

120 Davies Dr.
York, PA 17402

Special points of interest:

- > Meet Julio Mendez: New Director of 9-1-1
- > Telecommunicators Week
- > Continuity of Government
- > Special Delivery

The Brief

York County Department of Emergency Services

BURIED In Snow... And Paperwork

York County experienced Mother Nature’s fury in February. Near record snow falls and blizzard conditions brought life to a standstill. Between February 5th—10th, parts of York County received about 4 feet of snow. For long time residents, the storms revived memories of 1993 and 1996. Schools and businesses closed and residents hunkered down in their homes heeding the warnings from officials to stay off the roads. All things considered, York County fared well. Some of the concerns for Emergency Managers at the county and municipal levels included; mass evacuations, stranded motorists, and power outages. Thanks to the hard work of snow removal crews and the utilities, these incidents never came to fruition. The major damage caused by the back-to-back storms

was to municipal budgets. While municipalities, schools, and other organizations do set aside money for snow removal each year, it is next to impossible to anticipate a weather event like the one experienced in February, especially in difficult economic times. As a result, York County Office of Emergency Management has been working hard to acquire federal assistance. YCOEM collected snow removal dollar estimates from municipal governments and organizations and has acted as the primary liaison between the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency and municipalities. According to state requirements, snow removal expenses must exceed \$3.23 per capita for a continuous 48 hour period to meet the lower threshold to apply for federal assistance through the



Above: A Stack of Snow Removal Documentation piled up in YCOEM. Another stack, equal in size, has been submitted to PEMA in an attempt to secure federal reimbursement.

Federal Emergency Management Agency. Following the guidelines, that means York County, as a whole, must have spent approximately \$1.2 million dollars in a 48 hour period. YCOEM collected information that shows York County reached \$1.7 million in validated snow removal expenses. On March 12th, Governor Rendell asked President Obama to declare a “Severe Winter Storm Major Disaster” in Pennsylvania in an effort to free up funds for snow removal reimbursement. The state only needed to reach a \$15 million dollar mark, to date, 27 counties have provided validated documentation to the state that shows \$36 million dollars were spent on snow removal. **Entities that did not report may still apply if a Federal Declaration is made.** There is no word when the federal government will make its decision.

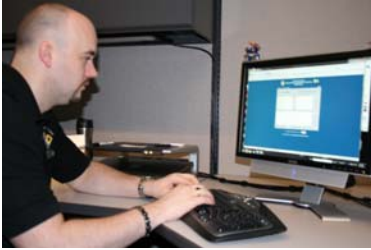


Above: YCOEM Duty Vehicle buried in snow halfway through the first snowstorm on February 5-6. There was much more to come.

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Web Paging A Big Hit With First Responders



Above: YCDES IT Department Technician Dan Says; “ This was proposed some time ago but the concept was not compatible with the old voice paging system. The new alpha numeric paging system allowed us the opportunity to acquire the necessary software and interface it with the paging system.”

Web Paging allows agency coordinators to send their own pages from anywhere there is an internet connection, including cell phones with internet capability in the field. Originally the system was developed to empower end users to communicate administrative messages to their staffs (ex. meeting announcements). Since activated around the holidays in 2009, end users have increased their use of the system to communicate directly with emergency personnel during incidents. For example, fire

chiefs will now request additional Fire Police for traffic control and request a member of the crew to call the chief or another member of the agency to convey specific instructions. The end result of Web Paging is that now Incident Commanders have a great tool to reach their crews anytime or anyplace they wish. Currently there are 65 agencies using Web Paging and they generate approximately 200 pages per week! Agencies interested in signing up for Web Paging should go to www.ycdes.org and click



Above: A screen shot of the YCDES Web Paging internet site.

on the Web Paging button. There, you'll find instructions on how to sign up, along with a form that needs to be filled out and submitted to YCDES.

Geographic Information Systems Project Underway



Above: Patti Jones of York County GIS standing by a fire hydrant using a Trimble hand-held GPS locator. This is something that the GIS department will have to do more than 6,000 times to map every hydrant across York County. In the end, GIS will be able to produce a map with every hydrant on it.

