



# RIEMA NEWS



Volume I, Issue XI

Director- Major General Robert T. Bray

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Executive Director- J. David Smith

## Welcome to the Special Hurricane Issue



By J. David Smith  
*Executive Director*

This message will find you at the back edge of a cool front which was welcome relief to all of us. The Spring Sizzle as it was called

gave me my first test and experience this year with our collaboration between local, state, and federal authorities who share a responsibility to inform and support our state community. This tropical heat also serves as a portent of things to come. The hurricane season is upon us and this issue is dedicated to an overview of our history with hurricanes and the concept of predictions for our future. The RIEMA News can only provide a glimpse into what defines Hurricane Preparedness which is a result of training, technology, exercise, corporate partnerships, shelters, evacuation routes, communications, commodities distribution, medical support, and governmental support.

On behalf of the entire agency I want to commend everyone who participated in such an extraordinary way to our heat wave awareness and response. You are an example to others and I hope this serves as a valu-

able experience when we have to work together on the much larger scale of a hurricane event. Thank You !

During our recent Hurricane Preparedness Conference at the Radisson in Warwick we witnessed unprecedented attendance and a remarkably diverse presentation that covered a broad spectrum (pun intended) of topics. The value of corporate partnerships will become "priceless" if a major storm makes



landfall on our watch. We must also be reminded that those images of both the '38 and '54 Hurricanes are potentially minimal compared to what may happen if the conditions are right. We have an increase in the MSL (mean sea level) of about six inches from the time of "the thirty-

eight". Coastal development, geological and astronomical variants will compound the effect of a similar storm or one of greater strength.

The State of Rhode Island is better prepared in 2008 than any other time in history for a catastrophic event such as a Category 3 or higher storm. The reality is that we can never be completely prepared for the loss of life, property, and the inconvenience that will be the inevitable result. We can only share a hope that our plan-

ning, exercises, drills, and professional training can minimize those losses and create the best plan of action and response for a speedy recovery.

Please begin to discuss your personal, pet and family preparedness with those around you. Don't forget to assist with plans for your elderly neighbor, consider the special needs population, identify someone who has multi-lingual capabilities so that Hurricane Preparedness is translated to every language. Storms do not discriminate.

Take advantage of our resources and hyperlink

to any site that will help you in our quest for what I call "emergency sharedness" We are all in this together and will ride out the storm together as long as we take the necessary precautions and heed the warnings. See you next month...

# The Hurricane of 1938: A Personal Account

Jeannette Gravelin was 18 years old and living with her family in Warwick, Rhode Island on the 21st of September 1938. As was typical, Jeannette shared a ride to work in Providence with her brother Pete and Uncle Omer. She worked at the American Standard Watchcase (Bulova Watches) on Sprague Street, while the boys worked across the street at Phillips Rubber Shop. Jeannette remembers one of the workers commenting that the wind was blowing and the trees were swaying and then later the shop foreman decided to allow those that lived the farthest away to go home early. Jeannette headed outside at 3:30pm to discover that her brother and uncle were already waiting in the car.



**Jeannette Gravelin**

The three had a harrowing ride ahead of them as Jeannette described fallen trees and power lines strewn across the road. Their trip would require them to make multiple twists and turns to avoid obstacles on their journey home to Reynolds Ave. They made it as far as the Greenwood Bridge on Warwick Ave when they could go no further in the car so they set out on foot. On their walk Fire, Police and National Guard could be seen responding to incidents and closing streets in flooded areas. Around 7:00 p.m., Jeannette, Pete and Omer finally arrived at her Aunt Lucy's house to find that many family members had taken refuge from the storm.

Later that night, a woman knocked at the door to say her house had been washed away into the Warwick Cove. Ten more people would come to Lucy's house during the night. Jeannette describes waking in the morning to utter destruction. The idyllic beachfront community in

Warwick known as Oakland Beach was destroyed. The entire impact would come to light over the next few days and weeks. It is something that Jeannette and other survivors remember vividly, even so many years later.

The 1938 hurricane had struck with little warning and was responsible for 600 deaths and \$308 million in damage in the United States. The "Long Island Express" was first detected over the tropical Atlantic on September 13, although it may have formed a few days earlier. Moving generally west-northwestward, it passed to the north of Puerto Rico on the 18th and 19th, likely as a category 5 hurricane. It turned northward on September 20 and by the morning of the 21st it was 100 to 150 miles east of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. At that point, the hurricane accelerated to a forward motion of 60 to 70 mph, making landfall over Long Island and Connecticut that afternoon as a Category 3 hurricane.

