



OCTOBER ISSUE 19

"SAVING LIVES BY SAVING SYSTEMS"

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 25, 2008
"Presser" Meeting
Room 11D, 11th Floor
1:30 P.M.

All students interested in writing or contributing to the newsletter in any way is encouraged to attend.

**Remember this is a way to become published and get your name out there!!*

This newsletter is not only seen by us here in the program, but is seen by many who have a monthly subscription, other chapters, and is on FEMA Higher Ed

Ten Things I Wish I Knew When I First Became an Emergency Manager

Basia Morofsky, MPA, EMHS

I first started working in the emergency management field about seven years ago. I learned the hard way, by making mistakes. Here are ten things I wish I knew when I first started. Maybe by sharing them with you now, I can save you doing the same and hopefully help you make informed decisions about your career in emergency management.

10 – Steer clear of colleagues who are against accountability.

There will always be someone in your office that's against following the rules or who feels they are above the rules. Signs to look for are: refusal to fill out required paperwork, account for their actions, equipment used or time out of the office, and, completing field reports. Steer clear of such people as much as possible. You won't learn anything useful from them. If you don't have a choice in the matter, make sure you follow the rules even if they don't. If you're out in the field, always offer to complete all the paperwork and final reports for the team. Remember when doing paperwork, be sure to be ultra-diligent. If your coworker is a habitual accountability rule breaker, you may find out they break other rules as well. Working as an Emergency

Manager, especially for a public agency in the field, provides individuals with plenty of freedoms, power and best of all, fun gizmos. A good way to keep yourself out of trouble is to read your organization's ethics manual, know where you need to draw the line both personally and professionally, and promise yourself to never cross it!

9 – Ageism and Sexism.

If you are young and/or a woman, expect to work twice as hard for the respect of your managers and peers. Being very young when entering a new office setting is always difficult, especially when working in the field. Getting your co-workers to see past your youth to truly appreciate your ideas is often very difficult.

Being a woman and working in the field doing emergency response is exceptionally difficult at times, not only on the home front but also on the international stage. Dealing with field responders or military personnel from other countries can result in a culture clash.

The only advice I have to offer is to keep yourself occupied with your work and keep a stiff upper lip. Be prepared for any situation, study and know your stuff. In the end, the face of emergency management is slowly changing with a new diverse generation coming into the workforce. So keep your

head up.

8 – Find a mentor, yet be selective.

Finding a mentor could be the best thing to propel your career to a new level. A mentor can teach you new theories, help you network and gain experience. Choosing the right mentor is extremely important; however it is crucial to be selective. Trust your instincts. Don't jump at the first person willing to take you under their wing. Do research, ask around, and check out potential candidates. Make sure your mentor is willing to give you their time and, most importantly, let you in on some of the action.

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PROGRAM BITES



By David Longshore,
*Executive Director,
MCNY MPA Program in Emergency
Management & Homeland Security*

During one of our recent Emergency Management and Homeland Security Open Houses, a young woman asked why she should attend Metropolitan College of New York's (MCNY) Emergency and Disaster Management MPA program as the next step in her educational advancement. It's a common question, a good question, and is one of the primary reasons why the EDM program runs a monthly Open House for prospective candidates – or for those who simply want to discover more about the exciting, life-saving world that is Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

Yes, it's true that MCNY's EDM program is one of the oldest of its kind in the nation...yes, it's true that MCNY's EDM program features top-flight faculty who work in the field...yes, it's true that our course listings are among the most innovative and useful in the community...yes, it's true that every year our students travel to Israel to study counterterrorism operations...and yes, it's true that MCNY's EDM program seeks to educate instead of simply teach. But yes, above all our program is about opportunity...the opportunity to find something new, interesting, and rewarding to do for a living...and the opportunity to enter (or rise within) a field whose many mission areas

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Ten Things I Wish I Knew When I First Became an Emergency Manager (CONT. FROM PG. 1)

7- Know your stuff.

