

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF HOMELAND SECURITY
AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

2017 ACTIVITIES REPORT



EMERGENCY TEST



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LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD



The start of a new year often provides an opportunity to reflect on major events, the lessons learned, and the milestones of year's past. In 2017, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Homeland Security and Emergency Management division (DPS – HSEM) recognized the anniversaries of two catastrophic events. The first: the 20th anniversary of the Red River flood which killed 11 people and caused more than \$4.1 billion dollars in damages. The second: the 10 year anniversary of the Interstate 35W bridge collapse which killed 13 people and led to sweeping changes for bridge safety inspections nationwide. Both are incidents of different magnitudes, but each left their own indelible mark on Minnesota's history.

These anniversaries are constant reminders that disasters do happen in Minnesota. Believe it or not, Minnesota is one of the most disaster-prone states in the country. We don't have hurricanes, volcanoes, or earthquakes, but we regularly see severe

thunderstorms, tornadoes, flooding and ice storms as seen in some of our more recent state disasters. In 2017 alone, 11 severe storms left behind more than \$6.3 million in damages across the state.

The fact of the matter is, most jurisdictions don't have money set aside for disaster damages. It's just not in the budget. In the last 10 years, the president has issued 20 federal disaster declarations for Minnesota, authorizing tens of millions of dollars in assistance. Since the state disaster assistance program was established by the legislature in 2014, the governor has declared 24 state disasters, helping 52 counties and 5 tribal nations recover more than \$26 million in eligible damages. These facts and figures demonstrate how important federal and state disaster assistance is in assisting Minnesota's counties, tribal nations, cities and townships recover from these events with resiliency.

That is why it's important that we, as emergency management professionals, are ready to respond at a moment's notice. An important part of this includes introducing ourselves to one another. How many of you know your county emergency management director? Have you met the emergency managers of neighboring counties? How often do you talk with one another? Making these connections now (and forging these relationships ahead of our next disaster) will set us all up for success in the future.

A second component of preparedness is being in the know. Various training programs serve as opportunities for stakeholders and public safety partners to gain deeper insight into our daily work. In 2017, HSEM continued our outreach with elected officials as I traveled the state to inform them on their roles and responsibilities before, during and after an emergency. HSEM also explored new communications channels. Among them: a new service that could deliver life-saving information in four different languages during an emergency. In addition, annual training continues to be a priority with our Radiological Emergency Preparedness Program, the Minnesota School Safety Center and our Rail and Pipeline Safety Program.

HSEM strives to strengthen partnerships through continued achievements in training, public outreach, and the adoption of new tools that will allow us to effectively work together in an emergency. I am proud of the dedicated service we have provided over the past year. I look forward assisting our communities become more resilient before, during and after emergencies in 2018.

Joe Kelly, Director
Homeland Security and Emergency Management

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Kelly', written in a cursive style.

MITIGATION



2017 mitigation project at a property in Blue Earth County.

LANDSLIDES

Landslides are natural hazards that impact life and property in Minnesota. The recent history of landslides illustrates this point:

- Summer 2012: Significant infrastructure damage in Duluth.
- Spring 2013: Two elementary students killed during a field trip at Lilydale Regional Park in St. Paul.
- June 2014: West River Parkway in Minneapolis was closed while patients and structures at Fairview Hospital were endangered.

The sad truth is that more people, structures and infrastructure become vulnerable every year. Landslides become more rampant with flash floods and eroding stream banks. In 2017, HSEM mitigation staff worked with four communities to acquire at-risk properties and are prepared to do so in the future.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Assistance program provides 75 percent of the cost of acquiring at-risk properties and demolishing the structures. The property is deeded to the applying jurisdiction so that no future development may occur. This

protocol reduces structural vulnerability and increases public safety. Homeowners of at-risk properties also benefit because home insurance does not cover damages due to landslide.

TRAINING FOR ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS

In 2014, Director Kelly started the "elected and appointed officials" program. This program is specifically designed for senior officials of tribal, county, township, and city governments. The four modules range between two and two-and-a-half hours and are listed below:

- Senior officials' roles and responsibilities during emergencies.
- Understanding federal and state disaster assistance programs.
- Communicating with the public during emergencies.
- Review and tabletop exercise.

The county emergency management director works with HSEM to get the training scheduled. Since the inception of the program, Director Kelly has presented classes to local government leaders more than 64 times in 35 counties.