It's called Geographic Information Systems or GIS for short. The work of the people in York County GIS is often under the radar, but they are an extremely important part of the YCDES team. In addition to updating data into the Computer aided Dispatch system used by 9-1-1 staff, GIS takes on important projects that impact life-safety issues across the county. Right now, the York County GIS Department is mapping every single fire hydrant in the county. GIS staff is working closely with local fire departments and the water companies along the way. They are collecting additional data

as well such as; manufacturer, color, fitting size, and date of installation. As opposed to having hydrants located by the "block" of a street or cross streets, the hydrants will be identified by an extremely accurate data point that'll ultimately end up on a map. In the end, first responders will be able

to download free software and the data will be provided by York County GIS for free. Kim Holtzapple is the Supervisor for York County GIS, she says "Our goal as a department is to continually look for ways to provide needed services to the community. We are applying technology to improve customer service and develop programs for the safety of all."



GIS department left to right: Patti Jones, Kim Holtzapple (Supervisor), and TJ Bradley.

York County 9-1-1 Introduces New Director: Julio Mendez



Above: Julio Mendez, New Director of York County 9-1-1.

In February, York County Commissioners named Julio Mendez the new Director of York County 9-1-1. Mendez spent 29 years in law enforcement before coming to YCDES. He spent most of that time with the Pennsylvania State Police working as a Criminal Investigator, Criminal Assessment Officer, Supervisor, and Patrol Trooper. Mendez also spent 5 years working in the York County District Attorney's Of-

fice under Stan Rebert. While working in the District Attorney's Office, Mendez was a founding member of the York County Missing Child Task Force Child Abduction Response Effort (C.A.R.E.). In taking on his responsibilities at YCDES, Mendez says: "I am truly impressed with the commitment and professionalism of the staff at York County 9-1-1 and YCDES as a whole. There is a solid foundation here and I hope to

build on the strengths of the people and the organization that are already in place." As the Director of 9-1-1, Mendez oversees the 9-1-1 center, radio technicians, IT staff, GIS, Training, Quality Assurance, Records, CAD, and the Mobile Data Communications Dept. (MDC).



Above: YCDES at 120 Davies Dr.

PBAPS Exercise

It's that time of year again. On June 22, 2010 the Federal Emergency Management Agency will conduct the Biennial Graded Exercise for Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station. During the exercise, County Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs), Municipal EOCs, and School Districts within the 10 mile plume Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ) will be evaluated on their ability to protect the public using their Radiological

Emergency Response Plans (RERP). On June 23, 2010 the Emergency Worker Decontamination Stations, Reception Centers, Mass Care Monitoring/Decontamination Centers, and Mass Care Stations will be evaluated. In preparation for this exercise the York County Office of Emergency Management's Nuclear Planner /Trainer has reviewed the RERPs. He will be busy scheduling and conducting training sessions and tabletop exercises as

well as updating all the RERPs for the Municipal EOCs and the Monitoring/Decontamination Centers. During this training, all Municipal RERPs and Implementing Procedures are updated and new copies of the RERPs and IPs are provided to the Municipal EOCs. Anyone with a question ahead of the PBAPS exercise is encouraged to call YCOEM at 840-2990 or send an e-mail to oem@ycdes.org.



2010 Weather Exercise



Above: Amateur radio operator Steve Steffen of York Ares Races Skywarn worked out of the York County Emergency Operations Center testing the capabilities of the amateur radio network.

March 18, 2010, it started with a forecast calling for severe thunderstorms across York County. As the storm moved in it spawned tornadoes. YCOEM, municipalities, schools, hospitals, and PEMA all activated their response plans and made notifications. Thankfully this time it was all part of Weather Emergency Preparedness Week.

Each day during the week of 3/15/2010, there was a different emergency to prepare for: 3/15- Thunderstorms, 3/16- Tornadoes, 3/17 & 3/18 - Flooding, and 3/19- Skywarn Training. Each year NWS and PEMA coordinate the exercise. It's a great opportunity for all to review their plans ahead of spring storms.



Above: The Susquehanna River near Wrightsville on the rise. There were flood concerns at the time of the PEMA/NWS Weather Emergency Preparedness Exercise in March. York County sidestepped the worst of it although some neighboring counties did experience flooding.