Study! Keep up to date on the latest advances in your field. Study up on government, private sector reports and journal articles. Redo FEMA courses and search for private companies, hospitals or schools who offer online courses. Know the latest government protocols and the reasoning behind them. You can also read the latest in emergency management from other countries and international organizations. This will save you plenty of work and time especially when management thinks you need to "reinvent the wheel". All the information you need to do your job is out there, you just need to know where to look.

6 – Volunteer.

Your time is valuable, so make sure to research volunteer opportunities prior to committing your time. Map the direction you'd like your career to take and identify the experience gaps that may prevent you from attaining your goal. For instance, if your future goal is to manage a field response organization but you find you lack the valuable field experience, try to find an organization that can help gain the precise experience you need. The most valuable emergency management work experience I gained in the past was through my mentor and volunteering.

5 – Know who you're planning for.

Successful emergency managers take the time to understand their target audience. Whether you are planning for first responders or for citizens, take the time to write a *realistic* and functional emergency plan. In the real world taking the time to truly

understand your target audience is a luxury. In reality you will be on a tight deadline and pressured by your superiors to get a large emergency plan done in record time. This is where you will have make the tough decision to work after hours and on weekends to produce a realistic emergency plan you can be proud of. Your work should never haunt you in the future, so you should always assume it will be distributed and judged by your peers.

All this requires a great deal of extra work and commitment on your part, but it will save you plenty of work in the long run.

4 – Know the equipment.

No matter if you are in the field, or in the office, a manager, or a responder; when an emergency happens you will have to rely on equipment to ensure you or your staff gets the job done. Know the equipment! Learn how to turn it on and off on your own. Practice finding spare batteries and replacing them yourself. Learn how to set and calibrate the equipment. Nothing is more important than understanding and being familiar with equipment you or your staff rely on in an emergency. Even if it isn't in your job description or your supervisor doesn't directly tell you to familiarize yourself with the equipment, know that as an emergency manager - it is your job.

3 – CYA

It is very important to be diligent with your personal and official paperwork. I'm not just talking about field reports, but daily logs, emails and personal note books. Documenting your daily work can be very useful to you in the future and could prove you acted with due diligence.

I have met several emergency managers who refused to document their work, meeting action items or complete field reports accurately. Either they didn't want a paper trail or they just didn't see the big picture, but documentation can help your department prove its value and benefit to the entire organization. It can help you get public officials to notice your section's importance and even help you build a case in acquiring future funding, equipment or staff.

If your office doesn't require field reports, meeting minutes, or log sheets, suggest they do so and offer to help design them. You can easily get some ICS templates from the FEMA site and even personalize them for your office.

2 – Network.

If you are ever given an opportunity to meet and introduce yourself to your colleagues either in your office, different bureaus or agencies, take this important opportunity. This is key for, as they often say in the field, in an emergency – it's not a time to handout your business card.

Meet the people you may rely on in an emergency. Know what they do, how they plan and execute their plans and what resources they have. Your network may become your greatest asset in the event of an emergency, perhaps even giving you informal advance notice of an event unfolding. The second reason to network is to introduce you to future employers. You should plan your future career and meet those people who can help you attain your goal.

PROGRAM BITES

(CONT. FROM PG. 2)

involve the most noble and humanistic of undertakings – that of preparing for, responding to, and recovering from those natural, technological, and other hazards that relentlessly threaten our livelihoods, not to mention our very lives.

So many of the people we speak to these days at our Open Houses express a frustration with their present careers, a lack of enthusiasm for the humdrum limitations of a service-based economy, and their desire to re-awaken the sense of wonder and hope that they once held for their professional lives. Others have shared their concerns that opportunities in exciting and vital careers aren't as plentiful as they once were, or that opportunities for advancement within those fields aren't available for those who haven't undertaken the dynamic quest that is higher education.

