

STATEMENT OF

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“THE STATE OF COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS”

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Introduction

Chairman Cuellar, Ranking Member Rogers and other distinguished members of the Subcommittee, I am Timothy Manning and I serve as Deputy Administrator for National Preparedness of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It is a privilege to appear before you today on behalf of FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). We appreciate your interest in and continued support for emergency management and, in particular, for the critical importance of personal and community preparedness.

Throughout the history of emergency management planning, considerations for individual and community preparedness have been inadequate. From the 1930s, when disaster response was ad hoc and largely focused on the repair of damaged infrastructure, through the present day, the importance of individual and community preparedness has often been given insufficient consideration. In fact, since September 11, 2001 and the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, the United States has invested tens of billions of dollars in bolstering *government's* preparedness, while paying comparatively little attention to personal and community preparedness.

Yet we know – and have seen – that personal, family and community preparedness can have a tremendous impact in mitigating the effects of an emergency. Just as all politics are local, as former Speaker of the House Tip O’Neill said, all disasters are local – they impact individuals, families, and communities. Simple steps taken by individuals to provide for the needs of their families and their neighbors in an emergency can dramatically improve the readiness and resiliency of the American people in the face of a disaster. Encouraging as many Americans as possible to take the steps necessary to ensure their own well being will ultimately free government resources to address those most in need during a crisis.

In order to advance this simple goal, we must engage and collaborate with civic leaders at the local level to promote local efforts to increase personal preparedness. As a former community organizer with a deep belief in the power of active citizenship, President Obama has made it clear that transparent and collaborative government, grassroots activism, and volunteer and community service are key priorities for his Administration. The leadership at FEMA and DHS is equally committed to increasing our collaboration with state and local governments, NGOs, and the private sector, and under President Obama and Secretary Napolitano’s leadership, we are reaching out to an unprecedented range of new DHS stakeholders to bolster our nation’s community preparedness and resilience.

While we will ensure that federal assets and resources are in a state of constant readiness and that FEMA is prepared to serve as an effective coordinator during a Presidentially declared emergency or disaster, FEMA will approach community preparedness from the bottom up and ensure that federal-level policies, guidance, tools and resources support and facilitate local implementation. Preparedness is achieved and maintained through a continuous cycle of planning, organizing, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating, and taking corrective action. This is true for an individual, a family, an organization, a community, and the nation. FEMA will engage the public and community leaders more fully in all stages of the preparedness cycle to strengthen our national readiness and resilience.

Finally, I would like to highlight both Secretary Napolitano's and Administrator Fugate's repeated emphasis on the importance of personal and community preparedness.

As Secretary Napolitano said before the Council of Foreign Relations in July, "For too long we've treated the public as a liability to be protected rather than an asset in our nation's collective security ... We need a culture of collective responsibility, a culture where every individual understands his or her role."

Our department's senior leadership is actively engaged in raising public awareness on this critical issue, and we will continue to drive this message to even more Americans in meetings, speeches and interviews across the country.

Community Engagement

Effective emergency management and emergency response requires that community leaders participate in developing community emergency response plans, conduct localized outreach and education to the public, promote training, participate in exercises, encourage volunteerism, and of course, should the worst happen, form an integral part of the response. The foundation of the current national strategy on community preparedness and resilience is to cultivate an effective organizational structure and process at the local level to foster this collaboration between government and civic leaders from all sectors, and then leverage this structure to reach everyone in the community. Citizen Corps has been one of the Department's key efforts toward this end.

Building on historic approaches to citizen preparedness, our strategy moving forward will be based on the following tenets: government must collaborate with civic leaders, local implementation is essential, and national support must include both consistent policy and guidance and tools and resources adaptable for local use.

To achieve these goals, FEMA works with state and local partners to establish effective partnerships at the local level. This is to foster a collaborative process between local government and civic leaders from all sectors and develop goals and strategies for resilience tailored to specific community vulnerabilities. FEMA will continue to work with these community leaders and support their efforts to increase individual and community preparedness and resilience.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program is an exceptionally well-tested and successful citizen training and volunteer program. CERT builds on the commonsense acknowledgment that community members are the first to respond to assist others who need help during emergencies. Having grown from 244 local programs in 2002 to 3,221 today, an estimated 600,000 individuals have taken the CERT basic training. The success of CERT is rooted in the program's clarity of training, hands-on practical delivery, and connection to local emergency services, most commonly emergency management and the fire service. Building on the successful basic training, there are several additional training materials in development including Animal Response, CERT Emergency Communications, Traffic and Crowd Management, and CERT Team Leadership.

