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News Release

IAEM-USA Names Winners of the 2017 Public Awareness Awards and the 2017 Technology & Innovation Awards

Oct. 23, 2017 (Falls Church, Va.) – The IAEM-USA Awards & Recognition Committee of the International Council of Emergency Managers (IAEM) is pleased to announce the winners of the IAEM-USA 2017 Public Awareness Awards and the 2017 Technology & Innovation Award. The award winners will be recognized on Nov. 13 at the IAEM 65th Annual Conference & EMEX, Nov. 10-15, 2017, in Long Beach, California.

2017 IAEM-USA Public Awareness Awards

- The winner of the **2017 IAEM-USA Public Awareness Award, Division 1** (local), is **Dare County (North Carolina) Emergency Management, and Sara Small, Dare County Public Relations**, for the creation of the *Dare County Hurricane Awareness Guide*. The guide was developed and distributed to the residents of and visitors to the Outer Banks of Dare County, North Carolina. Hurricane season in Dare County is always met with countless questions about what residents and visitors need to know and what they should do to ensure their personal readiness. To provide the county's 40,000 residents and at times up to 300,000 visitors, Sara Small developed the guide, which received rave reviews from all users. In addition to hard copy distribution of more than 5,000 copies, the content was made part of the county's ongoing social media campaign to improve individual awareness and readiness.

Without the *Dare County Hurricane Awareness Guide*, residents and visitors would have to search numerous locations to find the basic information needed to prepare for and recover from a tropical weather event on the Outer Banks. With changes to how information on storm surge is being generated and shared by the National Hurricane Center, the guide is of critical importance, since it concisely captures information on storm surge watch and warnings as well as the Potential Storm Surge Flooding Map. It brings greater emphasis and awareness to the life threatening nature of storm surge while still addressing tornadoes, winds, rainfall and rip currents.

- The winner of the **2017 IAEM-USA Public Awareness Award, Division 2** (regional/nonprofit), is **California State University Northridge, and Jenny Novak, CSUN emergency manager**, for the preparedness coalition built to plan CSUN's Beat the Quake: An Earthquake Themed Puzzle/Escape Room. The program uses a popular live action game format in an educational effort to help people understand in a hands-on, fun environment while learning how to prepare for earthquakes. Teams of four to five were challenged to solve a series of earthquake related puzzles and activities, such as performing non-structural mitigation within a simulated apartment, collecting preparedness items to build a kit and practicing appropriate action (drop, cover, hold on) when they heard the earthquake early warning sound that simulated an earthquake. This program is important because rather than simply telling or showing people how to prepare for and mitigate earthquakes, it challenges them to interact with the environment and test their knowledge in a gaming environment. The debut event was highly creative through the utilization of a 1990's setting to interest participants. This created relevance because the debut

event took place at California State University Northridge, which was heavily impacted by the 1994 Northridge earthquake. The program provided an understanding of a historical event that occurred when many participants were not yet born.

Beat the Quake directly educated 113 CSUN community members who participated in the puzzle room. Dozens of additional CSUN community members also received educational materials through the collocated tabling of community resources and the earthquake poster presentations from students in the general education geology course. Since the debut event in 2016, two other universities have replicated the event and two more events (one university, one general public) are planned for later this year. University departments involved in the planning and implementation represented a broad spectrum of the campus community: the Department of Police Services, the Geology Department, the Career Center, the University Student Union, the Student Health Center, CSUN Dining, and University Housing. External partners included the Earthquake Country Alliance, the American Red Cross, and the Amazing Escape Room of Los Angeles.

The **IAEM Public Awareness Awards** recognize outstanding public awareness programs or public education products related to emergency management, homeland security, and/or disaster preparedness.

2017 IAEM-USA Technology & Innovation Awards

- The winner of the **2017 IAEM-USA Technology & Innovation Award, Division 2** (regional/nonprofit), is **Sedgwick County (Kansas) Emergency Management, and Rick Shellenbarger, emergency manager/planning officer**, Sedgwick County, for coordinating the development of “Early Alerting for Responders” and setting up a coalition of county agencies to realize county goals. Early alerting of potential hazards to responding units provides a life safety and enhanced situational awareness measure to prevent injury and death. It can also help ensure that responders have a better understanding of the hazards and initiate quicker evacuation and sheltering notifications of the general population.

In the past, responding units to facilities were unaware of what was located there until an assessment was made and the incident reported back to command staff and Emergency Communications. This type of response was considered a concern for the safety of response units such as fire, police, and emergency medical services since they could be proceeding downwind into a dangerous situation. Since responders can arrive from different communities and even counties, the need to identify the hazards and recommended stand-off distances became more apparent. Sedgwick County Emergency Management started collecting hazardous material information reported by facilities under the Right-to-Know Act of 1986 and scenarios derived from facilities under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Risk Management Program, including in the Emergency Communications Premise Alert text box. Many of the areas of concern remained either within the facility or could extend 25 miles from a hazardous materials release. An accidental or intentional/criminal action resulting in a release of hazardous materials from an aboveground tank was the greatest concern. This situational awareness reporting need for responding units and community safety concerns is the principal reason for this innovation.

The **IAEM-USA Technology & Innovation Awards** recognize the development of technology and innovation to improve emergency management operations, public education, or the emergency management/homeland security field.

Learn more about the annual IAEM Award Competitions at www.iaem.com/Awards.

IAEM is a nonprofit professional organization representing more than 4,600 emergency management and homeland security professionals for local communities, state and federal disaster officials, private sector, non-governmental organizations, and others involved in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from all types of disasters, including acts of terrorism. IAEM provides access to the largest network of emergency management experts who can provide advice and assistance; the Certified Emergency Manager/Associate Emergency Manager program; annual scholarships; a comprehensive monthly newsletter; and more.