For these and so many other reasons, MCNY's EDM program seeks to provide its students with an opportunity from which to make further opportunities. By their very nature, Emergency Management and Homeland Security are challenging fields that require the support of well-trained, enthusiastic, hard-working, dedicated, and conscientious individuals in order to achieve their life-saving and system-saving objectives. Winston Churchill once remarked that the best way to build strong communities is to give children milk. Following a disaster, the best way to rebuild damaged communities is to make sure that everyone has milk, shelter, medical care, financial resources – and hope. For those who are seeking to pursue a career in which the capital is human, not simply monetary, MCNY's EDM program can provide you with an opportunity to do just that.

AN INTERVIEW WITH METROPOLITAN COLLEGE OF NEW YORK'S PRESIDENT, DR. VINTON THOMPSON



MCNY's President, Dr. Vinton Thompson

Margaret Vazquez
Public Relations Chair & Editor, "Presser"

I recently sat down with Dr. Vinton Thompson, who came to MCNY this past May as MCNY's new President, to find out a little more about his many contributions to the field of higher education. Dr. Thompson began working in higher education as an adjunct instructor in the adult evening bachelor's degree program at Chicago's Roosevelt University which like MCNY, caters to a largely adult, commuter student body. This began a relationship that spanned more than three decades

In 2004 Dr. Thompson became Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Kean University, a public university of 13,300 students in Union, New Jersey, near Newark Liberty Airport. At Kean he oversaw the revitalization of faculty scholarship and the development of many new programs, including the university's first doctoral programs, as well a branch campus in Ocean County, New Jersey.

Dr. Thompson believes that MCNY's EMHS program is very successful and fills a need in the community. Dr. Thompson stated "the program has a dedicated leader in Professor Longshore and a great team of collaborators in the program's professors." Dr. Thompson has become increasingly involved in emergency management issues, particularly since the incident at Virginia Tech, and is involved in implementing MCNY's emergency plan, which was written by our very own team Delta, and continues to be worked on by members of the school staff, EMHS faculty and members of Team Foxtrot.

Dr. Thompson stresses the importance of relationships and networking and believes that program Alumni are an important component in the emergency management field in New York, which hopefully will continue to lead to internships and job opportunities for MCNY students. Dr. Thompson continues to look for opportunities for outside funding and grants, which will hopefully lead to more scholarships for our students.

Dr. Thompson has participated in several community efforts, including the multiethnic campaign to elect Chicago's first African-American mayor (a Roosevelt University graduate), and the grassroots campaign for school reform and parent led local school councils in the Chicago Public Schools. He is also a visiting scientist at the American Museum of Natural History in Manhattan. In his off hours Dr. Thompson reads history, hikes, cooks Chinese food, and continues to pursue his scientific interests in spittlebug biology, and occasionally rollerblades on weekends. About once a year he tries to get to Costa Rica, where he has ongoing scientific pursuits and where he and his wife have a small farm with waterfalls in remnant rainforest. He has two children, both college graduates and his wife, Ruth Moscovitch, is an attorney and an artist.

Impact of Physical, Social, and Economic Inequalities on Disaster Planning

Ayodeji Aina
 Graduate Student, MPA EMHS

The impact of disaster events on a community usually reflects a pre-existing relationship between available resources, the physical and socio-economic inequalities which underlie human vulnerability, and recovery capacity. The intricate web interlinking relationships of these attributes and vulnerability is apparent in the four stages of emergency management, sometimes aptly captured under the heading of “special needs population”. Confusing at best, such coinage has been extremely difficult to define, and has over the years expanded to include large swaths of disenfranchised sections. The Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Authority (FEMA) defines the special needs population as those with language barriers and different forms of disabilities. The homeless or healthy poor can also be considered as a special needs population, as they lack the financial resources to respond to emergencies. Other vulnerable groups include the elderly who have fewer social and economic resources and are more reluctant to access formal assistance and likely to reside in disaster-vulnerable structures. The ambiguity of who constitutes “special needs population” is a major first challenge for emergency planners. While identifying special needs population in a small community may be relatively achievable, it is a daunting task in major cities and a major test for emergency planners and managers. An ever-expanding list will probably include the disabled, seniors, the hearing- and visually-impaired, pregnant women, children, minorities, and undocumented and legal immigrants. The inability to accurately identify such populations hampers effective emergency planning objectives.

