

Disaster News Update – February 4 to 10, 2008

RECENT DISASTER / HAZARD ACTIVITY (Past 7 days)

- **Avalanche:** Colorado
- **Drought:** Oregon, Nevada, Idaho, California, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Arizona, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Texas, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi, Maryland
- **Earthquake:** California
- **Explosion:** Georgia (Sugar Refinery)
- **Extreme Cold:** Wisconsin, Alaska, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Ohio
- **Fire:** New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Virginia, South Carolina,
- **Flood / Flash Flood:** Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Hawaii
- **HAZMAT:** Pennsylvania (truck accident)
- **Heavy Rain:** Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania
- **Severe Winter Weather:** Wisconsin, New Mexico, Vermont, Iowa, Alaska, New York, Idaho
- **Strong Wind:** Michigan, Wisconsin, North Carolina, New York, Ohio, Virginia, Illinois, Pennsylvania
- **Structure Fire:** Tennessee (Pumping Station Fire)
- **Tornado:** Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee
- **Volcano:** Hawaii

CURRENT FEMA MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATIONS (Past 30 days)

- [Tennessee](#): Severe Storms, Tornadoes, Straight-Line Winds, and Flooding (2/7)
- [Arkansas](#): Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Flooding (2/7)
- [Hawaii](#): Severe Storms, High Surf, Flooding, and Mudslides (2/6)
- [Missouri](#): Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Flooding (2/5)
- [Kansas](#): Severe Winter Storms (2/1)
- [Indiana](#): Severe Storms and Flooding (1/30)
- [Nebraska](#): Severe Winter Storm (1/11)
- [Nevada](#): Severe Winter Storms and Flooding (1/8)
- Fire Declarations: N/A

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM NEWS

Mom's mission to comfort kids produces playground-in-a-bus (AP, 2/10)

Cody McElrath staked out a spot to line up his miniature cars with two playmates, then exclaimed "let's ram them." Nearby, three girls played games or colored, looking up occasionally to watch an animated video. The children showed no outward signs of the terror a few days earlier when tornadoes ravaged this area of western Kentucky. Instead, while their parents were busy reassembling their lives, the children were content playing inside a former school bus converted into a mobile playroom just for kids who have been through disasters. "It's the simple things in life that keep kids busy and keep them happy," said Kathryn Martin, the driving force behind the goodwill bus. "And during times like

this, parents are not able to, so why not come here and help and do a small part." Martin's motivation to comfort kids in times of disaster sprang from her own tragedy. Her 2-year-old son, C.J., was among 25 people killed in 2005 by a tornado that struck the Evansville, Ind., area. Now, the play area on wheels is known as "C.J.'s Bus." The outside of the bright yellow bus features pictures of C.J., smiling and giving a thumbs up sign. Martin initially resisted having C.J.'s picture on the bus, but now she realizes it's a welcoming sign. "How else is a kid going to know that this is for them," she said. "None of these kids have ever questioned whether this bus is for them or not. They just want to come in the happy boy's bus, and that makes me feel good." Besides giving children some sense of a return to normal, the mobile playground supervised by volunteers also gives frazzled parents a chance to focus on recovering their lives. The donated, rebuilt bus is stocked with toys, games, coloring books, crayons and a flat-screen television in a 280-square-foot play space. The back of the bus has a small area for volunteers a bathroom and shower, beds and cooking facilities.

Faith Based Volunteers Help Flood Victims (Disaster News Network, 2/9)

Flooding doesn't come often in February in Ohio. In the week approaching Valentine's Day, residents are more used to battling snow than rising rivers. But right now, across the state, rain has swollen rivers to points well above flood stage. Many homes that were flooded by rising waters in August are pumping out their basements again. Repairs only half begun from the last flood are back where they were six months ago. In Tiffin OH, in the northwestern section of the state, is built on the banks of the Sandusky River, which historically, supported industry in the town. For now, unable to stay confined to its banks, the river has brought little but trouble to the Seneca County seat. "We have a pretty serious flooding problem here," said Seneca County Public Safety Administrator Daniel Stahl. He said the river reaches flood stage at eight feet and the current mark is nearing 12 feet. Rainfall seems to have tapered off throughout much of northern Ohio for now, residents report, but temperatures on Saturday night were expected to plummet to below zero. "That will bring more problems to people with flooded basements," said Tamara McBride, chief of public affairs for the Ohio Emergency Management Agency. "With the basements flooded, there's no way to get these people heat...and then the water pipes are at risk of bursting also." Terry Samuelson, who heads the long-term recovery committee for Volunteer Connection in Ohio, said northern Ohio is comprised of very close-knit communities. People who live there are always ready to take in family and friends in need.