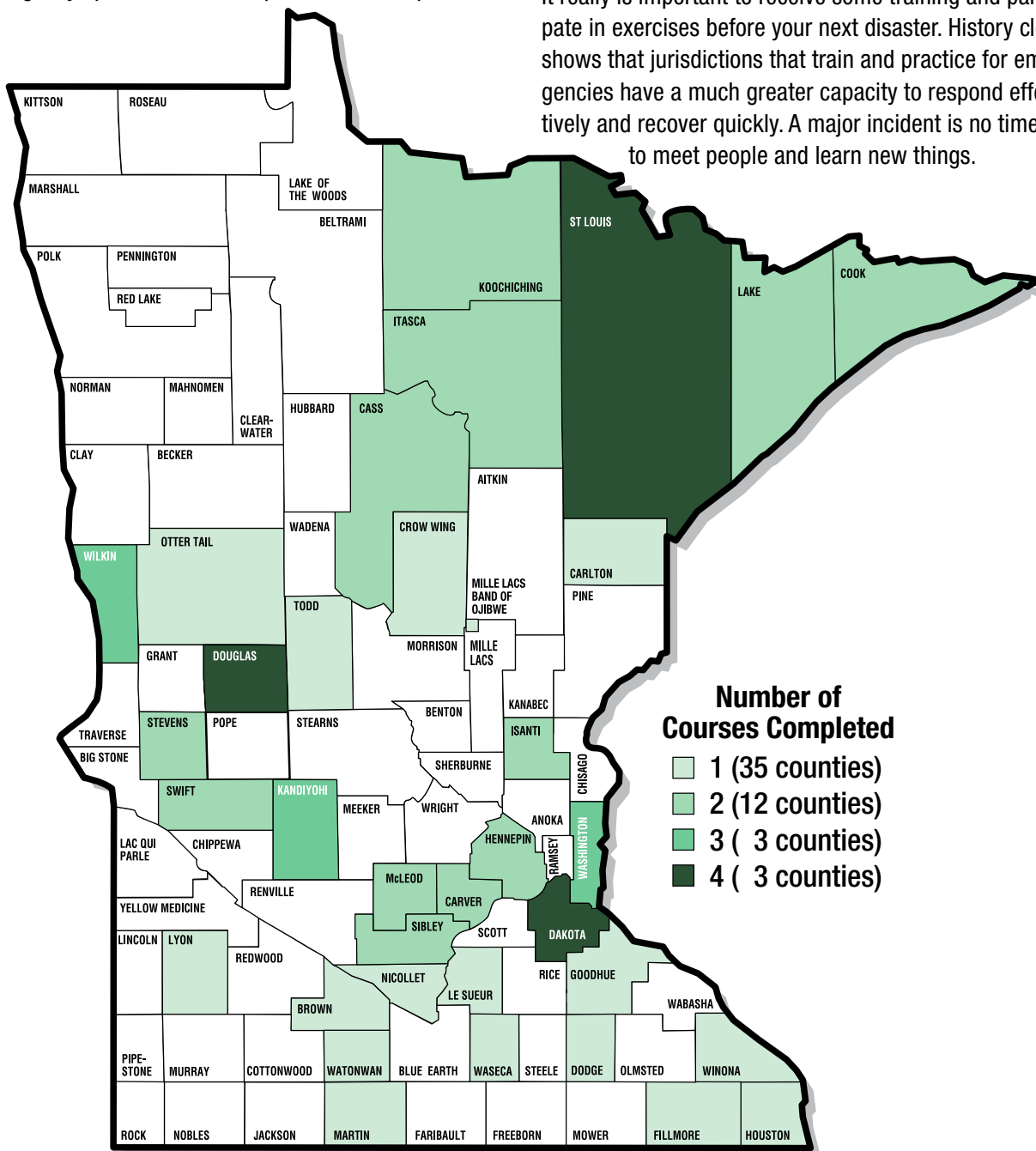
Additionally, more extensive training is offered to the entire county. The Integrated Emergency Management Course (IEMC) is modeled after a national program at FEMA's Emergency Management Institute. The purpose of the program is to bring together multidisciplinary teams of elected officials, administrators, department heads, first responders, etc., to focus on:

- Senior officials' roles and responsibilities during emergencies.
- Emergency operations center operations and reports.

- Incident action planning.
- Public information, warnings and social media use in an emergency.
- Tabletop exercise

The IEMC program is modular and can be tailored to a county's specific needs and objectives. HSEM can deliver it in a county or at the Emergency Management Training Center at Camp Ripley.

It really is important to receive some training and participate in exercises before your next disaster. History clearly shows that jurisdictions that train and practice for emergencies have a much greater capacity to respond effectively and recover quickly. A major incident is no time to meet people and learn new things.



MITIGATION



2017 Dakota County IEMC at Camp Ripley.

INTEGRATED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COURSE (IEMC)

Combined with targeted training modules, the IEMC delivers jurisdiction-specific training and exercise events for Minnesota's local communities. Jurisdictions engaged in the IEMC program include the counties of Dakota, Koochiching, McLeod, Otter Tail and Washington. Douglas County and City of Alexandria; along with St. Louis County and the City of Duluth are also participating in the IEMC program.

This program enhances the ability of local emergency managers to operate their emergency operations centers, builds whole community support, and strengthens their response and recovery capabilities.



One of HSEM's interns participates in a public outreach activity at the Minnesota State Fair.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

HSEM training staff continued their ongoing work with the Learning Management System (LMS) programming in 2017. The LMS has now been in place for over a year, and great strides are being made to adapt the system to the needs of our emergency management partners from both the public and private sectors. This is an ongoing learning process both for system administrators and LMS users. HSEM continues to learn ways to best utilize this tool to be responsive to the training needs of all our constituents and customers.

DIVERSIFYING EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

During the second half of 2017, HSEM welcomed two students from the Right Track Program in St. Paul and one graduate student from the University of Minnesota as interns.

Right Track has a goal of using local businesses in St. Paul to provide professional skills and employment opportunities for the youth that reside in St. Paul. The graduate student's internship focused on identifying training needs and a gap analysis for the Training and School Safety Center branch.

COMMUNICATIONS

Getting the right information to the right people at the right time so they can make the right decisions is the primary goal in an emergency. But on any other ordinary day, helping Minnesotans prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters is the priority for HSEM through dedicated public outreach and communications efforts.

