

Galveston/Houston Area Alliance for Response Forum
July 29, 2011
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

MEETING NOTES

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Wynne Phelan, Director of Conservation, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

- Welcome to the Museum, we are excited to make this Alliance for better preservation for cultural collections.
- An Alliance for Response network will help us plan for emergencies like Ike and Katrina, and continue to grow and evolve as organizations.

Minnette Boesel, Mayor's Assistant for Cultural Affairs, City of Houston

- Welcome on behalf of the Mayor of Houston.
- This is an extraordinary gathering of cultural leaders and emergency responders to start a road map for better city preparedness.
- After Katrina we had to work as a community to take in refugees from New Orleans.
- It was an extraordinary time of reaction with no plan or blueprint, but there was an amazing gathering of volunteers.
- Lessons learned from that impacted the planning process, and certainly cultural losses were a lesson learned.
- In Mississippi 2/3 of buildings in historic districts were destroyed in Katrina.
- Museum district in Houston opened after Ike because they still had power and AC, served as a sort of refuge.
- Libraries in Houston stepped up and opened as many as possible to be a resource for families.
- Cultural institutions are a huge asset to the community and in the Gulf Coast they are so vulnerable.
- The Mayor applauds and thanks you.

FEMA PERSPECTIVE ON COMMUNITY SELF RELIANCE

Kevin Jaynes, CHMM, Regional Environmental Officer, FEMA Region VI

- FEMA is here to help!
- FEMA's mission is to Prepare, Respond, and Recover.
- To reach this mission, FEMA is working with a whole community response concept.
 - Goal is to work together, not to take charge, but work with state and local government.
 - Part of the whole community concept is to be prepared for yourself, your community.
- Important to communicate and collaborate early so that the appropriate level of response is brought in a disaster.
- It is also important to know what and where the resources are in a community.
- The National Response Framework the organization of federal partners in a disaster, the Emergency Support Functions (ESF's) are the ways in which they are directed into action.
- At FEMA states are organized into regions, Texas is Region VI.
- The FEMA regions work with local partners like city, county, and community leaders.
- They also work with private partners like Target and Walmart, who have access to resources that can be distributed easily.
- Faith based organizations are also a good way to spread information locally.
- The way to get the whole community prepared is to Communicate/Coordinate/Collaborate.
- In 1977 I saw a King Tut exhibit in New Orleans. What if it had been 2005 and Katrina was coming in? What would they have done?
 - In this region It's not a matter of if there will be a major disaster, it's a matter of when.

- Important to look at past hazards and current risks to make a preparedness plan.
 - What stage is your emergency plan at?
 - Does it work, have you tried it?
 - Need to make sure you are self sufficient.
- Get to know your local officials even as they change.
- Forming these Alliances is a big step in the right direction.
- Understand how the response framework works at all levels of government, and look for ways for your Alliance to be a part.

Question and Answer Session:

So many people can't get access to their buildings after a disaster, how can you avoid this?

- Be vocal and be involved in the planning process. Organizations like Volunteers Active in Disasters can be useful to you, make sure people know you and the significance of your collections. Get to know local law enforcement, mayor, etc.

Time is a real negative factor for objects and buildings under water. Can you reflect on this?

- When there is a disaster the number one priority is always going to be life safety, then life sustaining. There might be some time before you can get in to your things and you need to have preparations in place for that. Preparedness will help you with the wait.

How can you connect with local government to let them know about your group?

- You have to go to them, be a squeaky wheel. The more vocal and organized you are is when things will happen.

ALLIANCE FOR RESPONSE: THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

Lori Foley, Vice President of Emergency Programs, Heritage Preservation

- It's hard to focus on just one region of Texas because the state is so big and so varied geographically, but we hope to come away from this with ideas of networks all over the state.
- Alliance for Response picks right up on the theme of communication and collaboration.
 - The idea is to start local to grow into the big picture of emergency response.
- What is cultural heritage?
 - Cultural institutions preserve our culture – important to our history and the ongoing life of our communities.
 - They provide services and resources – contribute to local economies and provide a sense of normalcy after a disaster.
- What do emergency managers need to know?
 - Cultural heritage is valuable and vulnerable.
 - It is also an essential piece of getting a region back up and running.
 - They have fragile collections that require special handling and care.
 - They also often contain hazardous materials and changing floor plans, and are frequented by vulnerable visitors
- 80% of cultural institutions don't have an emergency plan with staff trained to carry it out.
- One of the keys to preparedness is having a relationship with emergency and first responders.
 - Use their knowledge to influence your plans.
 - Invite emergency responders for walk-throughs of facilities to talk about layout, priority collections, ways you can address risks
- It is so important to network and work with your emergency responders, they want us to succeed as much as we want to make sure collections are cared for.
- What has Alliance for Response has achieved:
 - Active preparedness networks that have training and education schedules and are affecting real changes to local and state emergency response policy.
 - Examples:
 - SHER used REPP worksheet to evaluate cultural resources.