Groups offer tornado relief efforts (Messenger-Inquirer (KY), 2/8)

Agencies and groups offered a variety of aid to residents affected by Tuesday's tornado and to those who are helping them. The American Red Cross has been organizing 900 meals a day since Tuesday night, said Georgianna Dotson, Muhlenberg County branch office manager. "We're feeding everybody," Dotson said Thursday. That includes food for emergency management workers in Powderly, hot meals for residents at Second Baptist Church in Greenville and snacks and coffee at the old Central City High School gym, she said. Volunteers also have been delivering food and drinks to residents unwilling to leave their damaged homes and emergency workers helping with traffic control, Dotson said. "At 4 or 5 (a.m.), we were hitting the National Guardsmen in their

Humvees with hot coffee," she said. The former school gym is the only shelter where people can sleep for the night, she said. Three people did just that Wednesday night while several others came for food or a break from the cold weather, Kentucky State Police Post 2 Trooper Stu Recke said. Recke has been the spokesman for an emergency management command center in the Muhlenberg County Agriculture and Convention Center in Powderly even as his home in Greenville was without power. At the nearby Muhlenberg County Cooperative Extension Service Office, a pink flier on a large green 4-H cloverleaf listed phone numbers for people needing a cleanup crew. Tommy Harrison, 4-H Youth Development agent, led a crew of 12 high schoolers from 4-H and school anti-drug programs in the Gaslight Park subdivision in Central City.

African American Ministers Return to Gulf Coast (PR Newswire, 2/8)

The Proctor Conference will celebrate its 5th anniversary meeting in New Orleans beginning February 11th to 14th, Re-Awakening the Sleeping Giant: Mobilization for Prophetic Social Justice Ministry, to address concerns surrounding the city's restoration and to examine public policies, emergency preparedness, healthcare and other issues affecting the African American church and community. At least 1,000 noted African American ministers, leaders and politicians will attend the Conference including Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, activist Dorothy I. Height of the National Council of Negro Women, Nobel Peace Prize winning environmentalist Dr. Wangari Maathai, Cookie Johnson of the Magic Johnson Foundation and a number of national politicians and New Orleans city officials. A number of programs are planned and participants will take part in "Field Experiences" to engage in hands on work at sites such the Freedom School, Beecher Memorial Congregational United Church of Christ and the Amistad Research Center. The Conference has released "the breach: Bearing Witness," a comprehensive report by the National Katrina Justice Commission (sponsored by SDPC), with introductory remarks by Sen. Barack Obama. The report includes 23 recommendations on the Gulf Coast restoration, highlights stories of those who were displaced, includes testimony from first responders, evacuees, political officials, Red Cross and FEMA, and sheds light on the public policy implications the hurricane has had on Homeland Security, poverty and race and class-based disparities.

America's Second Harvest Feeds Tornado Communities (PR Newswire, 2/7)

The Nation's Food Bank Network is providing food and grocery products to communities hit by devastating tornadoes yesterday in Alabama, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky and Mississippi. In addition to the many deaths and injuries that have been reported, thousands of people have been left without power and with only limited access to food. "While we are currently doing damage assessment to determine where help is needed, we know that there will be a tremendous need for support in the towns that were hit," said Vicki Escarra, president and CEO of America's Second Harvest--The Nation's Food Bank Network. "Our food banks through the affected region are working closely with state and local emergency management agencies, our non-governmental partners in disaster relief, and their local social service agency partners to identify the need for food, cleaning supplies, diapers and personal care products in their local communities." The Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee has been able to lend its resources and the unique "cook/chill method" production capability of the food bank for disaster relief

efforts. The cook/chill prepared meals allow the food bank to cook the entire meal and flash-freeze it so that it can easily be re-heated in a mobile or temporary kitchen. This method is allowing the food bank to support two American Red Cross shelters in the area with nutritious and easy to prepare lunches and dinners feeding 400 people. Additionally, the Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee is working with donor partners Kroger, Food Lion, and Armour to provide emergency food boxes for Fairfield schoolchildren, participating in a backpack program, who have been impacted by the tornados.

About 150 volunteers turn out to fill sandbags (Newes Sentinel (IN), 2/7)

No more sandbag volunteers were needed this morning, but about 150 people showed up in Waynedale on Wednesday night to answer an urgent plea from the city to hold back floodwaters. A few more went to the Street Department garage, 1701 Lafayette St., to fill sandbags. By 9:30 p.m. the city had said volunteers were no longer needed. They were, however, at four locations the city has established for residents to pick up sandbags to protect their homes. The Street Department began its day cleaning up leaves and ended it sandbagging. "Last night it was helping stranded motorists; today it's filling sandbags," said Fort Wayne Police officer Troy Jester on Wednesday afternoon, as he did just that at the Street Department along with volunteer Dave Baron. The Salvation Army and the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) were there feeding volunteers. CERT volunteer Molly Mahoney was there with her son, Patrick, 9. Patrick said he was having fun helping, but he "could have more fun if I could play on the sand," he said. Volunteers were sparse there, with only six on hand as of 4:45 p.m. Most said their homes were fine, but they wanted to help others. Boy Scouts were asked to gather and fill sandbags at the Southwest Conservation Club, 5701 Bluffton Road, one of the four spots where residents could pick up sandbags. Salvation Army spokeswoman Kristen Guthrie said the local corps was on standby to provide nourishment and encouragement to sandbaggers and flooding victims.