The tide was even higher than



usual because of the Autumnal Equinox and full moon. The hurricane produced storm tides of 14 to 18 feet from New London east to Cape Cod. The storm surge was especially vio-

lent along the Rhode Island shore, sweeping hundreds of summer cottages out to sea. As the surge drove northward through Narragansett



Bay, it was restricted by the Bay's funnel shape, and rose to a level of nearly 16 feet (15.8) feet above normal spring tides, resulting in more than 13 feet (4.0 m) of water in some areas of Downtown Providence. Several motorists were drowned in their autos.

A hurricane impacting the New England area in 2008 could cause over 5 billion worth of damage and economic loss based on comparisons to the impact of the 1938 hurricane. It is not a matter of if a hurricane such as the 1938 will hit Rhode Island it is a matter of when. Rhode Islanders must prepare and plan to respond to the impacts of a storm and keep in mind that complacency during the warning phase of the event can increase loss of life and damages from the storm.

## NIMS Training Available Bi-Monthly

In an ongoing effort to provide updated NIMS required training and ICS training, RIEMA will be conducting Technical Assistance training for the On-line courses (IS-100 and IS-700). Also an overview brief will be provided for ICS 100. The training will be scheduled the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>

Thursday of the month from 9 a.m. through 12 p.m. and will be located in the State EOC at 645 New London Ave. Cranston, R.I. 02920. Seats will be limited due to computer resources.

Please contact Ken Baker to reserve your seat at: [Kenneth.l.baker1@us.army.mil](mailto:Kenneth.l.baker1@us.army.mil).

## Get Ready RI! Continues With Shelter Table Top Exercise

The Governor's Office, RIEMA, RI National Guard, American Red Cross – RI Chapter, Salvation Army, RI State Police, HEALTH, DEM, Volunteer Center of RI, 27 cities and towns, and select other state partners gathered on May 28<sup>th</sup> for a statewide shelter table top exercise. The scenario presented was a hurricane affecting the entire Northeast as well as Mid Atlantic area. The exercise was designed by a team of state and local partners connected to emergency management and sheltering.

The exercise began with a hazard analysis statement that Atlantic hurricanes pose a direct threat to all states on the U.S. eastern seaboard. Further, there is a 37% chance of a Major Hurricane making landfall on U.S. east coast this season. The probability of R.I. being directly impacted by a Category 3-5 hurricane is far less than the majority of the southern coastal states, however the possibility of such an occurrence is not remote.

In addition participants were reminded that history has shown that hurricanes can rapidly intensify at the last moment before landfall. This can render emergency operations geared up for one level of hurricane threat largely inadequate when a more severe storm actually arrives. Therefore, RIEMA has made the recommendation to all local emergency management authorities to always prepare for a category higher than expected. State level planners will also do this.

Five Target Capabilities were explored during the exercise:

- Citizen Protection: Evacuation and/or Shelter-In-Place Protection
- Communications
- Critical Resource Logistics and Distribution
- Mass Care
- Emergency Public Information and Warning

Municipalities were seated with nearby neighbors and state agencies sat together as if they were all at the state Emergency Operations Center. It was agreed that the networking and communications between the selected groups was one of the highlights of the day. In addition, the questions were found to be so thought provoking that the participants requested to have a copy of the questions to take back and explore with their government leaders. The exercise was phase 2

in a 3 phase *Get Ready RI!* program geared to

help RI prepare for Hurricanes. The final phase will be a full scale exercise on Saturday September 13, 2008. RIEMA is asking all municipalities to participate in that by opening a shelter in their jurisdiction. The RI Homeland Security Exercise & Evaluation Program will be funding this event. For more information email Brit-

## '08 Hurricane Season Predicted To Be Above Normal



As schools begin to close and summer kicks into gear, many of us start to focus on our upcoming summer vacations, barbecues and the beach. However,

the beginning of the warm weather also signals the start of the 2008 Hurricane Season. Beginning June 1<sup>st</sup>, the hurricane season runs until November 30<sup>th</sup>.

A normal hurricane season usually produces 11 named storms and six hurricanes, two of which are major (Category 3, 4, or 5 on the Saffir-Simpson Scale). This year we have already seen our first named storm, Tropical Storm Arthur and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is predicting a near normal to above normal. This means that we may see upwards of 12-16 named storms, 6-9 hurricanes, and 2-5 major storms.

Traditionally, hurricanes have struck New England between late August and late September. While many look at this as an opportunity to relax, use this extra time to prepare yourselves, your families, and the communities you serve. We at RIEMA will be working diligently throughout the summer to ensure that the state is at the highest state of readiness possible.

