

## **Alliance for Response – Next Steps in Ohio**

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In December 2003, more than 60 representatives of cultural heritage institutions throughout Ohio gathered for a statewide meeting to focus on cooperative disaster planning and response. This meeting, sponsored by Heritage Preservation and underwritten by the Fidelity Foundation, featured speakers from the cultural heritage community who had experience in cooperative disaster planning, along with representatives from county, state and federal emergency management agencies. Afternoon breakout sessions divided participants into four groups - Northeast Ohio, Central Ohio, Southeast Ohio, and Southwest Ohio. Participants were able to share their institutions' disaster planning status and discuss effective ways to further develop cooperative disaster planning efforts in their regions. Participants strongly supported the idea of holding regional meetings in 2004 to bring cooperative planning discussions to the local level.

### **Northwest Ohio**

The first of the four regional meetings was held in November 2004 at the Cleveland Art Museum. The meeting was sponsored by the Intermuseum Conservation Association and OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc. Over eighty participants from northeastern Ohio museums, academic, and public libraries gathered for the day-long session.

George Hays, Salem Public Library, gave a dramatic presentation showing the devastation his library suffered from floods in the summers of 2003 and 2004. Prior to the disasters, he had established good working relations with local emergency responders, his insurance agent, and an area salvage company. This effort paid off in terms of the library being able to quickly mobilize response to minimize, as much as possible, damage to the library and to get back in operation as quickly as possible.

Arnold Tunstall, Akron Museum of Art, offered an inside look at how his museum responded to various disasters over the past few years, including a blackout that occurred just before a major reception, water leaks, and a fire alarm on Christmas Day. In addition to the value of having disaster response plans in place, some of the lessons learned in responding to these situations were very simple – having enough flashlights available to negotiate dark spaces, and knowing where the shut-off valves were for the water and steam pipes.

Sharlane Gubkin and Nathan Lambert, Case Western Reserve University, gave examples of the Case Western Reserve University's disaster response plans for salvaging building contents and digital assets. Sharlane walked participants through the implementation of the university's disaster plan after a fire nearly destroyed Adelbert Hall in 1991. This building housed many important offices at the university. The Preservation Department took charge of salvaging all the paper-based materials damaged in the fire, including books, files and records, photographs, blueprints, and artworks. Having the plan in place enabled the preservation department to quickly secure the appropriate resources to begin salvage operations, and to appropriately prioritize salvage activity. Thanks to their efforts, over 80% of the damaged records were able to be recovered, and almost all the data from 130 hard drives in office computers was able to be saved.

Nathan Lambert explained the components of creating a systems recovery disaster plan, including how to perform a risk assessment, develop the recovery plan, and maintain that plan. Ongoing planning and assessment is important in terms of business continuity, and in determining how an institution defines business continuity. At Case Western's Kelvin Smith Library, disaster recovery planning began with identifying all the library systems, and then assigning severity types to identify the extent to which having the system down affects library operations. User groups for the systems are also identified, and this information is used to create the system restore priorities and procedures.

Presentations from Tim O'Toole, Cleveland Division of Fire, and Prioleau Green, Cleveland Division of Police, caught the audience's interest as they talked about working effectively with first responders. Chief O'Toole explained the laws for "public assembly occupancies" and how to coordinate these requirements into disaster plans. He walked participants through components of emergency plans that are relatively recent, including responding to "white powder" incidents and area-wide evacuation planning. He emphasized the need for training all employees, including part-time employees, since panic is the number one killer in emergencies. Chief O'Toole also ran down typical issues that impede effective emergency response, such as locked or hidden exit doors, and impaired fire suppression systems. In his view, the single most important asset a cultural heritage institution can provide to first responders is an individual who has access to the facility, to building plans, an emergency call list, and knowledge of the materials and risks on site.

Chief Green started his presentation with a reminder that cultural heritage institutions need to be alert to possible terrorist activities. The societal and monetary value of the collections, as well as the fact that cultural heritage institutions attract many visitors, makes them a potential target for terrorism. While there is no need to panic, it is always wise to be alert and prepared. The second portion of Chief Green's presentation walked participants through the components of emergency management and planning from the fire department's viewpoint, including keys to successful and sustainable plan formation. He spoke of the four elements of emergency management: planning, training, testing, and coordinating activities within the community. Upper management support of these activities is crucial. Chief Green walked participants through the planning steps, including forming a disaster planning team; developing a mission statement, schedule, and budget; analyzing the institution's hazards and capabilities for response; meeting with outside groups (such as first responders, community emergency management staff, etc.) to identify external resources; and developing protocols for response to potential disasters and emergencies. Once the plan is developed, he suggested keeping support documents, including call lists, building and site maps, and salvage priority lists on CD or DVD in multiple locations. It is also important to train staff on the plan, and to make sure that it is integrated into organizational operations.

