

On Call



A quarterly newsletter by the York County Office of Emergency Management

Office of Emergency Management

2011 Year in Review

- > 4: number of tornadoes reported in York County
- > 14: number of municipalities that participated in the TMI exercise
- > 35: number of calls the HazMat team responded to
- > 40: hours EOC activated for during Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee
- > 60.2: inches of rain received this year
- > 313: incidents requiring notification of the OEM Duty Officer

Tropical Storm Lee Leaves its Mark on York County

September 7, 2011 started out as a quiet, dreary morning in York County. And then it started to rain. And then it poured, and poured some more. Then came the flood.

By early afternoon, the 911 center was inundated with calls and local responders were quickly arriving on scene to help stranded drivers and close flooded roads. As over 10 inches of rain fell that day, the Office of Emergency Management activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to help with the coordination of resources and to respond to the events. One of the hardest hit areas was Hellam Township. At one point during the storm, it was easier to list the roads that were passable than those that were closed, according to emergency coordinator, Andrew Stern. The



Damage Assessment teams comprised of officials from FEMA, PEMA, and the County evaluate damage to a culvert in Hopewell Township.

Representatives from other agencies like the USDA and Department of Public Welfare were on hand to address any additional needs. Before its closure in mid-December assistance had been provided to over 770 people at the DRC. Af-

Red Cross even opened two shelters – Eastern High School and Manchester Township Municipal Building, for those forced out of their homes by the flooding. The next day the County began collecting damage reports which would eventually earn the County a Presidential Disaster Declaration. The declaration was the key to getting financial assistance for residents and municipalities to make repairs.

By October 4, FEMA and PEMA opened a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) at the Pleasant Acres Annex to help residents impacted by the storm. The DRC served as one stop shop for citizens to meet with various federal, state and county agencies. FEMA and the Small Business Association officials were available to help with applications for financial aid.

affected residents also had the option to register for assistance online. In total, nearly 4,000 York County residents applied for aid, receiving over \$5.7 million. As part of the recovery operations, OEM also partnered closely with the York County Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD). The group staffed a phone bank and coordinated services for 73 residents who either weren't eligible for other assistance or exhausted the assistance they received. 107 volunteers worked approximately 2,508 total hours helping residents clean up storm damage and make repairs. Response and recovery efforts would not have been so successful without the support of our local EMAs, other county agencies and volunteer organizations. Thanks go out to all those involved in recovery efforts.

Collapsed road near Glen Rock.



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Exelon makes donation to York County Office of Emergency Management

Thanks to the sale of its Three Mile Island Joint Information Center in Susquehanna Township, Exelon Nuclear will donate \$436,000 to area emergency management agencies to support local emergency preparedness in the TMI area.

York County Office of Emergency Management will receive \$54,000, which the organization may use to buy equipment, training and updating emergency plans, said Ralph DeSantis, a TMI spokesman.

The money will help fund the County's CERT program and the purchase of a new HAZmat vehicle.

The rest of the donation will be spread out among emergency management agencies in Londonderry Township, Dauphin, Cumberland, Lancaster and Lebanon counties.

OEM Director Mike Fetrow says some of the money will help fund the County's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. The remainder will go toward the purchase of a new Hazardous Materials Response Team vehicle. The vehicle being replaced is a 1982 International nearing the end of its life cycle.



Exelon TMI Communications Manager, Ralph DeSantis, presents a check to the York County Commissioners and representatives from the County Department of Emergency Services.

County Coordinator Completes Certification

Flooding, a plane crash, a missing person and a hazmat spill all occurring at the same time, might sound like a lot to handle, but not for York County's Emergency Management Director, Mike Fetrow, recently certified by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA).

Successfully passing the exercise, which was held on October 27, was the final step in earning certification to serve as the County Emergency Coordi-

nator from PEMA. Pennsylvania law requires that the emergency management coordinator earn at least two levels of certification.

Other steps in becoming certified involve attending training sessions offered by PEMA and FEMA and being appointed as the County's Emergency Management Coordinator by the Governor.

Volunteer EOC staff from several organizations participated in the exercise,

including the American Red Cross, amateur radio, and the Penn State Ag Extension.

The York County Commissioners also were present for the exercise. Their presence and participation was recorded as proof of support by Elected Officials by the exercise team from PEMA and was commended. The Office of Emergency Management appreciates the time and support from everyone who participated in the exercise.

South Central Alert Goes Live

It's been a few years in the making, but York County now has a way to get messages directly to residents. The program known as South Central Alert, allows residents to register their cell phone numbers and email addresses to receive notifications of emergencies affecting areas they live or work in. It can be used by emergency personnel to target a message to just a few addresses or an entire county. Anyone with an entry in the yellow or white pages of the phone book is already entered into the system. Residents who don't have a landline are encouraged to enter their mobile

device numbers. There is even an option to receive alerts affecting other addresses such as a child's school or spouse's workplace.

The system was purchased by the South Central Task Force, a group of emergency officials from Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry and York Counties who collaborate to address preparedness needs on a regional level.

To register for South Central Alert, visit www.ycdes.org and click on this logo.