For more information on the 2008 Hurricane Season and what you can do to prepare please visit [www.hurricanes.gov](http://www.hurricanes.gov).



**American Red Cross**

Rhode Island Chapter



**Volunteer Center of Rhode Island**

Connecting People and Opportunities





## RI Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster Prepare for the Season

The Rhode Island VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters) recently completed their initial Disaster Operations Plan in time for the 2008 Atlantic Hurricane Season. The plan provides details into how the network of nonprofit organizations will support the residents of the state by describing how they will respond to and recover from emergency situations. The idea for the plan began last year originally as a way to capture the communications process of the network and quickly expanded into a all-encompassing operations plan. According to the document the plan will serve as a guide for RIVOAD members to "effectively coordinate with state and federal officials to ensure successful disaster preparedness, response, and organization for the foundation of the local recovery process."

The intent of the plan is to be all-hazards, however the plan is primarily based off of the Hurricane Response Annex of the Rhode Island State Emergency Operations Plan and explains what the activities of the RIVOAD will be beginning 96 hours pre-landfall of a hurricane event. Additionally the RIVOAD identified the Emergency Support Functions that have members of the RIVOAD as supporting agencies and indicate the roles those agencies will serve upon activation of the ESF's by the state.

The plan still meets the original purpose by providing details as to how the network will communicate with one another before and after a disaster, including how RIEMA can utilize FEMA resources to set up a conference call for all responding voluntary agencies who will have representation in the state after a disaster has occurred.

The plan was designed by a working group made up of members of the executive steering committee with assisted guidance from RIEMA. The working group was originally led by Joshua Hussey, formerly of the Volunteer Center of Rhode Island and now the Private Sector Liaison for RIEMA. The working group will be sustained under the leadership of Jen Tomassini of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank and will include representatives from the Rhode Island Community Action Program Association, the United Way of Rhode Island, and the Volunteer Center of Rhode Island.

The RIVOAD will vote to accept the document at their General Membership meeting on June 12 at the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. For more information on the VOAD contact Jen Tomassini of the RI Community Food Bank at [JTomassini@rifoodbank.org](mailto:JTomassini@rifoodbank.org).

## Annual RI Hurricane Conference Recap

RIEMA hosted its Annual Hurricane Conference on June 9th. 150 people turned out for the event and 37 of the 39 were represented. The program kicked off with introductions from Warwick Mayor Scott Averdisian, RIEMA Director Major General Robert T. Bray, RIEMA Executive Director J. David, and FEMA Region 1 Administrator Art Cleaves.

Bryan Koon, senior operations manager for Wal-Mart, was the headliner. His company can move thousands of tons of goods and supplies with lightning speed getting his stores resupplied and providing necessary items for the community after a hurricane. Their effort after Katrina certainly backed up his claims. He also talked about working more closely with other corporate entities and local government so they could be even more effective.

Joe Cournoyer, RIEMA planner,

talked about building more partnerships with the public and private sector to improve the quality of Emergency Management. To further that point Nick Logothets from the American Red Cross RI chapter informed us of a new partnership with Amica Mutual Insurance Co., Met Life, Hasbro Inc., and American Power Conversion Corp. Each company has agreed to put together teams of employees to be Shelter Volunteers.

Rich Horwitz, RI Disaster Animal Response Team, made us aware that every community is mandated by federal law to have a plan in place to accommodate pets. He offered to assist communities in writing their plans.

Rick Andreano, RIEMA planner, spoke about the communication plan for shelters in RI. He assured the room that if everyone follows the plan that there will be less confusion and no redundant ordering of resources. Matthew Belk, senior forecaster and

hurricane program leader for the National Weather Service made us aware of some new tools on the NSW website. Darren Delaney, RISP, addressed the role of state police during and after a hurricane. Duffy Eagan, Citadel Communications, brought us up to speed on the Emergency Alert System (EAS) now in place.

The learning didn't stop in the lecture hall. There were booths and command centers for touring. FEMA brought their MERS Command Center. RIEMA brought the state Mobile Command Center. L-3 Communications brought their "Wolf Coach" a GMC Suburban equipped with state of the art communications equipment. Along with the Wolf Coach, KVH Industries from Middletown, RI displayed one of their new Trac-Vision Antenna Systems that allows mobile satellite reception at a fraction of the cost of current rates.

# Statewide Shelter Communications Plan

RIEMA has partnered with Rhode Island ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service) to develop, test and implement the first-ever Statewide Shelter Communications Plan. Nicknamed ShelterCom™, the plan would set a common communications protocol to ensure flow of information from every shelter and EOC in the state during a multiple shelter activation.

