition. We've shifted our focus from winter weather to spring severe weather potential. Though, as we saw in December, severe weather can happen any time of the year. We need to be ready when storms strike.

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) made staffing changes this quarter. These changes allow us to build a more robust team of professionals to better serve the citizens, business, and visitors to the City of Dallas. We look forward to what more we can accomplish.

OEM has not only worked with our City partners but also private sector partners to revitalize and grow our Public-Private Partnerships. A large step forward was organizing and hosting a symposium in March with keynote speaker Michael Carano from Chicago First. We held breakout sessions on safety topics of interest to our private sector partners. This is part of our ongoing commitment to public safety.



Our Public-Private Partnership Symposium with ACM Eric Campbell, Rocky Vaz, and Kevin Oden.

As we move forward into spring and summer, we will continue to work with our partners to build a safer Dallas, including conducting a multi-agency, whole community, two-day workshop. This allows us to assess current capabilities and identify the best ways to prepare, respond, and recover from any emergency.

## Taking it to the Community

Public education is a big part of OEM's mission. We've worked with the region on the KnoWhat2Do program and have gone to schools and other groups to talk about preparedness. In the last few months we've developed a Disaster Resilient Citizen program.

The program is an individual and community based class designed to prepare residents for emergencies. The individual component will be a series of videos, now in production, that a person can watch on their own.

The community aspect is a 90-minute discussion-based presentation meant

for a community, faith-based or neighborhood group. This part of the program is available to all districts following a successful initial presentation to Councilmember McGough's District 10 in February. The participants in our community preparedness program receive a basic emergency preparedness kit to help them get started.

There's also a third component to the program—community involvement. We provide resources that show citizens where they can receive further training and/or volunteer opportunities.



If you're involved with a group that would like to receive preparedness training, or would like more information on scheduling a class, contact our Community Preparedness Program Manager, Cassandra Wallace at [Cassandra.Wallace@dallascityhall.com](mailto:Cassandra.Wallace@dallascityhall.com).

## Building a Safer Dallas—Public-Private Partnerships

On March 8th, after months of planning, OEM conducted its first Public-Private Partnership Symposium. This event included Downtown Dallas, Inc.; Dallas Convention and Visitor Bureau; and the Dallas Emergency Response Team (DERT). The event emphasized Dallas's commitment to working with all our partners in a whole community approach to public safety and preparedness.

The symposium was held at the Meyerson Symphony Center, providing a gorgeous backdrop to vital and timely information provided by our knowledgeable and experienced panelists. We held two

breakout sessions with three panels each on topics like crisis communications, building evacuations, and risk assessment.

Our keynote speaker, Michael Carano, brought his expertise as Executive Director of ChicagoFIRST. Chicago has a robust Public-Private Partnership focusing on security and business continuity. Mr. Carano's address gave us aspects to consider as Dallas moves forward with further developing our program.

In preparation for the Symposium, we updated the Downtown Dallas Emergency Response Plan. This



Opening Remarks at the Meyerson

resource manual provides critical information for businesses and building managers on how to deal with the most likely events. We look forward to working with all our partners in developing and mutually beneficial resources in the future.

## Active Shooter Training

Active Shooter incidents have made the news with alarming regularity in the past few years. The City of Dallas takes active precautions in the event of an active shooter threat. OEM has partnered with Dallas Police to provide cutting edge training to city employees.

This training covering what to do in an active shooter scenario is based on the national Run. Hide. Fight. campaign. Since January we've held classes. We've added a

Run. Hide. Fight. video on our website, available in English and Spanish, and have also recorded the DPD training. This video is available to departments and employees through the City of Dallas intranet portal. We are currently working to also provide that video in Spanish.

The video was developed to address the overwhelming demand for this particular training. We are in the process of scheduling more training. If you have questions or want more information on this or other training



City Employees learn what to do in an active shooter scenario

and exercises the City offers please contact our Training & Exercise Coordinator, Alicia Toombs—[Alicia.Toombs@dallascityhall.com](mailto:Alicia.Toombs@dallascityhall.com)—or check notification emails.

## Go-Kits

In July 2015, the City conducted a full-scale test of the Continuity of Operations Plan to assess the ability of critical City services to continue to operate from alternate locations should City hall become inaccessible. To add to the City's Continuity of Operations Program, OEM has built and deployed "Go-Kits" at five off-site, backup locations.