The combination of income inequality and economic resources, language barriers, physical disabilities, and lack of social capital enhances disaster vulnerability, creating a worrying task for emergency management as these demographics have less

access to mitigation tools such as communication and information channels, financial incentives, and access to other resources of support required for emergency planning and post-disaster resiliency. Budgetary resources squashed between the coalescence of lack of adequate funding and the demands of other problems perceived to be more pressing also stifles appropriate mitigation measures. Discouraging statistics highlight the immense challenges facing local emergency planners. With 37 million Americans (1 in 8) living below the official poverty line (Center for American Progress, 2007), millions struggling to get by every month, and minorities making up a third of the US population, disaster mitigation measures will only take back stage in household and community preparedness.

Post-impact disaster research findings on Hurricane Katrina showed that 20-25% of potential evacuees had disabilities or cared for people with disabilities and were some of the most vulnerable. Others included hospitalized patients (esp. ICUs), homebound persons and residents of long-term care facilities, and protocol or device-dependent patients. Increasing population density in high-risk areas escalates disaster losses, and land use regulation, a potentially effective mitigation tool, will be difficult to implement, as there are fewer livelihood options for these categories of vulnerable populations outside these areas.

Operations of the global political economy, which usually involves power-dependency relationship between the rich and poor countries, contributes heavily to disaster vulnerability. With the recent unprecedented increases in world oil prices, and the subsequent characteristic appreciable rise in basic amenities such as foodstuff, shelter and cost of living, mutual aid partnerships

measures for the special needs populations is also affected. Organizations such as the American Red Cross and Meals-on-Wheels, that usually collaborate with public organizations in the provision of services, to increasing sections of the vulnerable populations are affected by the prevailing economic, social and political indexes (New York Times, 2008), due to a dearth of donations and volunteerism.

While the following suggested approaches reflect distinctive characteristics of these populations, there needs to be larger broader societal factors put into consideration. A two-pronged approach of inter-disciplinary integrated perspectives can be applied in counteracting the impacts of inequalities by specifically increasing public participation early on in the planning and implementation process, and reviewing government’s policies regarding emergency management.

Increasing Public Participation in the Planning and Implementation Process

Actively incorporating people as partners, and attempting to mitigate risks and vulnerability through cooperative strategies of communication and development, community resiliency can be achieved. Effective disaster management needs to ensure that the diverse interests and priorities of communities, especially those of vulnerable groups, are integrated into planning. Matching appropriate social support services, educational initiatives and mitigation programs to the specific and local communities is pertinent. For example, warning systems have to be tailored to socio-demographic variables of language proficiencies and social networks. Emergency managers will need to strengthen communal planning and decision-making mechanisms by promoting integration of local interests and expertise. This is imperative as the special needs populations grow. Each

community’s needs must be addressed on a community basis taking into consideration its unique demographics. In sustainable hazard mitigation and management, emphasis should be on relying on indigenous community strengths and balancing expert knowledge with local knowledge rather than on hierarchical, centralized models (Kathleen J. Tierney, 2001). The need to foster appreciation of both non-professional expertise and local interests and expertise in planning will promote communication and understanding, reinforcing social support and mutual aid.