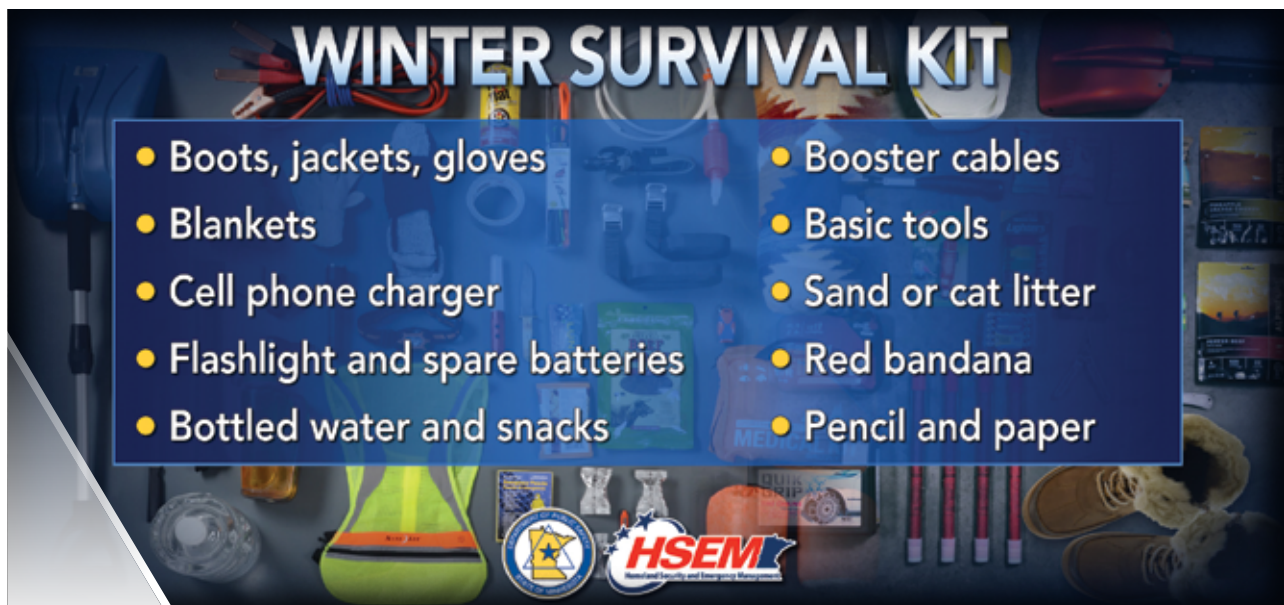
Here are some communications highlights for 2017:

- Severe Weather Awareness Week was big for HSEM in 2017. The campaign took a digital turn with live Facebook chats with local meteorologists who highlighted the daily themes. From thunderstorms, to flooding, to heat waves, HSEM desired to reach as many people as possible. Our highest rated Facebook live chat was with KSTP meteorologist Dave Dahl, which was viewed 2,800 times. On tornado drill day, so many people tried to visit HSEM's website that the increased traffic overloaded the DPS computer servers. These large engagement numbers show the high level of interest for information about weather preparedness in Minnesota.
- Time is hard to come by for many families. We're all busy, so the need for bite-sized information is growing at a rapid pace. That's why HSEM used a new visual tool to deliver winter weather safety messaging in 2017. They're called infographics and each image contains important bullet points, lists, tips and best practices for



Dave Dahl visits DPS to talk heat waves during Severe Weather Awareness Week.

people to follow during the winter months. These infographics will also prove to be useful during Super Bowl LII when many visitors will be unfamiliar with the threats that come along with Minnesota's winter weather.



Winter kit infographic used for public messaging.

MITIGATION



Families compete to assemble emergency supplies in 60 seconds or less.

- HSEM took a new approach to its preparedness campaign at the Minnesota State Fair in 2017. This involved a family-friendly activity called “Gone in 60 Seconds” where fair-goers had just one minute to find essential items from an emergency kit to place in their go bag. The goal was to show how difficult it would be to grab those items and quickly leave during an evacuation. The activity demonstrated how families should plan and prepare ahead, so they don’t have to pack an evacuation kit when an emergency strikes.
- Going Digital, Getting Social. Much of our lives is lived online, or on a virtual cloud. In 2017, HSEM worked to create public education materials that focus on using

technology tools before, during and after a disaster. A new page on the HSEM website called “Preparing in the Digital World” shows how Minnesotans can utilize their various devices (like smartphones, tablets, computers and more) to prepare for real-world emergencies.

HSEM also worked to build its online following and social media presence by promoting public safety messaging on the following topics: disaster assistance registration, state disaster declarations, Emergency Management Assistance Compact requests and regional hazardous materials response team training.

PREPAREDNESS



HSEM staff and volunteer students shoot scenes for the SSC training videos.

STATE PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS

Over the past year, HSEM ensured that all memoranda of understanding, memoranda of agreement and letters of agreement beyond five years were reviewed. These documents were either updated and resigned or, if no longer required, retired. HSEM assisted in the final review of the emergency operations plans of state agencies that have emergency responsibilities under Governor's Executive Order 15-13. HSEM also hosted state emergency response committee meetings quarterly, updated the Continuity of Operations Plan, and updated Minnesota's emergency operations plan.

SCHOOL SAFETY CENTER (SSC)

The safe school facility assessment coordinator updated and refreshed the HSEM Safe School Self-Assessment instrument to incorporate current best practices in facility risk management. This tool is used either independently by schools, or by SSC personnel, and local public safety partners will assist with the on-site facility assessment. The school resource officer coordinator (SRO) updated both

the three-day Basic SRO course and the SRO Advanced Strategies course to incorporate current best practices in school safety. These courses were delivered in several regions to better fulfill the needs of our law enforcement officials throughout Minnesota. Additional SRO Advanced Strategies courses are planned for 2018.

The SSC joined with the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) Fusion Center to develop and distribute a publication focused on current school safety issues and trends. This electronic publication is distributed to Minnesota SROs and law enforcement personnel via the Intelligence Communications Enterprise for Information Sharing and Exchange law enforcement portal. This opt-in publication has already been embraced by the law enforcement community as an interactive information-sharing site with contributions by local SROs.

The SSC developed and assisted in the production of two training videos to enhance school facility site assessments and response to violent intruder training. These videos help schools develop an understanding of current best practices in violent intruder response and as a facility site pre-assessment instructional primer. Both videos are available to K-12 schools served by the SSC throughout the state.

PREPAREDNESS



Hazardous Materials Response Teams put their skills to the test in a full-scale training exercise at Camp Ripley.