Shelters are staffed primarily by volunteers. Rhode Island ARES has agreed to help provided trained, li-



censed radio volunteers to your community. RIEMA and ARES have been working with municipalities across the state to engage radio volunteers to work in your shelters. In addition, RIEMA will be issuing deployable radio go-kits to each town working in the ShelterCom plan. This funding was provided through a federal Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG), with ARES providing 100% of the match required for your community.

Approximately 75% of Rhode Island municipalities have already

joined in the ShelterCom program and are working with radio volunteers currently.

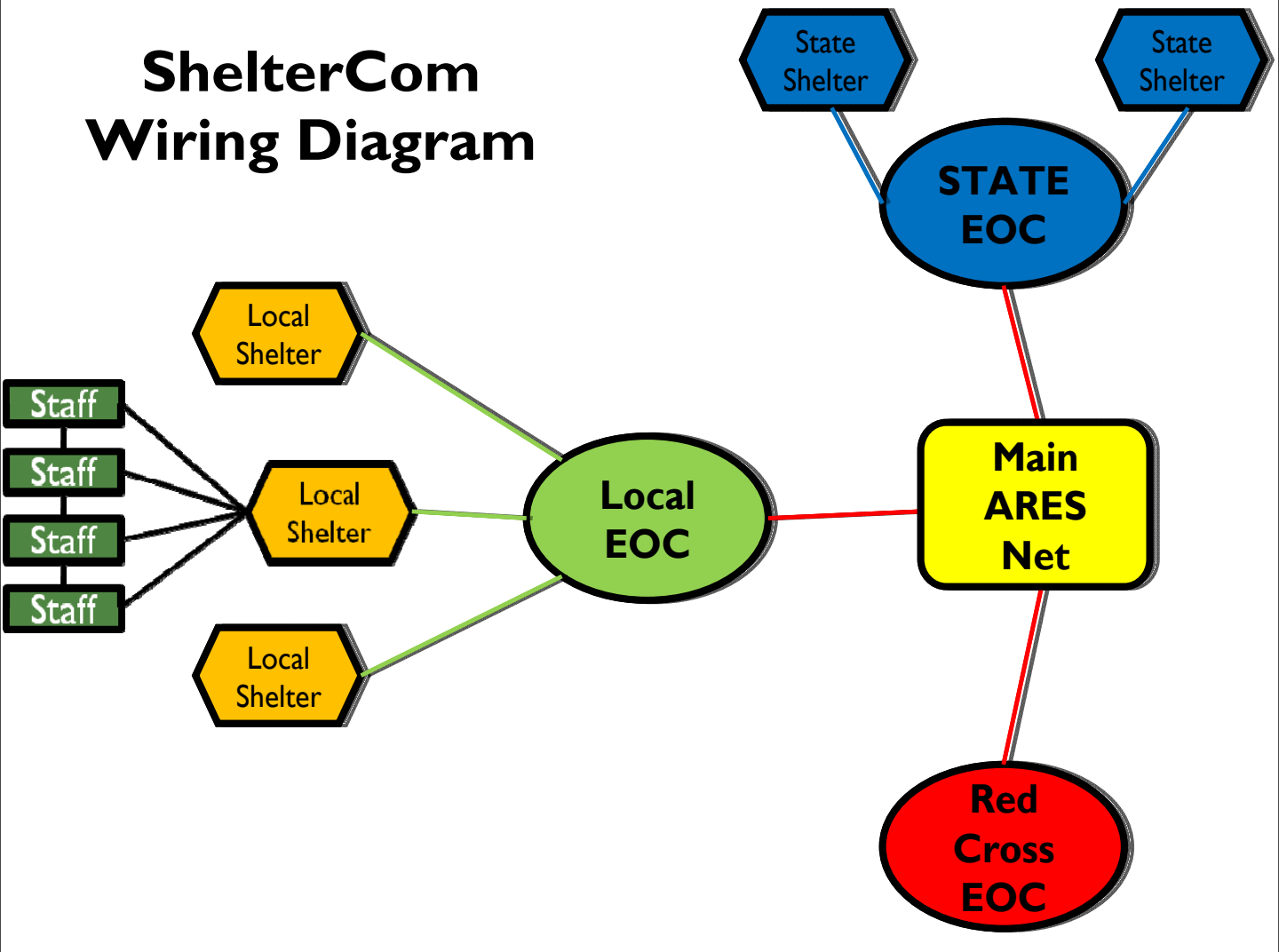


There will be training for radio operators available this summer, and we will exercise the plan as part of the Statewide Shelter Exercise on September 13<sup>th</sup>.