- TACREN emergency hotline for cultural institutions.
 - NYC-OEM partnership and tabletop exercises.
 - COSTEP: MA annex to CEMP formally recognizes that emergency managers are responsible for historic resources in a disaster.
- National Leadership Institutes –addressed how to develop strategic relationships with emergency managers and how to sustain networks.
- Alliance for Response Toolkit is available online, and your network can springboard from these resources.
- Other Heritage Preservation Resources:
 - Heritage Emergency National Task Force Information on Major Disasters Web page.
 - Navigation Guide helps you prepare for the fund seeking process after a disaster.
 - MayDay, an annual event to promote taking simple preparedness steps for emergencies.
 - Field Guide to Emergency Response and Emergency Response and Salvage Wheel
 - ICS Book
 - Expert response and recovery advice for the public.

Question and Answer Session:

Can you give more examples of what the Alliance for Response local networks have accomplished?

- In Philadelphia, they were able to go in after a local fire and take care of fire damaged resources because of established relationships with local first responders. In Massachusetts, COSTEP can sit at the table in the Emergency Operations Center and respond to cultural heritage needs when there is a major disaster. Having prior relationships with emergency managers is so important to all Alliance groups, networking is everything.

AIC-CERT: SUPPORTING COLLECTIONS IN PERL

Steven Pine, American Institute for Conservation Collections Emergency Response Team

- The theme of today is identifying resources and connections to bring together the emergency response and cultural worlds.
- AIC-CERT began as a reaction to Katrina when several museums were destroyed.
- But there is also the “everyday “museum disaster too, this is more common and sometimes just as damaging.
- AIC recognized that it would be to our collective benefit to draw from conservators trained in first response.
- A team of conservators went through CERT training, and they are still growing and developing the curriculum.
- There is a great variety of talent and skill sets brought to the table at these trainings.
- The teams learn the Incident Command System as well as health and safety training, which is paramount for the conservators and staff they are assisting.
- AIC-CERT’s mission is to respond to the needs of cultural institutions in a disaster, these needs can be very varied depending on the disaster and the type of institution.
- They have a 24/7 hotline, to try and connect needs to those with areas of specialization.
- The AIC website has a lot of resources and links to help as well.
- Recent deployments have been to the Midwest and Southeast for flooding and tornado support.
- Three teams went to Galveston to provide support after Hurricane Ike to make connections and provide on the ground advice.
- The AIC-CERT Team will assess and triage the damage.
 - Usually a matter of working with a recovery team that is already there to provide expertise and support.
 - It is Important to get access to collections as soon as possible because mold is a huge problem.

- We hope in the future to draw in more resources and be able to continue to support cultural institutions in disasters.
- AIC-CERT is trying to reach the need, and supports local efforts for preparedness like Alliance for Response.
- We need to have cultural heritage institutions engaged in the emergency response framework to allow cultural heritage to have a voice after disasters.

OVERVIEW OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES PANEL

Moderator: W. Dwayne Jones, Executive Director, Galveston Historical Foundation

- We wanted to use this panel as an opportunity for you to get to know your emergency managers.
- For better preparedness you need to know what they do and how they think.
- It's important for us to understand the emergency management structure.
- Life safety will always be first, but we want to make sure that cultural heritage is also included somewhere down the line.

Larry Mousseau, Planning & Operations Supervisor, Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

- We are also here to help!
- The Galveston/Houston area of Texas is very vulnerable to storms.
- The Mission of the County Emergency Management Office is to safeguard the people in the county.
- We work with local jurisdictions on developing emergency plans so we are ready for any type of disaster you can think of.
- Harris County is huge, so we coordinate and collaborate with a huge number of responders, infrastructure, private organizations, etc.
- We also do outreach to the community:
 - Organize tours of Emergency Operations Center, the hub during an emergency.
 - Disseminate information to families; important for you to personally be ready so that you can help others!
- We also work closely with elected officials in the state to share information.
- Preparedness, what can you do?
 - Everything you need about emergency management is on our website: HCOEM.org
 - A lot of data available on the site that you can use to identify your risks and make your plans accordingly.
- Hurricanes are the major threat to the region
 - The current season is just starting so it is important to be prepared now!
 - Major issues in a hurricane are storm surge, tornados, rainfall, and strong wind.
 - In this area storm surges can make it very far inland.
- Be prepared for your family and your organization.
 - You have to take the initiative!
 - You never know what is going to happen.
 - Have a disaster supply kit, be patient, help your community, and have a plan.