The SSC partnered with Minnesota higher educational institutions to provide emergency management courses to educators in their Principal and Superintendent Licensure programs. It is imperative that educators seeking licensure in school administrative positions have an understanding of multi-hazard emergency operations planning for their facilities and communities. This partnership has been embraced and has already produced significant school safety improvements throughout the state.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

HSEM awarded \$272,786 in hazardous materials grants to local responders to better prepare for and respond to incidents involving hazardous materials. Over 650 personnel of fire departments and hazmat teams attended trainings and conducted multi-jurisdictional exercises. This included airport rescue firefighting, confined space rescue, hazmat awareness and other preparedness courses across the state.

REGIONAL HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RESPONSE TEAM TRAINING EXERCISE

A variety of materials are transported on Minnesota's rail-ways. From grains and livestock, to crude oil and hazardous materials, first responders need to be ready to keep you safe in the event of railway emergency. That is why members of Minnesota's Regional Hazardous Materials Response Teams trained with local responders, state agencies and railroads in a unique scenario in September.

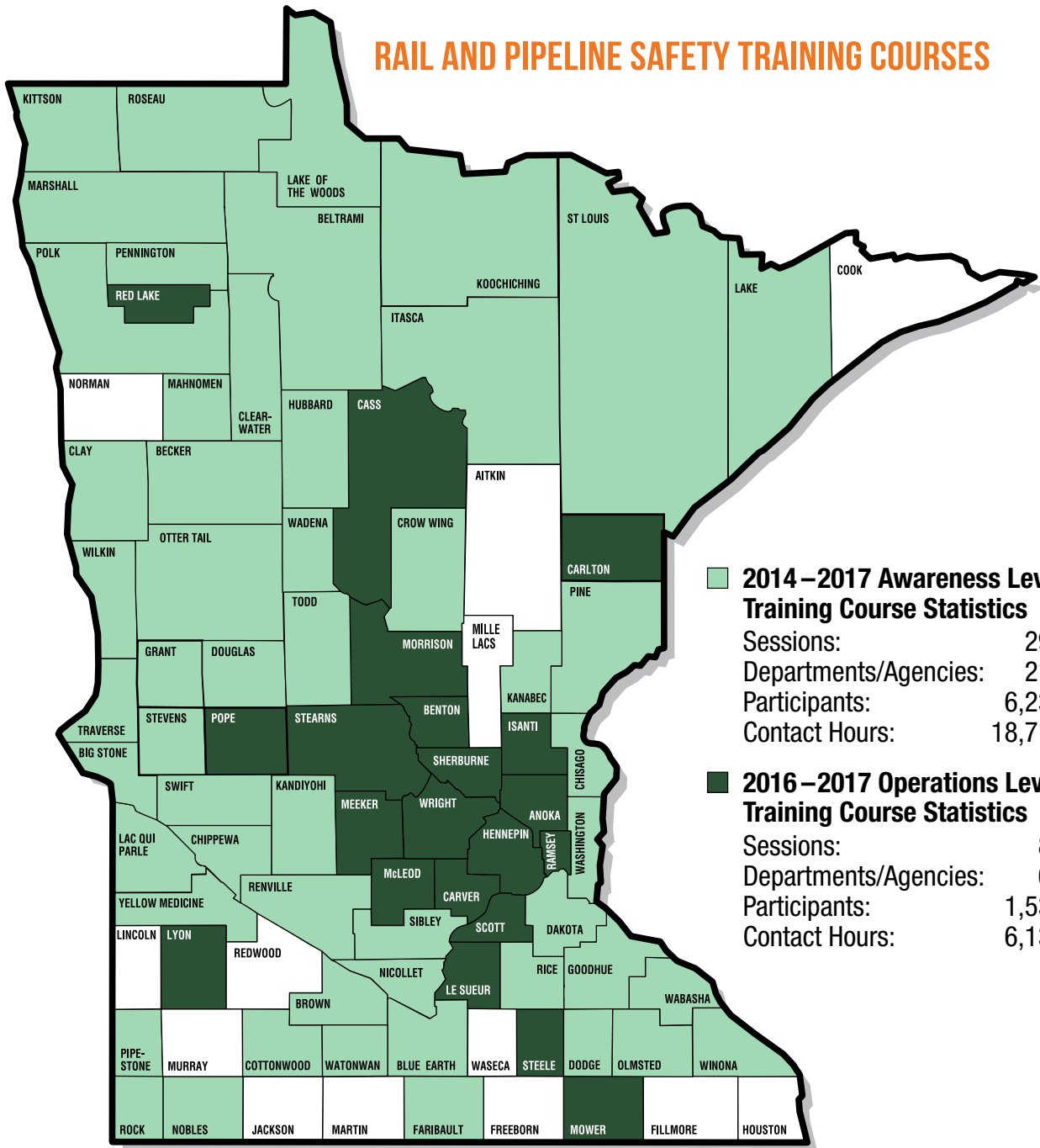
Participants worked to identify safety threats on rail cars carrying anhydrous ammonia and chlorine. Their goal was to contain the simulated spill or leak while preserving the safety of those who live and work around the scene. The training was facilitated by HSEM, which manages the state's 11 regional Hazardous Materials Response Teams. The scenarios played out at a Camp Ripley training facility, which will be enhanced with \$3.5 million in bonding money approved in the 2017 legislative session.

RAIL AND PIPELINE SAFETY

The Rail and Pipeline Safety funding account continues to be active. HSEM is responsible for working with railroad and pipeline companies in developing safety protocols and facilitating coordination between these companies and local public safety officials. Counties, tribes, cities and jurisdictions participated in the successful exercises. Multiple exercises were conducted during 2017 that included the University of Minnesota, Clay and Isanti counties, Camp Ripley, the cities of St Paul, Red Wing, Moorhead and attendees at the 2017 Association of Minnesota Emergency Managers (AMEM) conference.