SKYWARN® Training (Advanced)



The effects of severe weather can be felt every year in York County. To receive critical storm related information, the National Weather Service established SKYWARN®. NWS trains volunteer SKYWARN® spotters to keep an eye on the sky when severe weather rolls in. The information provided by SKYWARN® spotters, coupled with weather forecasting technology, enables NWS to issue more timely and accurate warnings for tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and flash floods. SKY-

WARN® spotters are part of the ranks of citizens who form the Nation's first line of defense against severe weather. NWS encourages anyone with an interest in public service to join the SKYWARN® program. Volunteers include police and fire personnel, dispatchers, EMS workers, public utility workers and other concerned private citizens. Individuals affiliated with hospitals, schools, churches, nursing homes or who have a responsibility for protecting others are also encouraged to become a spotter. Spotters learn: thunderstorm development, fundamentals

of storm structure, identifying potential severe weather features, information to report, how to report information, severe weather safety. York County Office of Emergency Management is sponsoring SKYWARN® training on Saturday May 1, 2010 from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. **This will be the advanced course but the review of the basics allows anyone to take the course!** For more information contact Tom Graybill at YCOEM by calling (717) 840-2990 or e-mail Tom at TAGraybill@ycdes.org.

National Telecommunicators Week 2010

Each year, the second full week of April is dedicated to the unsung heroes in emergency response; telecommunicators who work in 9-1-1 centers. York County 9-1-1 has more than 80 dedicated men and women who proudly

answer the call when residents are in dire need of help. Three performance based awards will be granted this year at York County 9-1-1: Telecommunicator of the Year, Supervisor of the Year, and Support Staff Member of the Year. There

will also be fun “dress down” days such as “Rock Band Day” and “Hawaiian Day” along with special lunches and dinners provided for the dispatchers. Please join us in keeping in mind the inspiring work these folks perform on a daily basis.



Above: Kim Hartman dispatching a call in York County 9-1-1.

Continuity of Government (COG)

Continuity is a set of procedures designed to recover and restore the critical functions of an organization or department in the event of an incident. Continuity is emergency preparedness for business operations. In today’s world, incidents can come in a variety of forms and can be natural (flood, hurricane), manmade (arson, terrorist) or technological (hacker, computer crash). Continuity is put into place after an incident has caused an extended disruption of normal business operations. The goal of continuity within the York County Government is to continue critical services to the public. York County first began a county-wide continuity planning effort in 2006. The project is led by the Information Services Department, but has included the commitment and resources of every department. In total the phased project took three years to finish. There are now plans in place – and tested - for every county department. To maintain and direct the County’s continuity efforts, a county-wide steering committee was created. The steering committee meets quarterly and consists of a representative from each area of the County. Annual unannounced tests are conducted for each County building to keep plans up-to-date and effective. During these functional continuity tests, York County staff participate in mock scenarios and are asked to perform the same responsibilities as they would during a real incident. Most importantly, these tests serve as educational tools which help staff learn valuable methods of communication during an incident and give them practice to be confident and prepared in the event of a real emergency. York County citizens should feel proud that their County government will be able to continue functions required by law and other critical services to the public even when disaster strikes.



Above (left to right): Logan Rio, Mr. Chuck Noll, and Cernel Shimmel during a Continuity of Government Exercise.

(Article provided by Logan Rio of York County Information Services.)

Oh Baby!.. In His Own Words



Above: Earl Garner with his “game face on” working the floor in York County 9-1-1.

(Written by Earl Garner, Dispatcher in York County 9-1-1)

I have been a 911 dispatcher for a total of 14 years. This is the 1st time I’ve had the opportunity to assist in delivering a baby over the phone. It was what I would call a relatively quiet afternoon. The call came in.. I answered the phone and the female on the other end made it known the situation was real. As a veteran experienced dispatcher, you can tell when it is the real deal and that was obviously the case in this instance. It was immediately

apparent I had to calm the caller, she was quite worked up. The baby was coming by nature and I knew it was “go time”, I had to get prepared. Once Pro-QA (software that assists dispatchers with offering direction to the caller) opened I began instructing the caller on taking appropriate actions. At this point, my nervousness subsided and things fell into place. Within a minute or so, I heard a loud wail in the background and knew a new child had arrived into the

world. After providing the caller with some additional instructions. I then asked her if the baby was a boy or a girl. Being elated and proud she said “it’s a boy!” This was a tremendous experience that I will never forget. As dispatchers, we routinely deal with calls where people on the other end of the line are in despair. I hope everyone has the opportunity to experience this type of call. I now feel like I’m good for another 14 years of service!