Lori Schwarz, Assistant Director of Planning and Special Projects, Galveston Historic Preservation Office

- At the city level we mimic a lot of the County policies but have a slightly different timeline.
- Because Galveston is an island we look at evacuations early and take storms very seriously, you never know what could happen.
- Katrina and Rita were a wakeup call for the region.
- Galveston does a lot of resident preparation and holds a large hurricane meeting every year to meet with community members.

- As a group you should get involved in these meetings.
 - It's a great way to get to know your EOC director.
- We created disaster response plan for cultural institutions after historic properties were destroyed in Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.
 - We have tried since to gather disaster plans from cultural institutions but have only gotten two.
 - If you are in the area you should do this!
- We've also been looking at ways to alert first responders to be more careful with collections and historic properties.
- The Galveston EOC director right now is very interested in hearing from outside partners and would be a good advocate.
- It's not always easy, but our job is to bridge the gap.
- So important to reach out and express the needs of your institution.

Creig Romero, Public Assistance Specialist, Texas Department of Emergency Management

Dan Brogdon, Asst. Public Assistance Officer, Texas Department of Emergency Management

- State emergency management really goes into effect in the aftermath of a storm.
 - State of Texas works after a disaster to get a federal disaster declaration to get people back on their feet and allow for FEMA assistance.
 - The State becomes the advocates between FEMA and local applicants to try and make the recovery process smooth.
- Recovery is the most painful part of the process, it takes a long time.
 - The Law Library at Rice University took 27 million to recover all inundated documents after Hurricane Ike.
- Be aware that emergency managers change frequently, so many have not gone through a major disaster before.

Question and Answer Session:

- *We've heard many times today that communication is key. How do you recommend that cultural groups contact emergency managers?*
- **Lori Schwarz:** Provide your emergency response plan to the city. Be proactive in finding that point person of contact.
- **Minnette Boesel:** The Office of Homeland Security, the Fire Chief and Police Chief in Houston are all willing contacts.
- **Lori Schwarz:** Your Historic Preservation Officer is also your liaison to emergency management.
- **Larry Mousseau:** At Harris County we keep your plans on file if you provide them. If you want to have representation at the Houston EOC, contact Mark Sloane at Harris County and if there is room you can have a voice for your group.
- **Creig Romero:** At the state level we have regional liaison officers that you can contact to share your emergency plan; you can get their contact info on our website. You can also contact me or Dan to get more information.
- **Dwayne Jones:** You have to go through your state to get FEMA funding, so make sure you know your local and state contacts in advance.

We've talked a lot about hurricanes, but how can cultural institutions prepare for other disasters?

- **Larry Mousseau:** We respond to all disasters the same way, so get to know the structure of response by reading state plans.
- **Lori Schwarz:** It's the same for the city as well. One of the core phases of disaster planning is mitigation, where you learn from disasters and make plans to address specific risks. When preparing you should consider all types of risks. Think about where you are storing things? What can you do to protect them? Consider all options for protection.

Cultural institutions are also a big part of the local business base with memberships, donations and gift-shops. How would you respond to us differently as a business?

- **Lori Schwarz:** Cultural institutions are often a safe haven following a storm, you should use this to your advantage to explain the importance of your organization to Emergency managers. Work out cooperative agreements in advance.
- **Larry Mousseau:** We keep track of “cooling centers” as relief following storms. If you can be on this list, you’ll be considered a critical facility in the city.
- **Dwayne Jones:** That brings up the point that it is important to have a constant supply of electricity to keep cultural collections safe. Try to get elevated electrical units or generators to make this happen.

What steps do we take to make sure that the cultural community can be a part of emergency response training and education?

- **Lori Schwarz:** I’ve been thinking about pushing to include a heritage resources annex to the city plan so that the needs of cultural are institutionalized. We need to have a whole community mindset, firefighters and beyond. You should ask first responders to hold training events in your institution, be proactive and get them to come to you.
- **Lori Foley:** FEMA is developing a course for the protection of Natural and Cultural Resources at their National Training Institute.
- **Dan Brogdon:** Nothing says you can’t approach your fire department and ask them to be on your planning team. Get them involved early and they will be more receptive to adding cultural to their agenda; it can help remove barriers. There is a lot of culture in this region that people are proud of. You should resource share as plans come about and develop a powerful persuasive message, network! Don’t just rely on major institutions to provide support.