There were 321 personnel trained at the awareness level and 358 personnel trained at the operations level statewide.

RAIL AND PIPELINE SAFETY TRAINING COURSES



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT: THE RING OF FIRE EXERCISE (BLOG)

When you think about the phrase “practice makes perfect,” it might bring to mind evenings of cajoling your kids to practice their musical instruments or learning that new software when you started your job. But to the folks in public health, emergency management and firefighting, that phrase means being prepared so that they’re not taken by surprise in worst-case scenarios.

That’s why the Arrowhead Region Emergency Management Association, HSEM and the Minnesota Incident Command System gathered key partners for a tabletop exercise called “Ring of Fire” in 2017. Attendees were given a scenario based on a 2011 catastrophic wildfire in Texas that burned 34,000 acres and destroyed 1,673 homes.

PREPAREDNESS

The scenario involved a fire ignited by a spark in track side brush from a passing train. By the time attendees learn of it, it's expected to arrive at a town of 750 people later in the day, and a troop of 15 Boy Scouts is unaccounted for. There hasn't been rain for days and there's none in sight.

So these emergency managers, public health staff, and county officials — among others — planned together how they would respond to this wildfire. They started by discussing questions such as:

- What actions will they take based on their current job duties and available resources?
- How will they control rumors?
- What if the local hospital is over capacity?

Of course, response is only the first half of handling a public safety emergency. The other half is recovery, the goal of which, according to FEMA, is to “restore, redevelop, and revitalize health, social, economic, natural, and environmental fabric of community.” That's a tall order — which is why exercise attendees practiced that too.

They made plans for what sorts of programs, initiatives or committees they will begin to set up to assist in the recovery process. They also discussed what financial and economic aid can be provided to citizens and businesses and how they would address any long-term housing shortages.

Wildfire is a top risk in Minnesota's Arrowhead Region. That's why these discussions are not only valuable from a planning and preparation standpoint, but they can be vital to regional planning, exercising and training efforts. By talking through their responses to the scenario, attendees identified gaps in personnel and resources and figured out what exactly they need to improve on and how they can do so.

Does this practice mean the response to the next wildfire will be perfect? Maybe not, but you can rest assured that those who respond have thought through most of the potential problems and can respond accordingly so that your community can get back on its feet.

CROSS-BORDER COMMITTEES

The Northeast HSEM region has worked with the Ontario, Canada Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management in organizing two cross-border committees representing Minnesota and Ontario. The people on these committees represent emergency management, law enforcement, border agencies, health and Red Cross.

Committees cover two border areas. The Rainy River Cross-Border Committee covers the International Falls and Fort Frances areas. The Pigeon River International Emergency Management Committee covers the Cook County and Thunder Bay areas.

The committees network to become more familiar with emergency management programs of each country and who to contact on border issues. The committees also promote mutual aid and discuss local international challenges. Both committees have hosted cross-border conferences. Pigeon River is planning a conference for March of 2018. The committees try to meet quarterly or as needed and alternate between locations in Minnesota and Ontario.

TRIBAL SUBGROUPS

The Northeast HSEM region has tribal land from five tribes (Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Fond du Lac Lake Superior of Chippewa, Grand Portage Lake Superior of Chippewa, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe) in the region. This year, the region organized a subgroup of tribes to focus on tribal emergency management and discuss their unique challenges. The subgroup plans to meet twice a year, or as needed. The subgroups will move meetings among tribes and plans to focus on mutual aid among tribes and promoting cultural awareness.



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PERFORMANCE GRANTS (EMPG)

HSEM awarded preparedness grants to 87 counties and four cities of the first class for a total of more than \$3.2 million in 2017. In addition, HSEM also awarded \$213,578 to tribal emergency management programs, the Minnesota State Patrol, Minnesota State Council on Disabilities, and grants that aid regional emergency management coordination and operations in all six regions. The vast majority of EMPG funding supports emergency management positions in counties and cities across the state.

Other initiatives that EMPG supported include:

- The purchase of a backup generator for a communication tower in northern rural Minnesota.
- Multi-jurisdictional exercises and state agency exercises.
- Interoperability communication with schools and emergency management.
- Public information projects through the use of radio broadcasting.
- Increasing emergency managers' knowledge base through trainings, exercises and speakers.

Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe's Emergency Management Director, Duane Oothoudt, applied for and received an EMPG in 2017. Part of the funds went to purchase and install a cellular interface/transmitter and antenna onto an existing weather tower in Boy River, Minnesota. The project was necessary so that weather information could be transmitted directly to the emergency operations center as well as the Division of Resource Management for interpretation and preparation in the event of severe weather.



Duane Oothoudt, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe's Emergency Management Director, and Carma Huseby, Division of Resource Management, check on the cellular transmitter now installed on an existing weather tower.

RECOVERY



Kittson County flooding closed roads in March 2017.

FEDERAL DISASTERS

There were no federally declared disasters in Minnesota in 2017. But during the first couple of months, HSEM worked with our partners at FEMA to help Minnesotans register for disaster assistance following the heavy rains and widespread flooding in September 2016. The storm resulted in an estimated \$8.3 million in damages to public infrastructure and caused damages to approximately 1,500 homes in seven counties.

In all, more than 660 applications for Individual Assistance were approved by FEMA, totaling more than \$2.5 million in approved funding. Minnesota also received more than \$6 million in public assistance funds.



Department of Public Safety Commissioner, Mona Dohman, visits the FEMA Joint Field Office with HSEM Director Joe Kelly.