For more information about the Statewide Shelter Communications Plan, please contact Rick Andreano,

RIEMA planner, at 401-462-7115 or [rick.andreano@us.army.mil](mailto:rick.andreano@us.army.mil)

## ShelterCom Wiring Diagram



## RIEMA Staff Changes

### Burnett Joins

Michelle Burnett comes to RIEMA with over eight years of experience dealing with environmental issues. She began her career at the Rhode



Island Department of Health administering the Bathing Beaches Program. In 2001 she moved over to the Rhode

Island Department of Environmental Management where she worked in the Office of Water Resources focusing her efforts on water quality standards and regulations. Most recently she worked for the Division of Fish and Wildlife, Office of Marine Fisheries where she was a Principal Marine Biologist. She oversaw a variety of projects including two Sportfish Restoration Projects, fish kill response, and habitat issues focusing primarily in RI's southwestern coastal ponds. Originally from New York Michelle relocated to RI to attend URI. Michelle received her Bachelors in Marine Biology and Masters Degree in Marine Affairs from the University of Rhode Island.

### Paul Lupoli and David Leonard Leave RIEMA

Paul Lupoli retired in May after 35 years of state service, 19 of which were at RIEMA.

David Leonard left RIEMA in June to return to his love of police work by accepting a position as a sworn supervisor at Bridgewater State College.

RIEMA wishes them the best in their future endeavors.

## A Thank You...

By Paul D'Abbraccio  
Counter Terrorism Planner

On May 10<sup>th</sup> my apartment building became engulfed in flames. Within minutes the North Providence Fire Department was on the scene to limit what could have been a far worse scenario. Later a Deputy State Fire Marshal arrived to investigate followed by the Red Cross to assist displaced residents.

We have all worked together over the years to assist Rhode Island residents during emergencies but we never expect ourselves to be the victim of such an incident. I want to take this opportunity to thank all those who helped me including members of RIEMA, the Rhode Island National Guard, LIUNA Local 808, and law enforcement agencies around the State.

### NATIONAL THREAT ADVISORY

#### ELEVATED



Significant Risk of Terrorist Attacks

### NATIONAL AIR TRAVEL ADVISORY

#### HIGH



High Threat of Terrorist Attacks



## Upcoming RIEMA Courses & Training

**June 13**

ICS 100 for RI Architects

**June 17-18**

RI Critical Incident Stress Team Training

*By Invitation Only*

**June 24-25**

ICS 300 for Kent County Hospital

**July 11**

Incident Response to Terrorist Bombing/Prevention and Response to Suicide Bombing

**July 16-17**

ICS 300

\*\*Signifies that the class is full

## Questions?

If you have any questions regarding this newsletter or any articles that have appeared in it please contact:

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Major General Robert T. Bray

*Executive Director*  
J. David Smith

# HURRICANE SEASON

GET SERIOUS. BE PREPARED



## All Rhode Islanders should have:

- An Emergency Kit**
- A Family Communications Plan**
- A Family Action Plan**
- A Shelter Kit**
- A Car Emergency Kit**
- A Plan for People with Special Needs**
- A Pet Plan**

### Kits should include:

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Local maps

### Family Plans should include:

- Trigger points for when to evacu-

ate and where to go.

- It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members.
- Be sure every member of your family knows the phone number and has coins or a prepaid phone card to call the emergency contact.
- You may have trouble getting through, or the telephone system may be down altogether, but be patient.

### Pet Plans should include:

- Food. Keep at least three days of food in an airtight, waterproof container.
- Water. Store at least three days of water specifically for your pets
- Medicines and medical records. Keep an extra supply of medicines your pet takes on a regular basis in a waterproof container.
- First aid kit. Talk to your veterinarian about what is most appro-

priate for your pet's emergency medical needs.

- Collar with 10 tag, harness or leash.
- Copies of your pet's registration information, adoption papers, vaccination documents and medical records in a water proof container.
- Crate or other pet carrier. The carrier should be large enough for your pet to stand, turn around and lie down.
- Sanitation. Include pet litter and litter box if appropriate, newspapers, paper towels, plastic trash bags and household chlorine bleach to provide for your pet's sanitation needs.
- A picture of you and your pet together.
- Familiar items. Put favorite toys, treats or bedding in your kit. Familiar items can help reduce stress for your pet.

**For more information on these and other personal preparedness plans visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)**