What can we do to help expedite response time?

- **Dan Brogdon:** We are very document oriented; make sure you have all of your documentation available and that it is dry and safe. This will help majorly with compensation.
- **Dwayne Jones:** The state will determine if you are eligible for FEMA funding and you will have to provide them with a lot of documentation about your organization pre and post disaster. Make sure you have all organizational details available and have access to copies either offsite and/or digitally.

Is the staff at state level emergency management pretty consistent?

- **Creig Romero:** It is in Texas; we have small teams that last longer. In major disasters we pull in other resources, but we have 22 permanent staff members.
- **Dwayne Jones:** So there is some institutional memory?
- **Creig Romero:** Yes
- **Dan Brogdon:** You are right, people get distressed by change over in emergency managers.
- **Creig Romero:** When Ike happened we went to every county to have public assistance meetings and make sure we met everyone we needed to meet.
- **Dwayne Jones:** But cultural organizations largely missed it in Galveston because of bad communication, and that was the impetus for this Forum because I never wanted that to happen again. I wanted Emergency Management to know that cultural heritage existed and was eligible.

Lori Foley, Vice President of Emergency Programs, Heritage Preservation

- Some suggestions of activities you can do as a group to grow this Alliance can do to be more prepared:
 - Make sure all participating institutions have disaster plans; Dplan and other models are available online.
 - NEH supports regional conservation and preservation centers, AMIGOS is the one closest to you and they will review disaster plans for you.
 - Get disaster plans to your local first responders and city and county emergency management.

- Organize a tour of the Emergency Operations Center.
- Organize a tour of Blackmon Mooring facilities.
- Get first responders to do training at your facility.
- Get involved in the local hurricane conference.
- The heritage community is organized to deal with institutions, but there is also heritage out there in private homes.
- It is incumbent upon all of us to reach out and help each other.

Lunch sponsored by Blackmon Mooring.

PANEL DISCUSSION: DISASTER NUTS AND BOLTS

Moderator: Lori Foley, Vice President of Emergency Programs, Heritage Preservation

What Happens After a Declared Disaster

Kristine Barbier, Public Assistance, Program Specialist/Outreach Officer, FEMA Region VI

- Here to tell you what to do when something bad happens.
- FEMA Recovery division provides:
 - Individual/Public Assistance.
 - Housing and unemployment assistance.
 - Hazard Mitigation planning assistance.
- Public Assistance
 - Helps provide reimbursement for debris removal and restoration.
 - FEMA cost shares, you pay 25%, but this can be reduced in bigger disasters.
- FEMA CD has all resource publications and forms to get you through the process.
- After a disaster the state OEM does an initial assessment of damages and decides if they need FEMA assistance for recovery.
- To be prepared for multiple assessments you should keep track of all documentation and expenditures even before the state applies for Federal aid.
- Once the aid is approved with a Presidential Disaster Declaration, the state then holds applicant briefings all over the state – make sure you are invited to these.
- At the meeting you can submit a request for public assistance, and they will contact you to set up a one-on-one kick off meeting to develop a plan for support.
- FEMA and the state will work with you to make a project plan that will be put through a FEMA review.
- After the review, FEMA money for the project goes to the state and they are your grantee.
- FEMA is the coordinator, the state is the educator and money lender, and they monitor the use of the funds.
- Applicant does the most, you have to start the process.
 - The applicant has to be prepared to show the FEMA and state partners what is most important and most costly.
 - You also have to do the work to keep track of the funds and keep track of the deadlines.
 - You must submit a request for public assistance 30 days after a Presidential Disaster Declaration.
 - If FEMA turns you down and you disagree, you can send an appeal to the state within 60 days of the response and they will forward it to FEMA.
- You have to be an eligible applicant:
 - State/City/County/Tribal organization or nonprofit that performs a critical service.
 - Nonprofits that perform an essential service (like museums, libraries, and archives) have to first apply to the Small Business Administration for a low interest loan before applying to FEMA.
- Your facility also has to be eligible:

- You have to own your facility.
- It had to have been in active use at the time of the disaster, and located in a designated disaster area.
- It cannot be funded by another federal agency.
- Work cannot be because of neglect or deferred maintenance.
- Work gets divided into emergency work – like debris removal, sandbagging, dehumidifiers, or permanent work – reconstruction.
 - Repair and restore back to the way it was, can't upgrade as part of FEMA funds.
- Cost must be reasonable and necessary.
 - FEMA will look at historic costs of similar work.
 - Include insurance deductions.
 - Insurance can affect your funding, make sure you assess your current assets.
- Keep records of EVERYTHING, even before the disaster declaration is made.
 - Take lots of photographs, and be prepared to have before photographs as well.
 - Keep logs of donated labor, and this can offset the cost of the costshare.
- Hazard Mitigation Grants – what could you do to keep this from happening again.
 - Environmental Compliance/Flood plain management/ Historic Preservation are all a consideration in FEMA's plans
- Rosenberg Library in Houston, went through FEMA review for reimbursement after Hurricane Ike.
 - Had some advance preparations, particularly with insurance.
 - Good documentation of the building.
- Closeout/audit is the end of the process, this goes through the state.
 - You have quarterly project reports until this point.
- Tips for Best Results:
 - Have to make sure you are well insured, or if not fully insured, get a waiver.
 - Need to establish lines of communication with city and state government before the disaster.
 - If you have a plan and contacts in place you get through the disaster much quicker.
- Phases of recovery:
 - Have to start before a disaster; disaster plan writing stage.
 - Prior to disaster put plan into effect
 - Post disaster make sure you keep track of all recovery expenses and document!
 - Goal is to make a plan that works so the process can be quick

Pre-Existing Contracts

Steve Rock, Senior Program Manager, The Louis Berger Group

- Lessons learned from Ike taught us that Pre-Existing Contracts will get you through disasters faster.
- Pre-positioned services:
 - Technical Assistance.
 - Response Services.
- You want to identify the issues advance so your proposal is accepted and you don't have to go through a FEMA appeals process.
- Pre-Existing Contract plans will lessen the burden and ensure that transitions are smoother.
- They also can speed up your cashflow if you are more aggressive with the process.

Creating a Disaster Plan

Teresa Carter, Technical Director, The Louis Berger Group

- I decided to start working with mitigation planning after Hurricane Floyd hit North Carolina and no one had flood insurance at that point because it was so rare.

- Most important part about planning is actually sitting down and doing the plan, talking it out, figuring what needs to happen.
 - It's too late to only look at the plan when a disaster happens.
 - A good plan will allow for a successful and timely recovery.
- Fill your plan with critical information:
 - Staff and vendor contacts.
 - Building infrastructure.
 - Collections inventory.
- It is important for staff to understand their roles.
- It is also important for everyone to understand the local recovery process.
- Communicate with others to better know what you will need following a disaster.
 - Make sure your scopes are complete.
 - Estimate values to maximum amount.
- It is also important to identify what Hazard Mitigation possibilities are out there.
- A pre-existing contract will also help to get boots on the group faster.
 - Competitive procurement process for response/recovery companies .
 - State of Georgia pre-position contract example.
 - Gives FEMA documentation to enable recovery of eligible items.
- FEMA website is a great resources for building your plan.

Practical Tips from the National Archives

Preston Huff, Regional Liaison, National Archives and Records Administration

- Our job at NARA is to work with shareholder groups to document heritage.
- How did NARA get involved with disaster recovery?
 - After Katrina NARA facilities and other federal agencies in the region were ok, so they went to help with New Orleans City records.
 - Leadership in Washington allowed NARA regions to help with a mission assignment from FEMA.
 - There were an amazing amount of damaged records, NARA was able to help recover many of them.
- Some simple practical tips:
 - Develop a response plan.
 - Examine storage areas for potential sources of water damage.
 - Elevate all holdings at least three inches off the floor.
 - Drape plastic over holdings in locations prone to leaks.
 - Inspect the sprinkler system regularly.
 - Monitor areas prone to leaks with water alarms.
 - React quickly to avoid mold.
 - Don't locate records on basement or on the top floor.
 - Keep indexes/finding aids separate from the building.
 - Backup vital records offsite and out of the region if possible.
 - Scanning original records, have back ups.
- REPAR-E is the Records Emergency Preparation and Response-External at NARA.
 - Head of committee is Jane Long, formerly of Heritage Preservation.
 - This is a resource for help with damaged documents.
 - Outward focus, use NARA resources to help other agencies.
 - Partner of the Emergency Response Framework 11, help at the table in federal response.
- Make sure you know your contacts and disaster recovery companies before the disaster.
- NARA wants to provide training and education outreach, visit Archives.gov for more information.

GALVESTON-HOUSTON AREA NEXT STEPS

Lori Foley and Dwayne Jones, Facilitators

- Contact Dwayne Jones if you want to join the Steering Committee and influence the future of the Galveston-Houston Alliance for Response network.
- Goal is to have large scale meetings like this maybe twice a year.
- We've learned today that networking is critical!
- Other Alliance groups have been very successful when they've formed partnerships with local emergency management.
- Please let us know if there is something you'd like to know more about that would be helpful to you in the future.