Spanish class offered for first responders (New Orleans Times Picayune, 2/7)

Covington resident Tommy Schubert never realized while growing up among the Hispanic culture in Killeen, Texas, that just learning Spanish and speaking both Spanish and English with friends in his neighborhood would provide him with skills to save lives in St. Tammany. But Schubert, 27, who has been in St. Tammany since 2003, has done just that each time he has been called upon to translate for first responders who do not speak Spanish. Schubert stepped in as translator first as a deputy sheriff in Criminal Control for the St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office, then as a volunteer for community Fire District 12. The need for all first responders to be able to communicate with everyone is so important that Schubert has created a "first responders' Spanish course." He is teaching the course to 45 firefighter and medical emergency personnel along with administrators and guests at Fire District 12. "The importance of being able to speak Spanish in this community now is vast," Schubert said. "There has been a huge influx since Hurricane Katrina of people from Mexico, Honduras and other Hispanic countries. When a responder gets to a scene, the first thing we must do is make sure the scene is safe, then render aid to anyone who needs it. We must be able to ask questions. How can

you help someone if you can't communicate with them?" Schubert has seen the problem first-hand. While working with the Sheriff's Office, he served as unofficial translator.

COMMUNITY PROGRAM NEWS

Churches Vital After Deadly Storms (Associated Press, 2/10)

On the way to this storm-ravaged community, a billboard bubbling with fresh paste rises over a rural road with a message from the Gospel of Matthew: "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted." In Macon County and other predominantly Christian areas where tornadoes laid a deadly path, churches and individuals' faith are playing a vital role in the aftermath. Faith is a way of life here. Many have volunteered services, opened disaster centers with food and shelter, clothing and medicine, while those who escaped death when so many did not say they are finding hope in stories of survival. "I was in a tornado and I lived," said James Krueger, a 49-year-old electrician, as tears streamed from his eyes blackened in the storm. When the winds hit, his 100-year-old home flew from the foundation until he lay on barren ground. It was an unlikely survival he cannot help but attribute to a higher power. "The bottom line is something kept me there," he said, shaking his head in disbelief. Stories like Krueger's are bringing hope for many residents struggling to figure how they will reassemble their lives, said Terry Gillim, a minister at the Church of Christ in Lafayette, (pronounced luh-FAY-et). On Friday, Gillim directed a disaster center flush with supplies, including clothing and medicine. Members of his church brushed elbows over boxes with those he had never seen in church before. "They say there are no atheists in foxholes," Gillim said. "There is a deep desire to know God. And when tragedy strikes or adversity comes our way, those desires are brought to the forefront whether we want them or not."

Long-Term Recovery Seen in Tennessee (Disaster News Network, 2/10)

The whine of chainsaws and rumble of front-end loaders were just some of the sounds in the tornado-ravaged portions of Tennessee this weekend as volunteers helped homeowners begin to pick up the pieces of their lives. At the same time, disaster response organizations have been busy assessing needs and planning for what is expected to be long-term recovery. In churches throughout the same areas Sunday, churchgoers prayed for the survivors and families who suffered losses and recounted their experiences Tuesday night and the days that followed. At Promise Church in Jackson, TN, the storm predications Tuesday night caused the church to cancel a planned meeting. At home with his family, Pastor Jay Hutchens went to the bottom of the stairs in his home to wait for the storm to pass through. After their electricity went out, Hutchens used text messaging to get weather updates from friends. When the storm passed their home, they first heard hail hitting the house, followed by 30 seconds of "an incredibly loud noise," then stillness. Hutchens said he'd always heard that when the silence comes is when you should be most concerned. "But after that we didn't hear anything. It turns out the tornado touched down about 500 yards from our house. Acres of trees were chopped off. They look like they were weed-eated. It's the wildest thing I've ever seen," Hutchens said.

'Citizen responders' to aid communities during disasters (Tribune Review, 2/10)

Founded in 1881, the American Red Cross has provided emergency assistance and disaster relief for more than 125 years. Now the Red Cross is leading local communities to be prepared to help their neighbors in an emergency. Under the guidance of the American Red Cross Southwestern Pennsylvania Chapter, a team of residents from Bentleyville, Cokeburg and Ellsworth are establishing a community shelter in case of a large-scale disaster. The Bentleyville Community Shelter Team -- which supports Bentleyville, Cokeburg and Ellsworth and the surrounding area -- follows a model that uses Red Cross-trained "citizen responders" to set up and run shelters during disasters. The fast-responding team can quickly establish a shelter to house displaced victims immediately after a disaster. A response that typically could take four hours may now take just 20 minutes with minimal coordination. "Involving local citizens in disaster response creates a self-sufficient community," explained Steve Noe, service delivery coordinator for the local Red Cross. "Having residents within a community trained to set up a shelter in the event of an emergency helps with response time, which can ultimately save lives." The Red Cross is hoping to continue the community Shelter Team concept elsewhere throughout the county. The Southwestern Pennsylvania Chapter of the Red Cross and the Washington County Department of Public Safety have a "long-term goal" of establishing such teams in each of the county's 67 municipalities and is seeking volunteers interested in participating.