The final presentation of the day was by John James, Cincinnati Insurance, who shared with the audience "what every insurance adjuster needs to know." He explained the role an insurance adjuster plays in helping institutions identify risks and develop loss-prevention plans, and in dealing with the aftermath of disasters. Adjusters need to work with their clients to discuss coverage and make sure that assets are adequately protected, and to learn what the library/museum perspective is. It is important to work together ahead of time to share information on the cultural heritage institution's priorities in terms of the building, contents, collection, and business income and extra expense issues. Having these discussions focuses the coverage and recovery efforts, eliminates misunderstandings, and enables recovery to happen more quickly and at less cost. It is also important to let insurance adjusters know who your internal (staff) vendors are ahead of time, and who you prefer to work with as external vendors.

If you do not have external vendors, such as general contractors, and companies to help in the salvage of specialty items, your adjuster can help you identify qualified vendors. Adjusters can also help in disaster planning by specifying steps to take once a loss has occurred, including how and when to contract vendors.

Tom Claerson, OCLC, spoke about the value of cooperative disaster planning and offered some successful examples of cooperative plans. He showed how cooperative planning helps the institutions involved save money, use resources efficiently, address training and education needs in a cost-effective manner, and share existing expertise on recovery planning and technical issues among institutions. The New Mexico Preservation Alliance, the San Diego/Imperial County Libraries Disaster Response Network (SILDRN) and the Inland Empire Libraries Disaster Response Network (IELDRN) all take slightly different approaches. New Mexico's network of volunteers has a focus on paper-based publications, educational opportunities, and access to expert responders. The California groups' more structured approach includes websites, central supply caches, training, and, for IELDRN members, mutual aid agreements. Tom then walked the group through the necessary steps in cooperative disaster planning, including identifying a point person at each institution, reviewing the existing plans, and identifying risks and resources at the participating institutions. This information is then used to develop the consortial plans and activities.

Finally, Sue Dunlap, College of Wooster, shared how the Five Colleges of Ohio were able to implement cooperative disaster planning among their libraries. Their planning included visits to each institution, which helped the planning team members become familiar with each other's facilities, collections, potential risks, and available resources.

The afternoon sessions afforded participants the opportunity to meet with presenters in a small-group discussion format. This gave them time to ask questions and share ideas before the group came back together for a final wrap-up.

From this meeting, several local groups have begun discussions about how to work together. The Akron-area participants were so motivated that they actually planned their first area meeting during the afternoon session that day!

### **Southeast Ohio**

The Southeast Ohio region took a different approach than that used by the Northwest Ohio group. Ohio University took the lead in planning and organizing this regional meeting. Because the Southeast Ohio region is relatively widespread and the cultural heritage institutions tend to be smaller, the planning group combined an invitation to attend the December 3 regional meeting with a request to participate in an online survey to determine the existing scope of disaster planning among the various institutions. Results of this survey were used to help structure the meeting.

The survey found that Southeastern Ohio libraries and museums have good levels of fire detection and suppression systems, and monitoring for temperature in all facilities, but few monitor for humidity, light, or pollution.

Three Southeastern Ohio institutions have experienced disasters that damaged material in the past five years, and one facility was temporarily closed. The types of disasters experienced ranged from water leakage and flooding to mold outbreaks. In most cases, internal staff performed cleanup and recovery.

The majority of the survey respondents do not have a disaster plan, and none had begun collaborative disaster planning activities. However, many were interested in this type of approach, and both service resumption and the efficient use of resources were seen as key collaborative benefits.

There was a high demand for education on disaster-related topics, including Disaster Preparedness, Writing Disaster Plans, and Disaster Mitigation. Three institutions also expressed interest in having preservation site surveys, with a disaster preparedness component, performed at their facilities.

To follow up on the survey results and begin collaboration, 30 people gathered at the Athens Community Recreation Center on December 3, 2004 for a program that included presentations and an opportunity for discussion.

Patricia Smith-Hunt, Ohio University, welcomed the group and set the stage for the day's activities. Tom Claerson, OCLC, provided background on the Alliance for Response. The next presentation was from Rick Mayer, Athens Chief of Police. He spoke about how the Athens Police Department responds to emergencies, and outlined some of the ways that police can be of assistance. He reminded participants that many times emergency scenes are also crime scenes, and spoke of ways to work with the police to resume business activities.