Within the National Preparedness Directorate, I have directed my staff to develop a more comprehensive approach to local empowerment and to be mindful of the importance of more inclusive non-governmental participation. Whether we are working on Comprehensive Planning Guides for local use, providing technical assistance and funding for catastrophic planning, developing national level exercises, utilizing the National Incident Management System, or increasing private sector preparedness through the Private Sector Prep Program, we must recalibrate our focus to better include and engage all sectors of the community.

Under the direction of Administrator Fugate, work across the Agency also has been redirected to adapt emergency management practices to the special needs of particular populations in local communities. The Administrator has established an internal Children's Working Group to ensure that all aspects of FEMA's planning and operations address the needs of children. The Working Group will also work closely with the National Commission on Children and Disasters to collaborate with leaders in the field and re-calibrate plans and protocols to ensure adequate considerations for the needs of children. Similarly, Administrator Fugate has appointed a Disabilities Coordinator to examine policies and guidance surrounding appropriate considerations for these critical stakeholders and partners.

Lastly, the Grants Programs Directorate supports community preparedness through the Homeland Security Grant Program, and we are encouraging states and urban areas to use this funding to ensure not only that government responders are adequately equipped and trained, but also to focus on community preparedness and greater participation from non-governmental sectors.

Research-based Approach

Our renewed emphasis on civic responsibility and community engagement will be research-based, flexible and adaptive. In August 2009, FEMA released a major study (available at www.citizencorps.gov) on Personal Preparedness in America, a national study of over 3,000 households. Results from this study may have important implications for the development of more effective communication and outreach strategies to achieve greater levels of preparedness and participation.

In addition to this primary research, FEMA also reviews and analyzes other party research on personal, business, school, and community preparedness; this database currently includes over 100 surveys conducted since September 11, 2001. We also publish Citizen Preparedness Reviews to assimilate current preparedness research and modeling, including a Personal Behavior Change Model, which provides a theoretical basis for evaluating the motivations for and barriers to personal preparedness. Having been tested through the household survey and focus groups, this model is being revised and will assist in developing effective social marketing tools for personal preparedness. Working through the Target Capabilities process and with our colleagues in the DHS Science and Technology Directorate, we also facilitate the connection between researchers and practitioners through working groups and roundtable meetings to ensure research is applicable and useful at the local level.

Building National Awareness

Ready is FEMA's national public service campaign, in partnership with the Ad Council, designed to educate and empower Americans to prepare for and respond to all emergencies, including natural disasters and potential terrorist attacks. The goal of the campaign is to get the public involved and ultimately to increase the level of basic preparedness across the nation.

Ready and its Spanish language version, *Listo*, ask individuals to take simple steps such as getting an emergency supply kit, making a family emergency plan, obtaining information about the different types of emergencies that could occur and the appropriate responses to each one, and getting involved in community efforts that promote neighbor-to-neighbor preparedness.

The Ad Council has declared *Ready* one of the most successful campaigns in its more than 60-year history. Since its launch, the campaign has generated more than \$775.9 million in donated media support. As of Sept. 1, 2009, www.ready.gov has received 33 million unique visitors; the toll-free numbers have received more than 390,000 calls; and more than 39.6 million *Ready* materials have been requested or downloaded from the Web site.

Ready Business is an extension of the *Ready* Campaign that focuses on business preparedness, helping owners and managers of small- to medium-sized businesses prepare their employees, operations and assets in the event of an emergency. The campaign's messages are being delivered through www.ready.gov, brochures, radio, print and internet public service advertisements and key partnerships.

Ready Kids is a tool to help parents and teachers educate children ages 8-12 about emergencies and how they can help get their families prepared. The program includes: a family-friendly Web site (www.ready.gov/kids); in-school materials developed by Scholastic Inc.; *Ready Classroom*, an online educational curriculum program developed in partnership with Discovery Education; as well as a multimedia toolkit targeted to pre-school aged children and their families developed in partnership with Sesame Workshop.