Tornado drill needs volunteer 'victims' (Lexington (KY) Herald Leader, 2/8)

Volunteer actors are needed to play injured victims during a tornado exercise for emergency personnel, according to the Division of Environmental and Emergency Management. If accepted, volunteers would report to the Veterans Affairs Medical Center on Leestown Road at 7 a.m. March 11 for the exercise. Participants will be transported to area hospitals for the exercise, then returned to the VA Hospital. There is no age requirement for volunteers, but underage participants will need to have a waiver signed by a parent. Adult volunteers will also be asked to sign a waiver. Volunteers should dress in old clothing and be prepared to spend six hours as victims. Makeup and wound dressings will be used to simulate wounds, DEEM officials said. Anyone who is interested in participating should contact Sharon Lee, volunteer coordinator for DEEM, at (859) 258-3788 or at slee@lfucg.com. A free lunch, and snacks and water during the exercise, will be provided.

Pet Shelter Could Open for '09 Storm Season (Palm Beach (FL) Post, 2/7)

Fido will have a fighting chance if a hurricane strikes the Treasure Coast during next year's storm season. The city hopes to debut its first pet-friendly shelter at the rebuilt Ravenswood Recreation Center in the summer of 2009, years after city employees approached the St. Lucie County School District in hope of designating a school as a pet-friendly shelter. Concerns about liability and damage prompted the district to back away from the idea, and city officials decided to build their own shelter for people and their beloved pets. Interestingly, the center on Ravenswood Lane is being rebuilt because it was destroyed by Hurricane Wilma in 2005. "Hooray!" beamed Mayor Patricia Christensen -- proud owner of a black Lab named Holly -- when she learned of plans for the pet shelter Wednesday. "We had a lot of people during the hurricanes who should

have left their homes but didn't because they had no place to take their dogs and cats." It's unclear how many animals the city's gymnasium would accommodate. City Manager Don Cooper this week asked the Florida Division of Emergency Management to contribute \$200,000 to fortify the \$8.5 million public shelter. Although the city had hoped to break ground on the new recreation center and an adjoining college classroom building and fire station by now, Cooper said he expects the shelter to be open in time for the 2009 hurricane season. Assistant City Manager Jerry Bentrott will act as general contractor on the project to save construction costs. The same method was used to build a clubhouse at the Saints Golf Course last year. Gov. Charlie Crist vetoed \$4.9 million in grants to replace the Ravenswood building -- one of only two recreation centers in this sprawling city -- prompting city officials to shift money from a proposed regional park to the venture.

WA Counties Create Video on Flu Preparation (Government Technology, 2/6)

A new video on pandemic flu preparation has been launched to help businesses, government agencies and community-based organizations prepare for the ongoing threat of what could be a catastrophic, world-wide event. Public Health Seattle & King County has launched *Business Not As Usual: Preparing for Pandemic Flu*, a 20-minute training video to help advance local preparedness efforts. The video is available online now at www.metrokc.gov/health/pandemicflu/video. A free DVD can also be ordered, which includes helpful planning materials. "It's essential that businesses, government and social service agencies can continue to provide critical services to the public during a severe pandemic flu, which will last for months," said King County Executive Ron Sims. "We developed this video to inspire and support local businesses and organizations in their preparations." Created to assist workplace leaders and staff in their pandemic flu planning efforts, the video describes the threat of pandemic flu and what life might look like during an outbreak. It also shows the benefits of being ready, and provides practical tips for creating a plan. "Buildings are left standing, and the roads remain open, but the health impacts of a severe pandemic flu will be felt throughout our community," said Dr. David Fleming, Director and Health Officer for Public Health Seattle & King County. "Everyone will need to change how we do business when a pandemic flu comes, so it's important that everyone prepares now."

Residents plan to be ready if disaster strikes (The Herald (SC), 2/6)

Area residents say the only thing worse than a community disaster may be a community unprepared for one. Wanting no such excuses, the River Hills Community Association is partnering with the York County Office of Emergency Management to host a Disaster Preparedness Forum on Feb. 12 for the Lake Wylie community at Camp Thunderbird. "The only problem we feel like we have here is being uninformed," said Martha Simmons, administrator for the association. "We want everybody (there). We want Autumn Cove, The Landing, everybody in the immediate area." The association members and River Hills Security formed their own disaster plan and decided to reach out to the community after contacting York County. "We just kind of got the ball rolling," said Dean Schillinglaw, chief of security. Several factors make Lake Wylie unique in York County in terms of potential disasters, said Cotton Howell, director of the York County Office of Emergency Management: The nearby Catawba Nuclear Station, a body of water

large enough to cause problems, and proximity to North Carolina, which could cause confusion with differing information on either side of the state line during an emergency, are at issue.