STATE DISASTERS

COUNTIES	TYPE OF EVENT	DOLLAR AMOUNT
Freeborn	Severe storms and tornadoes	\$45,554
Kittson	Flooding	\$176,416
Big Stone	Severe storms and tornadoes	\$33,918
Stevens	Severe storms and tornadoes	\$ 31,874
Winona	Severe storms and tornadoes	\$143,715
Anoka	Severe storms	\$696,517
Becker	Severe storms and tornadoes	\$391,928
Clay	Severe storms and tornadoes	\$177,620
Norman	Severe storms and tornadoes	\$114,665
Clearwater	Severe storms, winds and hail	\$93,213
Redwood	Severe storms, tornadoes and flooding	\$485,920
Renville	Severe storms, tornadoes and flooding	\$419,566
Crow Wing	Severe thunderstorms and straight line winds	\$307,738
Cass	Severe thunderstorms and straight line winds	\$79,267
St. Louis	Winter Storm, heavy snow and gale force winds	\$2,834,840 (based on PDA figure)
Renville	Severe Storms, heavy rains and flooding	\$145,800 (based on PDA figure)
Redwood	Severe storms, heavy rains and flooding	\$42,000 (based on PDA figure)



Becker County storm damage in July 2017.

RESPONSE

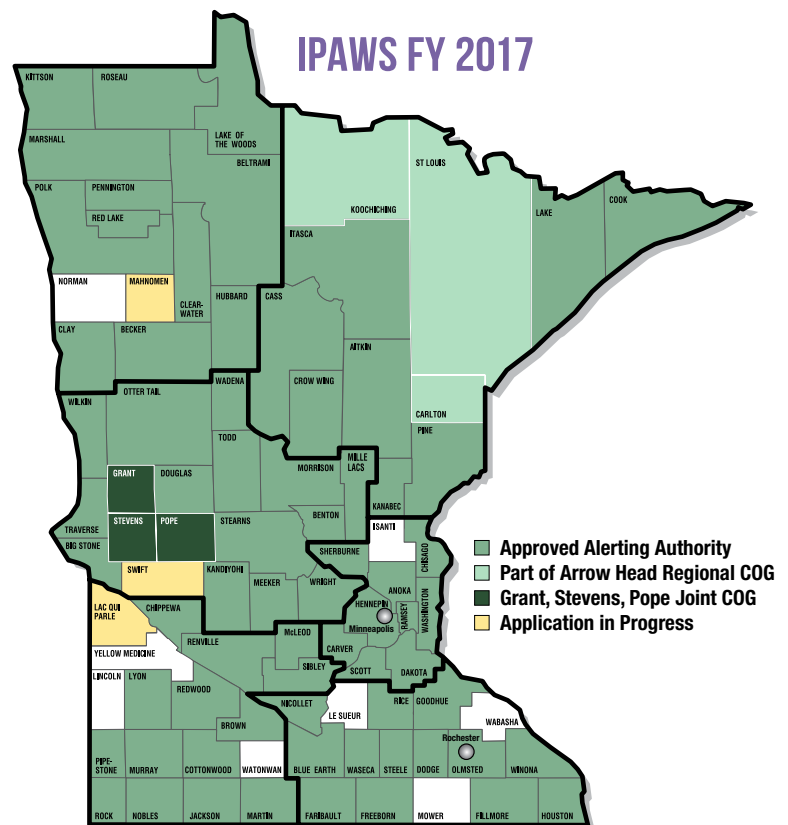


Emergency management staff watch the broadcast of public information in four different languages during the multilingual drill at TPT.

IPAWS: ON THE MOVE

In 2017, Minnesota's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) transitioned from HSEM to the Department of Public Safety's Emergency Communication Networks (DPS-ECN) division. John Dooley, formerly of HSEM, was named IPAWS program manager at ECN.

- Since January of 2016, an additional 30 counties have signed up for IPAWS, marking a 34 percent increase in counties having this additional public information and warning capability.
- 314 participants have attended 18 Public Alerting Authority Best Practices workshops in each of the seven Statewide Emergency Communications Board regions.
- Online training modules offered by the Alexandria Technical Community College were released in the summer of 2017.
- Multi-lingual alerting was demonstrated during the following exercises:
 - The Rochester Airport crash exercise served as a start to integrating public information and alerting into the training and exercise program.



— The HSEM Radiological Emergency Preparedness program, the Metropolitan Emergency Managers and Twin Cities Public Television (TPT) stations demonstrated a real-time exercise to translate public information for dissemination in four primary languages: English, Spanish, Hmong and Somali. This first-of-its kind exercise also demonstrated what is needed to produce graphics to be viewed properly on modern broadcast television and the final test of streaming Live content directly to a broadcast station from the Department of Public Safety’s Office of Communications for live coverage of a press conference.

- A survey was sent out to the state Emergency Alert System participants through their representing associations to identify multi-lingual alerting opportunities. The survey closed September 29. Data collected is being analyzed and is required as a deliverable item to the Federal Communication Commission in the second quarter of 2018.
- Education and outreach is being addressed through presentations at professional organization conferences, regional radio board and emergency management meetings, along with radio and television interviews with committee members.

ABOVE AND BEYOND IN THE EMERGENCY PLANNING AND COMMUNITY RIGHT-TO-KNOW ACT (EPCRA) PROGRAM

Thanks to the staff of the EPCRA program for providing a significant contribution to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Staff were able to identify 279 potentially non-compliant facilities in the state of Minnesota. This large task was accomplished in two steps. The first step was to compare the DHS Chemical Facility Antiterrorism Standards (CFATS) listing of regulated and unregulated Minnesota facilities to the Minnesota Tier II Emergency and Hazardous Chemical Inventory database. The second step was to compare the CFATS list to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) list of Risk Management Plan-regulated facilities in Minnesota.