Government Policies

From a policy-making perspective, emergency managers must strive to promote policies that identify and mobilize the more marginalized and less visible segments of the society into a more supportive neighborhood which can reduce daily strains and promote local social capabilities such as: home help for the elderly, and child care support groups for single parents (another special needs group). These policies can influence a psychosocial pattern of study to understand a ‘cause and effect’ relationship of accentuated risks resulting from community needs to vulnerability. Inequalities in resources, which lead to inequalities in protection from disasters, cannot be in the maximal interest of the least-advantaged. Economic incentives such as federally assisted mortgages and insurance have merely redistributed risks rather than minimize them, as insurers are generally uninterested in mitigation. In addition, there is also a perceived reluctance on the part of some local governments to significantly restrict land use in hazardous areas even when the risk of such land use has been vividly demonstrated. Government mitigation programs and policies

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Membership

For information on joining IAEM – MCNY and / or IAEM, please contact the current IAEM – MCNY Treasurer, **Lisa Ellison**, at treasurer@iems-mcny.org or at MCNY during class. Membership supports the groups' goals of fostering academic excellence, professional development, networking and alumni relations, camaraderie and organizational growth. It also includes social events, field trips, guest speakers, and workshops.



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must ensure that the least-advantaged are not unfairly unburdened with high levels of exposure to such disasters. FEMA's recent change in policy for undocumented immigrants in the aftermath of the Midwest floods (Hurricane Dolly) for federal assistance through non-cash assistance, which may include food, medical services, temporary emergency housing and crisis counseling, is an example of massive steps in minimizing social inequality amongst vulnerable populations.

Disasters will happen. Lessening their impacts in the future will involve a reduction in socio-economic and physical inequalities, thereby building individual, household and community resiliencies.

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THE ECONOMICS HAZARDS CAUSED BY THE ERUPTION OF MOUNT ST. HELENS (1980)

Blanca I. Colon

Southwestern Washington State's Mount St. Helens, a volcano in the Cascade Range, erupted twenty years ago in late March and caused the worst volcanic disaster in the recorded history of the United States. Mount St. Helens' eruption in a matter of hours caused a loss of lives and widespread destruction of valuable property, primarily by the debris avalanche, the lateral blast, the mudflows, and the flooding. The eruption also caused extensive damage to land and civil works which included all buildings and other manmade structures in the vicinity of Spirit Lake being buried. More than 200 houses and cabins were destroyed and many more were damaged in Skamania and Cowlitz Counties, leaving many people homeless. Tens of thousands of acres of prime forest, as well as recreational sites, bridges, roads, trails, and more than 185 miles of railways were destroyed or heavily damaged.

Economic losses in the State of Washington have been estimated officially at \$860 million, down substantially from earlier estimates. The largest loss, reported to be \$450 million, was standing timber in areas affected by the lateral blast and mudflows. Trees amounting to more than 4 billion board feet of salable timber were damaged or destroyed, primarily by the lateral blast. At least 25 percent of the destroyed timber has been salvaged since September 1980. Hundreds of loggers were involved in the timber-salvage operations and during peak summer months, more than 600 truckloads of salvaged timber were retrieved each day. Losses in agricultural output, which apparently were less than officials had expected, may range from \$40 to \$100 million. The accounting of the losses as of 1980 figures is as follows:

• Forest damage approximately	\$450 million
• Clean-up (includes roads and bridges)	274 million
• Property loss	85 million
• Agriculture loss	39 million
(Included Hay 29.4, dairy 5.6, beef 2.5, bees 1.6)	
• Income loss	9 million
• Transportation (ports and airports)	2 million
TOTAL	\$859 million

The effects of the eruption on water resources surrounding Mount St Helens were devastating. The Washington Department of Fisheries estimated that 12 million Chinook and Coho salmon fingerlings were killed when hatcheries were destroyed; these might have developed into about 360,000 adult

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THE ECONOMICS HAZARDS CAUSED BY THE ERUPTION OF MOUNT ST. HELENS (1980)

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salmon. Another estimated 40,000 young salmon were lost when they were forced to swim through the turbine blades of hydroelectric generators because the levels of the reservoirs along the Lewis River south of Mount St. Helens were kept low to accommodate possible mudflows and flooding. River temperatures raised around 30 to 20 degrees C (68 degrees F) which was 7 degrees C above normal. This caused a dramatic decrease in fish and salmon and the water turbidity affected the fish's gills. The waters were scoured by mud, debris, and ash which affected the fisheries around the mountain.