RESPONSE AND RECOVERY NEWS

Hundreds of Volunteers Help Tornado Cleanup (Arkansas Democrat Gazette, 2/11)

Volunteers fanned out across storm-wrecked areas Sunday, trying to help residents restore order to the devastation left by two tornadoes that tore across Arkansas on Tuesday. Some came in small, family groups, armed with chain saws and work gloves, wanting to help neighbors in need. Others came in large relief groups, from states as far away as New Hampshire and as close as Oklahoma. Among the volunteers was a group of more than 800 students from Harding University in Searcy, who spent their Sunday in Clinton helping residents. "This is what Christians do for each other," said Marie Yates, a sophomore at Harding. "They are supposed to take care of each other. ... We wanted to do whatever we can to help."

Southern authorities assess tornado warnings to get ready for next storm (AP, 2/9)

After the deadliest wave of tornadoes to hit the South in more than two decades, dazed authorities and residents are wondering what could be done differently next time. There will be new interest in tornado sirens in places like Macon County, which has none and suffered 14 deaths, and consideration of other changes there and elsewhere across tornado-prone areas of the South. Officials cite strong storm awareness and disaster drills with helping Union University, in Jackson, Tenn., avoid loss of life as tornadoes roared through last week. Sirens and long advance times in warnings that were repeatedly broadcast also helped prevent higher losses of life the total as of Friday was 59 from the powerful set of storms that included a ground-hugging tornado that roared across northern Tennessee with wind estimated at 125 to 150 mph. That twister was blamed for 24 of the deaths. The most effective preparation for the next storm could be a healthy dose of fear triggered by lingering images of this month's disaster. "A lot of it is just members of the public taking seriously that it can happen," said Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen, who toured stricken areas. "You get a little more convinced each one you see." The tornado's awesome destruction drew gawkers Saturday, complicating the recovery and salvaging efforts of residents and officials in rural Macon County.

Frustration grows in Ohio after second big flood in 5 months (AP, 2/9)

Jeremy Young strung together pipes and hoses to pump three feet of water out of his basement Friday. It was all too familiar. Floodwaters began dropping slowly across northern Ohio, but the frustration didn't go away. "It's the same old drill," Young said. For the second time in five months, residents were faced with cleaning up from a flood that swamped low-lying towns across Ohio's flat farmlands. Dozens were forced from their homes, including 37 residents of a nursing home who evacuated when water crept up to the basement windows. Fed up business owners urged Ohio's governor to do something. "I don't know how many more of these I can take," furniture store owner Jim Heringhaus told Gov. Ted Strickland, who toured the area and met with residents. He

understood their anger. "It has a financial impact and an emotional impact," Strickland said. "What I worry about is the wear and tear it has on the human spirit." After flying over nearby Findlay, Strickland said it was terrible to see how many families had been affected by this week's flooding, especially because many were just putting their homes back together following the August flood, which was the worst since 1913. "The state stands ready to help," Strickland told local emergency officials. "We're all in this together." Residents affected by this week's flooding may be covered by the federal assistance made available after the August floods, state officials said. Residents and business owners should call the National Flood Insurance Program at 800-638-6620.

President Declares Major Disaster for Tennessee (FEMA, 2/8)

FEMA announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the state of Tennessee to help people and communities recover from the effects of severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding during the period of February 5-6, 2008. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the state by President Bush. Paulison said that the President's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in Hardin, Macon, Madison, Shelby, and Sumner counties. The assistance, to be coordinated by FEMA, can include grants to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses. Low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also will be available to cover residential and business losses not fully compensated by insurance. Federal funding also is available to state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis in Hardin, Macon, Madison, Shelby, and Sumner counties for debris removal and emergency protective measures. In addition, federal funding is available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures for all counties within the state. Paulison named Gracia B. Szczech as the federal coordinating officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Szczech said that damage surveys are continuing in other areas, and more counties and additional forms of assistance may be designated after the assessments are fully completed in the affected areas.

Shaken residents begin cleanup (USA Today, 2/8)

Across four states, the death toll from 10 tornadoes that tore through Tuesday and early Wednesday rose to 58. As shaken residents began salvaging remnants of their lives and confronting the tough, emotional journey ahead, emergency officials began tallying damage and plotting the rebuilding. R. David Paulison, head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, toured parts of Tennessee with Gov. Phil Bredesen and Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. President Bush plans to visit the hard-hit state today. "Prayers can help and so can the government," Bush said. Paulison described the damage in Tennessee as "hit-and-miss across the state." "Some homes are completely exploded and all over the ground and the next-door neighbor has only a few shingles off," he said. Paulison doesn't foresee a need for temporary housing, such as FEMA trailers in the state, because few people are in emergency shelters and rental units are plentiful, he said.