NEW CHANGES UNDER SECTIONS 311 AND 312

The Environmental Protection Agency is amending the hazard categories for reporting under Sections 311 and 312 of the EPCRA program. The Occupational and Safety and Health Administration Hazard Communication Standard increased the number of physical and health hazard categories from five to 24. Chemical manufacturers and importers are required to evaluate their chemicals to ensure they are classified and labeled appropriately and develop standardized safety data sheets to be distributed to users of their chemicals.

PHYSICAL HAZARDS	HEALTH HAZARDS
Flammable (gases, aerosols, liquids, or solids)	Carcinogenicity
Gas under pressure	Acute toxicity (any route of exposure)
Explosive	Reproductive toxicity
Self-heating	Skin corrosion or irritation
In contact with water emits flammable gas	Respiratory or skin sensitization
Oxidizer (liquid, solid or gas)	Serious eye damage or eye irritation
Pyrophoric (liquid or solid) / Pyrophoric (gas)	Specific target organ toxicity (single or repeated exposure)
Organic peroxide	Aspiration hazard
Self-reactive	Germ cell mutagenicity
Corrosive to metal	Simple asphyxiate
Combustible dust	Hazard not otherwise classified (HNOC)
Hazard not otherwise classified (HNOC)	

RESPONSE



Minnesota AHIMT members work among the damage in Florida to distribute PODS for hurricane Irma survivors.

TOXIC RELEASE INVENTORY (TRI) PROGRAM

The TRI program celebrated 30 years under the EPCRA. With information about industrial management of toxic chemicals, the public, community members, stakeholders and government agencies can make more informed decisions that impact human health and the environment. Also, the TRI program creates a strong incentive for companies to reduce the amount of pollution in their communities. Several videos were created in Minneapolis, including *Using Data for Collaborative Action: In Communities* and *Using Data for Collaborative Action: At Industrial Facilities*.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE COMPACT (BLOG)

Harvey. Irma. Maria. You have no doubt looked on in helplessness as the horrors of the 2017 hurricanes unfolded in photos and videos. It's natural to want to help your fellow humans in times of disaster, which makes it that much harder to feel that there's so little you can do.

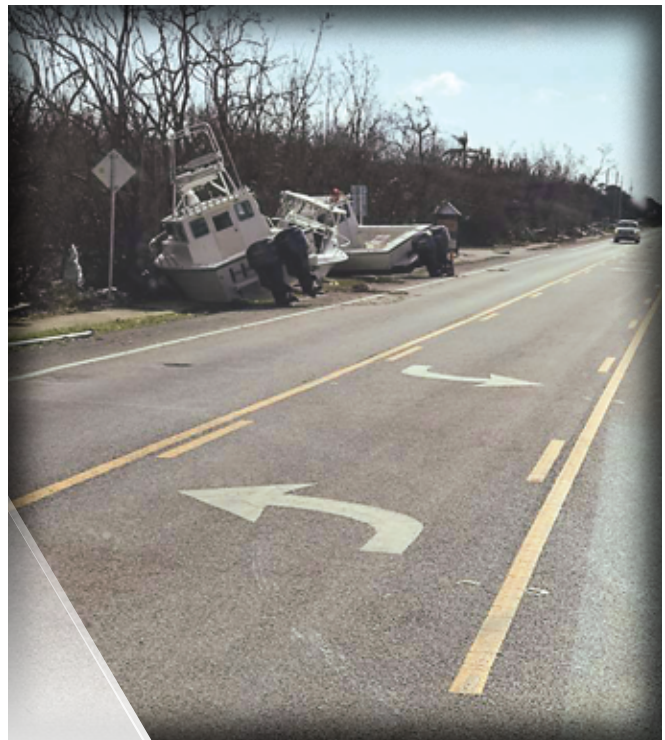
It may help to know, then, that Minnesota heeded the call of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) after Irma made landfall in Florida. EMAC is a mutual aid agreement among all 50 states. Here's how it works: A requesting state asks for specific resources, such as people or equipment, based on their needs. Then, agencies in other states with those resources are able to respond to a request, but there is no obligation to participate. In Minnesota's case, HSEM coordinates EMAC requests.

So when Irma started lurking around Florida's shores, a Minnesota All Hazards Incident Management Team (AHIMT) packed up and headed south. That specific AHIMT consists of 80 people, but a smaller group was chosen based on the mission's needs. Gov. Mark Dayton authorized their deployment on Sept. 8, two days before the hurricane made landfall. The team, which consisted of 16 emergency management professionals (think firefighters, EMS, law enforcement, and retired military), arrived in Marathon, Florida on Sept. 13.



One of seven PODs in the Florida Keys following Irma.

The team reported plenty of damage but no communications, cell service, electricity or running water. Their mission was to help county emergency management establish seven points of distribution (POD) over an 89-mile stretch of the Florida Keys. PODs are where the public goes to pick up emergency supplies and basic necessities, such as food and water, following a disaster.



Damaged boats and other debris litter Florida roads after Irma.

RESPONSE

SPECIAL TEAMS: EXPECTING THE UNEXPECTED (BLOG)

If real life were anything like TV, first responders would do nothing but save people from hostage situations and defuse bombs all day. In reality, much of a first responder's life consists of things like traffic stops, fire calls and paperwork. But that doesn't mean nothing unusual ever happens, so they have to be ready for it.

That's where the HSEM's State Emergency Response Teams (also referred to as Special Teams) come in. When local first responders encounter something they can't handle themselves, they call the special team best suited to the situation.



Hazmat team responding to a call in 2017.