The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area. Training is provided in basic disaster response skills, like fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event if professional responders are not immediately available. CERT members also are encouraged to support emergency response agencies by taking a more active role in emergency preparedness projects in their community.

If you're interested in joining a CERT, contact Bill James, York County OEM Municipal Planner/Trainer at 717-840-2914 or wrjames@ycdes.org.



Prepare for Winter Weather

We've all been stuck for hours on the highway because of an accident or without power longer than we were comfortable with. In winter, these situations, are even more unnerving because of the cold and wind. Despite forecasts for a mild winter, (excluding the days just before Halloween), inclement weather will eventually make its way to Central PA at some point this season. Whether it be snow, ice or freezing rain, it only takes a little precipitation to quickly create a dangerous situation.

We encourage everyone to spend a few minutes to make sure you and your car are properly prepared for the winter weather season. A wise Pennsylvanian once said, "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." That wise fellow was Benjamin Franklin, and it goes without saying he'd been through his share of harsh PA winters.

So take a few minutes, review the tips below, and gather some items into a backpack or duffle bag to keep in your trunk or closet and forget about it. While we hope you never

have to use it, things do happen. And when your sitting in the cold, you'll be glad you spared a few moments to prepare ahead of time.

Winter Emergency Kit

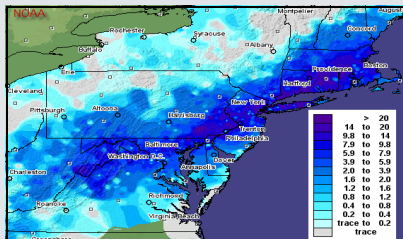
- Sand
- Rock salt
- Shovel
- Extra clothing and blankets
- First aid kit with pocketknife
- Jumper cables
- Ice scraper
- Water
- Special items like baby food or medications
- Flashlight
- Extra/alternate heating fuel

Stock up on supplies like food and toiletries at home to be prepared to be isolated for up to 3 days in case of snow and power outages.

Winter Driving Tips

- Slow down
- Increase following distance
- Avoid travel in bad conditions
- Turn on headlights if using wipers
- Use low beams in heavy snow
- Beware of black ice
- Remove snow and ice from hood and roof
- Ensure car is in good working order
- Watch for changes in speed limit on interstates during bad weather

Nature Makes Herself Known throughout 2011



Thunder-snow was experienced by some County residents during the January-25-27 snowstorm.

Tornado damage in Windsor Township when two tornadoes (EF1 and EF0) touched down: 6-12-11



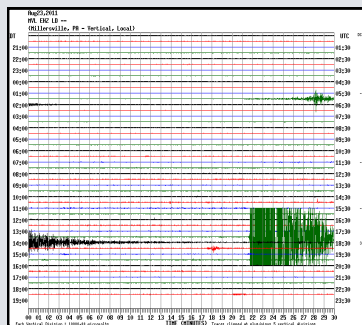
On July 23, severe weather visited the County again with more wind damage near Spring Grove.



An EF0 Tornado touched down in W Manchester Township: 4-16-11



High tension lines toppled during an EF2 tornado at Ski Roundtop: 4-28-11



August 23rd a 5.7 magnitude earthquake, centered in Virginia, was felt throughout York.



Flooding from tropical storm Lee in Hellam Township at the intersection of Rt. 462 and Frys ville Rd.: 9-7-11



Record early snowfall, on October 29th, brought up to 10 inches across York County, and resulted in over 60,000 people without power.



Amateur Radio has provided 'voice' emergency communications for many years in York County. YARS has been active in both the TMI and Peach Bottom Nuclear Power Plant drills for over twenty-five years.

With recent advances in computer sound card technology, YARS now has computer software that allows us to send and receive digital messages over the air. This software can

be used to send, receive and print various NIMS forms such as the ISC-213, HISC-213 and several Red Cross forms, that would be used during an emergency.

This new technology gives YARS the ability to send/receive message traffic at a much quicker rate than voice communications. It also gives us the capability of sending and receiving small Excel-type files. YARS first demonstrated this technology in the 2010 Peach Bottom Drill and again during the 2011 TMI Drill. We had 100 percent copy of all traffic sent and received. FEMA and PEMA observers have been quite impressed with our use of this technol-

ogy by our radio operators. YARS plans to use Digital Communications as our primary method during the 2012 Peach Bottom NPP drill. York County OEM and the three local EMA's will be provided with the hardware York County OEM and the three local

EMA's will be provided with the hardware and software required to use this type of communications. Efforts are underway to expand use of the technology to the South Central Task Force region and across Pennsylvania.

About YARS

Amateur Radio (HAM) Emergency Communications (EmComm) is organized in York County under an umbrella organization entitled "York ARES RACES SKY-WARN" (YARS). The acronyms in the name represent the various organizations that provide the rules and regulations that govern Ham Radio involvement in emergency communications. All YARS members are required by the York County Office of Emergency Management to have a state background check, be issued a Duly Enrolled Volunteer Number and have a OEM Amateur Radio Identification Badge.

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