Taos County (NM) declared a disaster because of heavy snow (AP, 2/8)

Many roads in Taos County are impassable because of heavy snow drifts, and state officials say homes and structures are threatened. Gov. Bill Richardson on Thursday declared the northern New Mexico county a disaster. The declaration frees up \$750,000 in state emergency funds to cover the cost of crews to clear public roads, respond to emergencies, support public services and utilities and related efforts. "The state's homeland security and emergency management personnel have been working closely with Taos County officials to assess the situation and moved quickly to make emergency assistance available," he said. Rio Arriba County also is under a disaster declaration. The heaviest snow had been reported in the Chama and Tierra Amarilla areas. Crews focused Thursday on clearing snow-packed roads and widening existing paths on streets for emergency vehicle use. The New Mexico National Guard was taking calls from residents and providing assistance to those most in need, including the elderly, families with young children and infants, and the disabled. Meanwhile, county emergency management officials and a number of other agencies collected and distributed food, medicine and other necessities to residents some of who are stranded.

Aid crews taking stock of damage (Arkansas Democrat Gazette, 2/8)

State and federal agencies Wednesday swarmed the 12-county swath of destruction left by Tuesday's tornadoes and straight-line winds, searching for the missing and helping to start the long road to recovery. FEMA called in 10 damage-assessment teams Wednesday to help document the damage. The more than 50 FEMA workers who will make up those teams flowed into central Arkansas from across the nation throughout the afternoon and will start assessing the damage early today. "We have to bear in mind that everyone is still in the response mode, finding out if everyone's OK, accounting for all the individuals and clearing the roads. That's what the local authorities and state are doing right now," said Bob Alvey, FEMA external affairs officer. Today "without disrupting that effort, we'll coordinate with local officials, visit sites and get that snapshot of damage." The assessment process is a partnership involving the state, FEMA, the U.S. Small Business Bureau and local authorities. The damage estimates compiled over the next few days by the FEMA teams will be given to Gov. Mike Beebe, who will use them in his request for federal aid. Beebe, who toured the storm damage Wednesday in an Arkansas National Guard Black Hawk helicopter, began the necessary paperwork for requesting federal aid shortly after landing. Until the state is declared a federal disaster area, FEMA and other federal agencies are not allowed to aid in the cleanup beyond assessing damage. "We're not going to visit every house, we're not going to visit every business," Alvey said. "That would be impossible." Tuesday's storm was the deadliest Arkansas has seen since 1997, when 15 tornadoes swept through the state, killing 25 people. Tuesday's severe weather left 13 people dead and injured at least 133. Alvey said FEMA's response to this disaster is the fastest he's seen in his history with the agency. The federal agency was heavily criticized for its slow response to Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast in 2005. This time, Arkansas' congressional delegation jumped on FEMA and the White House shortly after the storm hit.

In tornadoes' wake, neighbors came through (Christian Science Monitor, 2/8)

As the eerie orange glow of a massive pipeline fire lit up the storm-torn skies, James

Krueger stumbled into a wasteland. Flashlights pierced the night, people yelled for help, dogs yapped, and four-wheel-drive utility vehicles appeared on the hillside. Pierced and battered, but very much alive, Mr. Krueger was quickly picked up by a neighbor looking for survivors and taken to the hospital. "I yelled for help and it came," he says.

The massive tornado that hit rural Macon County, Tenn., at 10:26 p.m. Tuesday night claimed at least 13 lives, injured 68, and destroyed 200 homes and four churches. But the massive twister reminded Krueger and hundreds of others how quickly help can come in the darkest hour - and sometimes in unlikely forms. As officials wrapped up search-and-rescue missions - a family of five was found at 2 a.m. Thursday, 28 hours after the storm - stories of heroism and perseverance began percolating through the town of Lafayette (pop. 4,238), a part of which the mile-wide tornado hit on its 15-mile journey across the Cumberland plateau. There were the men who jumped into their four-wheel-drive vehicles to carry injured adults and crying children to main roads. There were teams of men with chain saws clearing roads and clambering through debris. And there were the 300 or so emergency personnel, many of them hit by the storm themselves, who responded to the vast disaster scene, oftentimes within 20 minutes. "They were there so fast," says Steve Gutierrez, a local builder. "A lot of these people live right here in town, and the response was immense." Concern drove many rescued residents out of shelters in search of loved ones. Creecie Morgan set out on foot to look for her aunt in a hard-hit area of the county seven miles away. "Finally, Pastor Dan came by and said, 'Get in the car. You're not walking all that way,'" she recalls. The tornado was the most destructive to hit Tennessee in 33 years, with most of the damage coming here in Macon County, a hilly stretch on the Kentucky border, dotted with red barns, brick homes, and trailer parks. President Bush was expected to visit on Thursday. In all, the system of storms claimed 55 lives and destroyed property across Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Alabama. "People were running around, trying to find neighbors, cutting trees, and digging in rubble," says Freddie Fuqua, a senior Lafayette firefighter.