Each team consists of fire department and law enforcement personnel working together. They'll bring all the equipment they need with them, whether it's a water supply for decontamination or a hazardous device disposal robot. Here are some of the special teams and their functions:

- Minnesota's 11 trained **Regional Hazardous Materials Response Teams** identify, monitor and mitigate simple chemical threats, whether it's a hazardous materials release like a chlorine leak at a water treatment plant or the rollover of a tanker carrying anhydrous ammonia.
- There are four **Bomb Disposal Units** in Minnesota. They respond to issues such as suspicious packages, drug labs, unexploded ordnances like old fireworks or grenades, and old dynamite on farms.
- The **Structural Collapse Team** — also known as Minnesota Task Force 1 — is composed of five teams. They conduct technical rescues in confined spaces, like trenches, or low and high angles, like caves and river bluffs. Their work also includes cutting through reinforced concrete and steel to search collapsed structures for potential victims and responding to situations like the deadly Lilydale landslide in 2013.
- The **Minnesota Aviation Rescue Team (MART)** consists of the Minnesota State Patrol helicopter and members of the St. Paul Fire Department. MART can perform aerial rescues from hard-to-reach places on-the-ground teams can't get to, like lighthouses and swamps.

Hopefully, you'll never be in a situation where you'll need Special Teams. But if you ever do, you'll find they're a great example of how state and local law enforcement and fire departments work together toward the same goal: keeping Minnesotans safe.

ABOUT HSEM



Deputy Director Kevin Reed addresses the 2017 HSEM Governor's Conference.

HSEM staff work in Town Square in downtown St. Paul. The staff of approximately 67 employees work in one of six branches.

- Administration and Grants
- Operations
- Organizational Development
- Preparedness
- Recovery and Mitigation
- Training and School Safety Center

Director:

Joe Kelly

Deputy Director:

Kevin Reed

Branch Managers:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| ■ Cathy Clark | ■ Kevin Leuer |
| ■ Jon Huspek | ■ John Moore |
| ■ Randy Johnson | ■ Joe Neuberger |

VISION

Keeping Minnesota Ready

MISSION

The mission of HSEM is to help Minnesota prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. The primary purpose of the division is to build communities prepared to respond to emergencies, with resilience to quickly recover from the effects of disaster.

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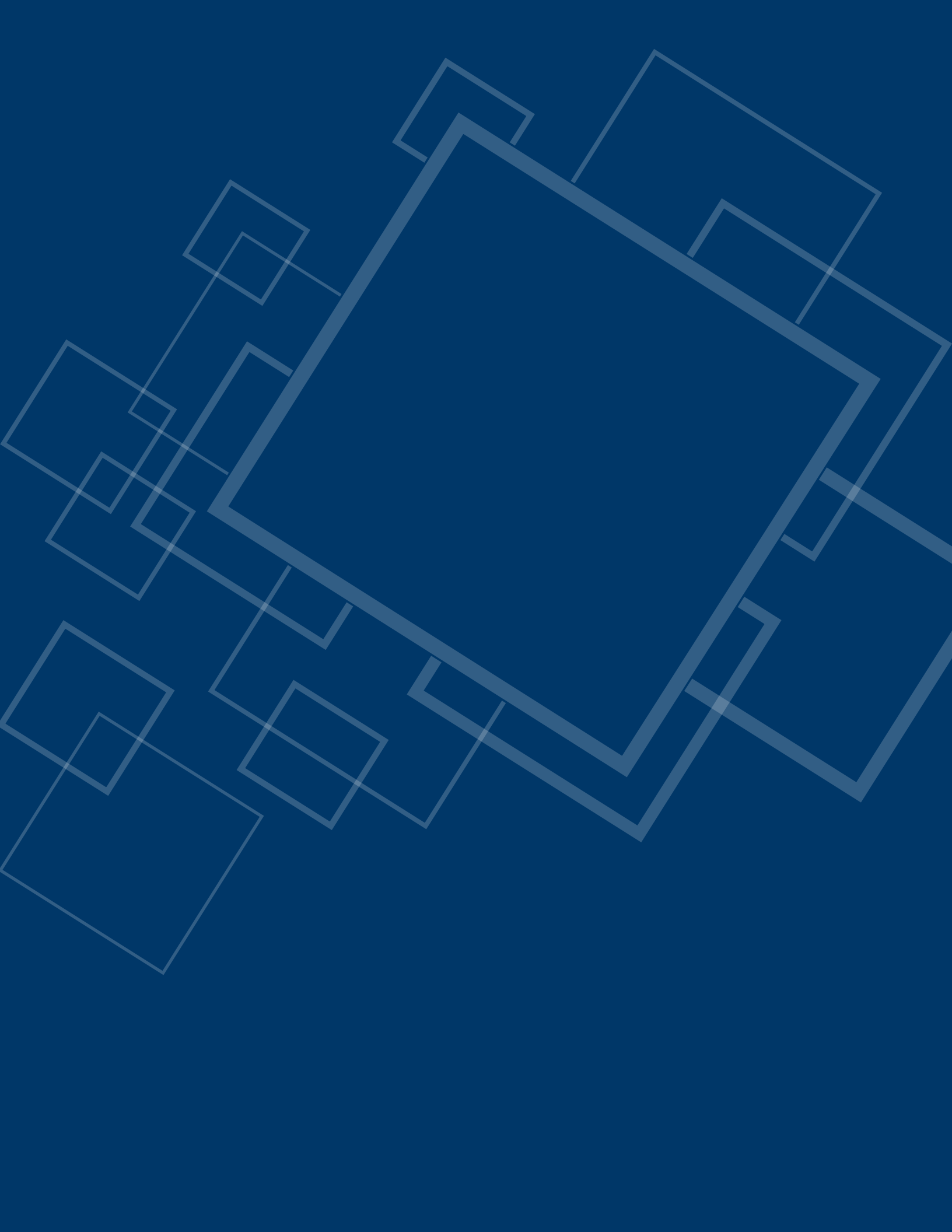
ABOUT HSEM



HSEM recognizes emergency management certificate recipients at the 2017 HSEM Governor's Conference.



Director Joe Kelly welcoming FEMA representative at the 2017 HSEM Governor's Conference.





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