

Illinois Contributes to Hurricane Katrina Efforts



The destruction from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita generated the largest deployment of mutual aid through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) in its history. Civilian personnel from all disciplines and National Guard troops were deployed in unprecedented numbers. EMAC is the main state endorsed mechanism for mutual aid, whereby one state provides resources, equipment, services, and other needed support to another state during an incident. Once an emergency declaration has been made, generally days before landfall in the case of a

hurricane, the governor is able to request assets from EMAC member states. Since administrative details, questions of cost reimbursement, licensing and credentialing issues are addressed in the EMAC adopted by member states, the requesting state is able to call upon resources from other states as soon as the emergency declaration has been made, wasting no time with forming agreements or working out these important issues.

Over the course of the response and recovery to Katrina and Rita, a total of 65,740 personnel were deployed to Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama and over 3,500 of those were health and medical personnel. The magnitude of Katrina and Rita and the length of the recovery process would have been nearly impossible for one state to address on its own, reinforcing EMAC's importance as it addressed the needs of affected states.



At the dedication of the State Emergency Operations Center on October 26, 2005, approximately 3,000 first responders and volunteers from Illinois were recognized for their contributions to the response and recovery efforts during the August hurricane that ravaged Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. Governor Blagojevich presented plaques to representatives of numerous organizations that assisted following the Hurricane Katrina disaster. Included in the recognition were the following State of Illinois agencies and statewide systems:



The Illinois Emergency Management Agency deployed state emergency managers to assist state and local officials in devastated areas of Mississippi with vital incident management, public health and medical coordination as did the Illinois Emergency Services Management Association that deployed over 30 local emergency managers to assist state officials in the gulf area with public health and medical care needs. They provided health and medical coordination assistance to the U.S. Public Health Service and the Department of Health and Human Services who served as the



lead agencies during the disaster. Of the many tasks in which the team was engaged were damage assessments and critical function status, setting up tents in parking lots for clinics, and dental offices, running supplies of medicine, cleaning out schools to be used as shelters, maintaining emergency power sources to area hospitals, and complementing emergency contingencies in any way possible.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency deployed essential environmental health and safety workers to support inspections of public water systems, to safeguard environmental quality consistent with the social and economic needs of the area to protect the health, welfare and property of the residents of Louisiana from disease and illness.

The Illinois Department of Public Health was recognized for their command and control of the Illinois Medical Emergency Response Team and deployment of vital public health workers to ensure the safety of food supplies and to promote the health of the people of the Gulf through the prevention and control of disease and injury. The Illinois Medical Emergency Response Team established a field hospital in Baton Rouge, Louisiana that enabled Illinois medical volunteers to provide critical, life-saving actions to more than 6,000 hurricane victims.



The Illinois Department of Central Management Services coordinated the deployment of mobile command centers and 100 state employees to provide essential telecommunications capabilities. The agency utilized best practices to create, lead and manage administrative and social services, disaster recovery and law enforcement operations, as well as, human and physical assets to affect over 25,000 families for the greater good of those affected in the gulf area.

The Illinois Department of Human Services deployed state employees to provide essential social services and intervention to assist families affected by the hurricane ultimately achieve self-sufficiency, independence and health. The Illinois Department of Employment Security deployed employees to provide essential social services and unemployment assistance to individuals and families impacted by the devastating storm.



Several of the state's law enforcement contingencies participated in the hurricane rescue and recovery efforts. The Illinois State Police was recognized for its dedication and leadership in providing command and control of "Task Force Illinois" and deployment of special law enforcement capabilities to assist with search and rescue efforts in Louisiana. Responding to the EMAC was a contingency of Illinois State Police Tactical Response Teams, Chicago Police Department SWAT Officers, and members of the Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS). Individuals from these organizations assembled to create "Task Force Illinois." This group of 300 dedicated officers from 112 state, county and local law enforcement agencies in Illinois provided valuable services to the State of Louisiana. This group also included officers from the



Secretary of State Police which assisted with life-saving search and rescue efforts, and the Department of Natural Resources which deployed dedicated law enforcement officers, and provided watercraft to supported search and rescue efforts in Louisiana.

The Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) coordinated the deployment of more than 950 dedicated firefighters, paramedics and essential fire support equipment that ensured the continuation of critical, public safety services in New Orleans and ten surrounding areas. During the MABAS six-week commitment, personnel assisted in the vaccination of residents, structural searches, water rescues, rendered support to Louisiana firefighters and their families, rebuilt fire stations and communication centers and other humanitarian missions. From the initial notification from EMAC to deployment was less than 24-hours.



The Illinois Department of Military Affairs deployed over 1,000 committed soldiers and aviators to the region to assist with medical, transportation, maintenance, supply, security, clergy, and aerial interdiction operations.