Officials tally Alabama tornado damage: 5 lives, 147 homes (Birmingham News, 2/8)

Twisters that ripped through north Alabama on Wednesday damaged or destroyed 147 homes in three counties, according to preliminary estimates released by state emergency management officials Thursday. The statewide death toll from the storms climbed to five on Thursday after officials announced an elderly woman injured in Lawrence County had died. Lawrence County officials announced a 5 p.m.-6 a.m. curfew along the 16.7-mile-long path of the twister to keep out nonresidents. Gov. Bob Riley toured tornado-damaged areas in Jackson and Lawrence counties with U.S. Rep. Bud Cramer, D-Huntsville. At a news conference after the Lawrence County tour, Riley announced that he's seeking a federal disaster declaration. "We're doing everything we can to get the relief here as quickly as we can," he said. Alabama Emergency Management Agency teams have been conducting preliminary damage assessments to help make the case to federal authorities for a federal disaster declaration. The preliminary assessments should be completed today, Riley said. Qualifying for federal disaster relief for residents will depend on how many of the storm-damaged houses were uninsured. Statewide there would have to be \$5.5 million in uninsured damage for the state to qualify for the assistance for residents and public agencies, Riley said. Brock Long, director of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency, said an estimated 147 homes in Lawrence,

Jackson and Walker counties were damaged or destroyed in the storm. That includes 91 homes in Lawrence County, said Hillard Frost, director of the Lawrence County Emergency Management Agency. Among those homes, 16 houses and 14 mobile homes were completely destroyed. Lawrence County had 91 houses damaged or destroyed, said Hillard Frost, director of the Lawrence County Emergency Management Agency. Many in the county had little or no warning of the approaching twister that struck around 3 a.m. Most of the county's rural areas don't have weather sirens.

Storm-debris piles frustrate Tulsa residents (Tulsa World, 2/8)

Find your zone number on the City of Tulsa debris removal map and a schedule of when crews will come to your neighborhood. The contractor reportedly is a few weeks from finishing the first pass through Tulsa. Patience is wearing thin for some residents who are still waiting for debris to be removed from in front of their residences. "I'm ready for this to be gone," said Debra Carter, who lives in a southwest neighborhood south of 61st Street off Union Avenue. "Look at this," she said. "The debris keeps falling into the street; the wind is blowing trash into it. It's just a lot of maintenance for me to keep it out of the street." Carter said she is trying to be patient, "but I'm starting to seriously wonder what the schedule is. Why is the debris on the nearby street gone, and this neighborhood hasn't been touched?" Then in midtown's Tracy Park neighborhood, a resident said he is concerned about the animals that are burrowing into the piles. Jason Sales, who rents a home in Tracy Park, has two piles about 4 to 5 feet tall in front of his residence. "I would probably be more concerned if I owned this house," he said. Sales said he thinks that all of the debris may be causing some environmental problems, specifically with allergies. The city's Web site has a map and debris pickup schedule, said Dan Crossland, the Public Works Department's deputy director of public facilities. Crossland said the city is trying to keep the schedule updated so residents will have a better idea when their neighborhood will be cleared. "I know it is frustrating for residents," he said. "The storm was in mid-December and everyone is sick and tired of it. But the city just started debris collection a little more than three weeks ago."

President Declares Major Disaster For Arkansas (FEMA, 2/7)

FEMA announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the state of Arkansas to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding beginning on February 5, 2008, and continuing. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the state by President Bush. The President's action makes federal funding available to state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis in Baxter, Conway, Independence, Izard, Pope, Randolph, Sharp, Stone, Union, and Van Buren counties for debris removal and emergency protective measures, including direct federal assistance. Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures for all counties and tribes within the state. Paulison named Philip E. Parr as the federal coordinating officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Parr said that aerial damage surveys have just begun and more counties and additional forms of assistance may be designated after the assessments are completed.

Wisconsin digs out from major storm (UPI, 2/7)

A moisture-laden storm dumped up to 21 inches of snow in Wisconsin, stranding motorists from Beloit to Madison along Interstate 90, officials said. Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle declared a state of emergency so National Guard troops could help motorists stuck in the 19-mile-long traffic jam, WISC-TV, Madison, reported. State emergency officials said snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles were used to check on the welfare of the more than 800 motorists stuck on the highway between Beloit and Madison, bringing them food or fuel as needed. National Guard officials said 15 Humvees and two 5-ton trucks also were being used to assist motorists. Two helicopters were available for aerial searches or surveillance. Lt. Col. Tim Donovan, a Wisconsin National Guard spokesman, said a Blackhawk helicopter surveying the scene reported 552 tractor-trailers and 295 passenger vehicles stranded along the interstate. The Wisconsin Division of Emergency Management activated its state Emergency Operation Center with response teams from several agencies. "We're trying to monitor the situation throughout the state," Jerry Haberl, Emergency Operation Center officer in charge, told WISC-TV. Orfordville, Wis., reported receiving 21 inches of snow, AccuWeather.com reported. Jackson, Wis., had 20 inches and Milwaukee reported 16.3 inches.