Fire Chief Bob Troxel, also of Athens, shared his Department's unique approach to becoming familiar with the buildings in Athens. They have recently purchased a digital camera, and are building a photo file of buildings, and make viewing this file mandatory for new recruits. Athens has many historic buildings, and this approach helps the fire department know as much as possible about the potential risks in advance of an emergency. The Athens Fire Department also is more than willing to do a risk assessment and safety walkthrough of any cultural heritage institution in their jurisdiction, and welcomes the opportunity to become familiar with the institution's special needs and risks.

The next presentation was from Cris Drugan, Nationwide Insurance, who focused on insurance considerations in disaster planning. He had several practical suggestions for participants, beginning with identifying all the assets held by the institution, including personal and real property and vehicles. He addressed the types of external and internal risks that cultural heritage institutions might face, and also the potential post-loss needs, such as money for temporary storage and business resumption expenses. He also explained the range of insurance coverage, from self-insurance, fully funded by the institution, to full coverage offered by an insurance company. Finally, he talked about some of the common interests shared by insurance companies and the institutions they insure, including detailed record keeping for assets and collections, asset valuation, and disaster planning to mitigate risks and damage.

The final session of the morning was a walk-through of Ohio University's disaster planning process. Pat Smith-Hunt explained how Ohio University has approached disaster planning for the library. The library's plan is nearly complete, and she offered to share their planning experience with any institutions which might be interested.

A general discussion session after lunch brought forth the region's need for education and assistance in disaster planning. While the participants agreed that cooperative disaster planning was a good approach, many felt that they needed additional education, such as workshops on disaster planning and preparedness, before they would be ready to begin the collaborative planning process. In 2005, the Southeast Region will focus on providing these training and education opportunities.

### **Southwest Ohio**

The final meeting of 2004 took place in Cincinnati, Ohio on December 13 at the Cincinnati Art Museum, site of the statewide meeting in 2003. The lead organizations in this effort were the Cincinnati Art Museum, the Cincinnati Area Red Cross, and Miami University. This group built upon the 2003 meeting with a half-day program that focused on existing resources offered by area first responders and examples of effective disaster planning. Approximately 30 representatives of area museums and libraries attended this meeting.

Once again, Tom Claeson opened the meeting with an introduction to the history of the Alliance for Response. He also spoke about the two previous regional meetings in Northeast and Southeast Ohio.

Gary Miller, Cincinnati Red Cross, spoke next. There are several active disaster preparedness groups within the Cincinnati area, mostly composed of first responders and emergency management planners. Miller encouraged the cultural heritage community to become involved with these groups, both to share the unique challenges they face in disaster planning and to tap into community resources for that planning. This will also raise awareness within the emergency management community, which has not traditionally focused on the museum and library community as participants in community disaster preparedness.

At this point, participant Mike Snowden offered to share his perspective. He is the new Homeland Security Director for Hamilton County. He spoke about how his agency could work with cultural heritage institutions.

The Cincinnati Art Museum has a robust disaster planning team. This group gave a panel presentation, walking participants through the elements of their plan, including the flip-chart version of the plan accessible throughout the museum. This flip-chart enables museum staff to quickly find the protocols for responding to various types of emergencies. The Art Museum's plan has been in place for a number of years, and there has been some staff turnover. Because of this, the committee is about to start reviewing the plan, revising where necessary, and training the rest of the museum staff on the plan.

Tom Claeson's presentation on building an effective cooperative disaster planning program concluded the formal portion of the program; the floor was then opened for discussion. Many in the audience were interested in the details of the Cincinnati Art Museum's plan. In addition, Rob Withers, Miami University, who has been on the 2003 Statewide Planning Committee, as well as on the 2004 Southwest Ohio Planning Committee, has developed a template for a disaster response vendor database that could be shared throughout the region. Participants were interested in seeing how this works, and Rob will e-mail the Web link to the Southwest Region meeting attendees.

The Southwest Region is interested in meeting again to discuss first steps in regional disaster planning, and will do so in 2005.

### **Central Ohio**

The Central Ohio Planning Committee is looking at a Spring/Summer 2005 timeframe for their region's meeting, and will meet in March to develop a program agenda.

### **Conclusions**

Throughout Ohio, cultural heritage institutions understand and support the idea of cooperative disaster planning, as evidenced by the strong regional attendance at the three meetings held to date. However, the four regions have slightly different needs – some are ready to begin working together now; some need additional education before they can address planning issues. In Southwest Ohio, the perception is that museums and libraries need to share information, but that each community has slightly different needs and that cooperative planning should start among similar institutions before branching out. The Southeast Ohio participants were very interested in reaching out to their local fire and police departments to build relationships before disaster strikes. And in Northeast Ohio, museums and libraries within local communities are taking the first steps in working together to create cooperative disaster planning.

OCLC looks forward to helping these local and regional groups as they move forward with their plans.