DHS/FEMA has also developed tailored preparedness information for specific Americans. DHS/FEMA, American Kennel Club, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, American Veterinary Medical Association, and The Humane Society of the United States have jointly created materials (available at www.Ready.gov) that highlight the key steps pet owners should take to prepare themselves and their animals. DHS/FEMA, AARP, the American Red Cross, the National Organization on Disability and the National Fire Protection Association also have created emergency information for seniors and Americans with disabilities and special needs. Materials developed for these specific Americans include brochures and instructional videos available at www.ready.gov.

DHS/FEMA also highlights public emergency preparedness through National Preparedness Month (NPM), a nationwide effort held each September to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools. In 2009, the *Ready* Campaign is being joined by more than 2,400 NPM Coalition Members to educate individuals,

families and communities on the importance of emergency preparedness. This year, the *Ready* Campaign is helping Americans understand that preparedness goes beyond fire alarms, smoke detectors, dead-bolt locks and extra food in the pantry, seeking to change perceptions about emergency preparedness and help Americans understand what it truly means to be “*Ready*.”

National Conference on Community Preparedness

In August, FEMA hosted the four-day National Conference on Community Preparedness: The Power of Citizen Corps. Participants included 750 national partners, state and local emergency management, fire and law enforcement, public health and emergency medical services, academics, advocacy groups, voluntary organizations, and members of the public, bringing together a uniquely diverse group of community preparedness activists. Participants represented all 50 states, U.S. territories, and tribes. Leadership from DHS and FEMA addressed the conference to underscore the importance of local activism and implementation to achieve community resilience and to renew support for local Citizen Corps Councils and Programs.

With nearly 100 presentations and workshops, the conference provided participants innovative approaches to all facets of community preparedness and resilience, including information on collaborative planning, youth engagement, preparedness for individuals with functional needs, pets and animal issues, and preparedness in economic hard times. Presenters included the seminal Citizen Corps programs: CERT; Fire Corps; Neighborhood Watch Program (NWP) Program; Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Program and Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS); and the National Emergency Technology (NET) Guard pilot program. In addition, numerous Citizen Corps Affiliates participated: Meals on Wheels, E 9-1-1 Institute, Home Safety Council, American Association of Community Colleges; state and local practitioners and elected leaders; and experts from the fields of public health, disabilities, children’s issues, and rural development.

During the conference, FEMA released the research report, “Personal Preparedness in America: Findings from the 2009 Citizen Corps National Survey,” and the Citizen Corps Volunteer Liability Guide, providing an in-depth overview of legal issues and approaches to address liability for emergency volunteers. The National Council on Disability also released its latest 500 page report on emergency management and people with disabilities, “Effective Emergency Management: Making Improvements for Communities and People with Disabilities,” and provided an interactive session with representatives from the Department of Justice on emergency management under Title II of the Americans with Disability Act. Also announced were the availability of a toolkit on Preparing Communities for Disaster, developed for the President’s United We Serve initiative, and a revised online registration process for Citizen Corps Councils and CERT programs.

Conclusion

Secretary Napolitano, FEMA Administrator Fugate and I are committed to advancing our nation’s preparedness. Increasing individual and community preparedness and resiliency is a FEMA priority; it is also a national priority and I will make it a personal priority during my tenure. To support local communities in this challenge, FEMA has begun to strengthen internal

coordination to ensure that we provide tools and resources from across the Agency more effectively. Specific actions will include:

- Ensuring FEMA and DHS policies and guidance include appropriate language to support citizen and community preparedness and resiliency;
- Working with current national partners and expanding our partnerships to enhance the tools and resources available to local communities;
- Enhancing education, training, and exercises for the public and making them more accessible to everyone;
- Promoting volunteer service opportunities to support community safety and resilience;
- Developing tools and technical assistance for areas where none already exist or where existing tools need enhancement;
- Continue conducting research on individual, business, and community preparedness and analyzing the research of others;
- Identifying ways to assess and quantify our progress;
- Working with the FEMA regions to support our state, tribal, and local partners; and
- Supporting open communications with community leaders and with the public.

Communicating the importance of personal and community preparedness is a cornerstone of our strategy moving forward, and with the continued support of Congress, we believe that considerable progress is within reach.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, for allowing me to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.