These kits provide the ability for us to continue providing service and sup-

port to the citizens of Dallas even if we are unable to reach our primary locations. These kits contain computer equipment to support basic, essential functions should the need arise. These kits will be maintained and updated on a regular basis so no time is lost when needed.

Kent Bauer is the OEM point person for these kits. He can be contacted at [kent.bauer@dallascityhall.com](mailto:kent.bauer@dallascityhall.com) if questions arise about these kits.



## CERT Training in Full Swing

Dallas CERT has been training volunteers for emergency response since 2007. Since its inception, Dallas CERT taught 140 classes and trained almost 2000 people with those numbers growing.

When Rowlett called for assistance following the December 2015 tornadoes, Dallas CERT—along with 22 other area teams—sent people to assist with damage assessment and other recovery duties. Dallas CERT also worked with the Dallas Marathon and other community events providing extra eyes for suspicious activity as well as on-the-spot first aid and triage if needed.

The need for trained volunteers is vital in emergency situations. Recovery efforts are increased when responders know the capabilities and skills of the volunteers offering assistance. Communities in need, like Rowlett, call for groups like CERT

when help is needed.

These very visible opportunities, especially with the tornadoes, saw a spike in willing volunteers stepping up. The January training class had a record attendance of 70 people—a 700% increase over previous classes.

The next class begins April 2, 2016 and currently has 65 people registered with room for more. There's still time to sign up for the class.

If you're interested in signing up for training—visit [www.DallasCERT.com](http://www.DallasCERT.com) and click the TRAINING tab. If you have further questions, contact Cassandra Wallace, Community Preparedness Program Manager, at [Cassandra.Wallace@dallascityhall.com](mailto:Cassandra.Wallace@dallascityhall.com)



January training class—biggest ever!



## JCTAWS, Training & Exercises

Training and Exercise is a vital element to emergency management and preparedness. In the past quarter we've had staff involved in several regional exercises on topics such as downed airplanes, mass sheltering, and Zika virus.

We are currently planning for a major, 2-day workshop with the Joint Counter – Terrorism Awareness Workshop Series. This exercise is in partnership with not only Federal, State, and Local agencies but will also involve our private sector partners for a whole community approach to a complex, coordinated scenario based on events in Paris and San Bernardino. We expect to have about 200 participants engaged in this exercise.

On a more local scale, we're conducting ICS forms training at the end of March to ensure we follow national standards for reporting and documentation. We've also implemented a monthly OEM Readiness Series to help train new staff, reinforce skills with existing staff, and review written plans, procedures, and policies. These short workshops also aid in keeping our plans and documentation current as we continue to move forward with our capabilities and evolution of technology and equipment.

We've also designed ready-to-use tabletop exercises for our private-sector partners as part of an on-going commitment to public safety across the City of Dallas.



We continue to develop training on a variety of topics to address City needs. For more information on training and exercises contact Alicia Toombs, Training & Exercise Coordinator at [Alicia.Toombs@dallascityhall.com](mailto:Alicia.Toombs@dallascityhall.com) or watch for notification emails.



## Save the Date! 3rd Annual Preparedness Fair Coming in September!



## OEM Welcomes New Team Members

OEM has had a transition in staff since the beginning of 2016. Some staff have shifted into new or expanded duties. New staff has come on board to fill vacancies to fully round out our capabilities.

OEM welcomes Vera Graham to our team. She joins us as a Senior Office Assistant as Mary Zarate transitions to Grants Assistant. John Patterson is our new Senior Emergency Management Specialist concentrating on plans. Kent

Bauer comes on board as an Emergency Management Specialist focusing on Technology and EOC Management. We are excited about the skills and expertise they bring to our department's pool of capabilities.

In addition to full-time staff, OEM has also brought on interns. Our interns provide much needed assistance on projects while gaining valuable real world experience. We appreciate all of their contributions.



Dallas OEM Staff.

With our team rounded out, we are better prepared and able to serve the City of Dallas. We look forward to what we can accomplish together.



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You can also follow us on social media for up-to-date information on events, safety tips, and more.

Find us:

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