Accurate cost figures remain difficult to determine. Early estimates were high and ranged from \$2 to \$3 billion which primarily reflected the timber, civil works, and agricultural losses. A refined estimate of \$1.1 billion was determined in a study by the International Trade Commission at the request of Congress. A supplemental appropriation of \$951 million for disaster relief was voted by Congress, of which the largest share went to the Small Business Administration, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The volcano has erupted an additional 21 times since 1980. These were mostly dome-building eruptions, although small pyroclastic flows (rocky rubble) and mudflows occurred also. During these years, lava formed an 876-foot-high dome inside the crater, with the dome's volume estimated at 97 million cubic yards. The volcano was quiet from 1986 until September 2004 and after that swarms of small earthquakes began. Plumes of steam and ash rose from new vents, ballistic explosions hurled boulders across the crater, and small mudflows traveled down stream channels close to the mountain. A large new lava

dome has grown at an impressive rate within the crater. By spring 2005, the newest dome was already taller than the dome formed from 1980 to 1986, before it collapsed.

The eruption temporarily killed Spirit Lake but the volcano gave back what it took. The massive avalanche and mudflow created two new major bodies of water which are the Coldwater and Castle lakes. It also increased the number of high elevation lakes and ponds around the mountain from 30 to more than 150. It gave Spirit Lake a higher elevation, filling the lake bed and raising the surface of the water. What had been a pristine, alpine lake ringed by an old growth conifer forest suddenly became a hot, toxic sludge hole for volcano effluent. The day after the eruption, Spirit Lake was the temperature of a hot bath and it bubbled from the volcanic gases seeping up from the lake bed. Nothing was left alive in Spirit Lake. John Baross, a University of Washington professor of oceanography and an expert on aquatic microorganisms, documented the first post-eruptions signs of life. The life was a rapid increase in the kind of bacteria that thrive in toxic environments without oxygen. In 1982, scientists noticed key chemical and biological changes with the dead trees that were swept by the landslide off the hills and into the lake which served as fertilizer. The heavy northwest precipitation that constantly fed the watershed and flushed Spirit Lake also helped tip the balance against the toxin-loving bacteria. Fish were discovered in the lake in 1993, though it is still unknown if they were survivors from ice-covered lakes that swam into Spirit Lake through streams or if hatchery fingerlings were

secretly planted by an impatient fisherman. Spirit Lake is well on its way to full rehabilitation even if it is now 10 percent smaller and much shallower.

Nature is going full-speed ahead to heal but undaunted by the certainty of future eruptions on Mount St. Helens. Ten years after the eruption, reforestation on private land in the blast zone had progressed so fast that it took a keen eye to distinguish the area devastated by the volcano from the reforested clear cuts that cover much of the rest of Southwest Washington. The Weyerhaeuser Company plans to begin logging the first of the 18.4 million seedlings it has planted in the blast zone in 2025. Alders and cottonwoods by the millions have flourished along the mudflows of the Toutle River, effectively masking the ravages of such a short time ago. In the blast zone the aquatic environment is recovering much faster than terrestrial one. The lakes surrounding the mountain were nearly back to normal ten years after the eruption and will be virtually indistinguishable from other alpine and subalpine Cascade lakes by 2000. On land however, the dominant shade of the blast zone will have shifted only slightly from grey to green by that time.

The 1980 and subsequent eruptions of Mount St. Helens furnish many lessons aside from scientific findings germane to reducing volcano risks. This lesson also illustrates the critical need to maintain an effective communication between scientists, emergency management officials, the media, and the populations affected during a volcanic crisis. The historical eruption made a mark upon the people in the Pacific Northwest and its surroundings but overall the damaged forests, streams, and fields will heal with the

passage of time. This natural disaster has been so thoroughly documented, that it will be a reminder for decades with the possibility of renewed volcanic activity and destruction.

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