Static Warning

On March 5, 2010, a gas station fire believed to be caused by static electricity claimed the life of a 19 year old man in Cumberland County. Back in November of 2009, a Maryland man died under similar circumstances following a gas station fire in Frederick, MD. While it doesn’t happen often, experts say static electricity is dangerous

while refueling your vehicle. Stories such as these have prompted the Petroleum Equipment Institute to look into the matter. According to PEI, Americans fill up at the pump up to 12 billion times per year. PEI also says since 1992, there have been 210 gas station fires attributed to static electricity. PEI says it received 45 more verbal reports of static fires

but did not received paperwork to back up the claims. PEI says since 1992, Nebraska topped the list with 14 incidents; Pennsylvania ranked 6th on the list with 8 static related gas station fires. If you’d like more information on static electricity gas station fires, visit www.pei.org today. The entire report is available online for your review.

Refueling Safety Tips

Turn off the vehicle’s engine

Do Not Smoke!

Be sure to touch a grounded metal object after getting out of your car, and before grabbing the fuel pump

DO NOT GET BACK INTO YOUR CAR DURING REFUELING! This could generate static electricity making for a dangerous situation.

Emergency Management Quarterly Training

TERRORISM

April will bring the second Municipal Emergency Management Coordinators’ training in 2010 at YCDES. This one will be one local EMCs won’t want to miss. There are three guest speakers lined up, all with something to say. **John Marsh** from the United States Department of Justice is one of the most popular speakers during the South Central Task Force Annual Homeland Security Conference; he always has a packed room. Marsh is an expert on international terrorism. He’ll provide an update on terrorism in the Middle East, National Intelligence, and Law Enforcement. **Kevin Alvarnaz** from the York/Adams Metropolitan Medical Response System

(YAMMRS) will also present. Alvarnaz is the vaccination coordinator and spearheaded the school-based vaccination effort in the fall through the winter. **Mike Brown**, a contractor for Harris, will also be on hand to discuss the state of affairs with the York County Department of Emergency Services Digital Radio Project. Brown will be available to answer radio questions and oversee the re-flashing taking place during Quarterly Training. Quarterly Training is on April 10th from 9 a.m.—noon and April 14th from 7 p.m.—10:pm. Please RSVP to YCOEM at (717) 840-2990 or e-mail oem@ycdes.org.



Above: YAMMRS Vaccination Coordinator Kevin Alvarnaz at the microphones along with Dr. Charles Chodroff. The photo was taken at YCDES during a news conference announcing the plan to vaccinate all school children in York and Adams Counties.



Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Department of Emergency Services to provide the highest quality of customer service to the residents and first responders of the County of York, Pennsylvania through preparedness, planning, mitigation and providing of resources by using the latest in communication technology for the safety of all.

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Visit us Online at
www.ycdes.org

WWW.READY-YORK.ORG

Visit READY-YORK.ORG today for tips on preparing for disasters of any kind!

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Future Issues

Here at YCDES, our goal is to make this newsletter as much about you as it is about us. We would like to give our audience the chance to reach out and share information with others in emergency services. For this newsletter to be a success, we need participation. We would like to invite our readers to share their "Best Practices" as they relate to emergency services. Readers are also encouraged to provide a commentary on a current and pressing issue if they wish. If you're interested in sharing your thoughts, please submit your writing by e-mail to bjmorrin@ycdes.org. The article should be limited to 200 words or less. YCDES would like to thank you for your consideration.

Celebrating 25 Years At YCDES

Near the end of the first quarter of 2010, staff at YCDES celebrated the 25th anniversary of Cindy Dietz. Dietz's career at York County Department of Emergency Services began back in 1985 when she came onboard as a 9-1-1 Dispatcher. Since then, Dietz has worked her way through the ranks of 9-1-1. She has worked as a Dispatch Supervisor and Police/Fire/EMS Coordinator. Dietz also held every position in 9-1-1 Administration. When asked about her career at York County 9-1-1, Dietz says; "I truly love

what I do and can't imagine doing anything else. My adult life has been dedicated to the emergency services field, both professionally and through volunteerism." Eric Bistline, the Executive Director of York County Department of Emergency Services says: "Cindy has been with this organization for more than 20 years and knows every aspect of the day-to-day operations here. Cindy is truly an asset to have walking the halls of YCDES." Please join us in congratulating Cindy Dietz on her 25 years of service.



Above: YCDES Executive Director Eric Bistline presents Cindy Dietz with a certificate to commemorate her 25 years working in York County 9-1-1.

Below: Cindy serves up the cake at her 25th anniversary party.