One-two punch leaves parts of Vermont with more than a foot (AP, 2/7)

A two-day storm dumped up to 15 inches of snow in parts of Vermont, closing schools, partially collapsing a warehouse roof and making driving treacherous. Burlington got 15 inches, Corinth 14 inches, Waterbury 12 inches and Waitsfield 10 inches. Farther south, West Rutland reported just 4.5 inches, Bethel 7 inches and Chester, just 2. Snow totals varied in the Northeast Kingdom, with 6 inches in Newport, and 13 in Wheelock, while in northwestern Vermont, Saint Albans had just 5 inches by early Thursday. The weight of snow caused a Cabot Creamery warehouse roof to partially collapse Wednesday. No one was injured. The snow also downed power lines, but only a few outages remained by Thursday, utility company officials said. The storm followed a series of blizzards this winter that have blanketed ski hills, closed schools, stocked up snow banks and narrowed roads.

President Declares Major Disaster for Hawaii (FEMA, 2/6)

FEMA announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for Hawaii to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, high surf, flooding and mudslides during the period of December 4-7, 2007. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the state by President Bush. The President's action makes federal funding available to state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe storms, high surf, flooding and mudslides in Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui counties. Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide. Paulison named Kenneth R. Tingman the federal coordinating officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Tingman said that additional designations may be made at a later date after further evaluation.

President Declares Major Disaster For Missouri (FEMA, 2/5)

FEMA announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for Missouri to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes and flooding during the period of January 7-10, 2008. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the state by President Bush. The President's action makes federal funding available to state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe storms, tornadoes and flooding in Barry, Dallas, Laclede, Maries, McDonald, Newton, Phelps, Stone and Webster counties. Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide. Paulison named Michael L. Parker the federal coordinating officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Parker said that additional designations may be made at a later date after further evaluation.

Rio Arriba County (NM) declared disaster due to snow (Associated Press, 2/5)

Gov. Bill Richardson has declared Rio Arriba County a disaster area due to heavy snow that has blocked roads and left residents stranded in their homes. Richardson said Monday that emergency management, state police and the state Department of Transportation will be available for emergencies and to support local efforts to clear roads. The heaviest snow was reported around Chama and Tierra Amarilla. The National Weather Service said a total of 33 inches of snow had fallen in Chama by Monday evening, Angel Fire had 12 inches and the Farmington area had between 4 and 8 inches. Snow also fell in Quemado, Ramah and Albuquerque. The disaster declaration for Rio Arriba County makes \$750,000 in state disaster relief funds available to cover the cost of crews to clear public roads, respond to emergencies, support public services and utilities and related efforts. The state emergency operations center has been activated to monitor the situation in the northern New Mexico county.

Prior Trauma Increased 9/11 Risk on Children (New York Times, 2/5)

Preschoolers who witnessed the Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center or saw its victims were at high risk of developing lingering emotional and behavior problems if — but only if — they had had a previous frightening experience, like seeing a parent fall ill, researchers are reporting Tuesday. The study, the first of its kind among such young children in the wake of the attacks, found that more than 40 percent who had such sequential traumas suffered from depression, emotional outbursts, poor sleep or some combination three years later. By contrast, children who saw the attack or its victims but had no earlier trauma showed few if any psychologically scars. The study, appearing in The Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, suggests that very young children respond to trauma in the same ways that adults do. If they are nursing a previous emotional wound, the impact of some new scare or crisis is multiplied.

View the Study: <http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/162/2/126>

PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION NEWS

L.A. School Kids Get Prepped (FEMA, 2/8)

A new classroom project to teach emergency preparedness to elementary school children was unveiled in the Los Angeles Unified School District today. The course was presented to fourth graders at Frank Del Olmo Elementary School by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The message FEMA brought to school is "Be aware-prepare." The kids got it and now they can take the message back to their homes and neighborhoods. "These students really took on the subject of emergency preparedness planning, and they will be energetic as they talk with their parents and friends to help everyone work on preparedness," said Terrie Zuiderhoek, deputy head of FEMA's wildfire recovery office in Southern California. "I remember how important this subject was to me and my friends when we were growing up, and I could see in the classroom today just how much these kids are also into this." Zuiderhoek introduced the two-hour curriculum to Principal Eugene Hernandez, Assistant Principal Tony Cortez, fourth grade teachers and dozens of enthusiastic youngsters. Not only did the students work online, they got a physical and mental workout as well. Local firefighters taught the class to stop, drop and roll in case of fire and to duck and cover in an earthquake. Other instructors showed how to make a family emergency plan, what items go into an emergency supply kit, and how to care for pets during stressful times. The kids jumped in and learned quickly. "This is a valuable program for youngsters of all ages," said Zuiderhoek. "The more work we do to become prepared, the more informed we will be-and the better prepared-when big disruptions happen." The curriculum is available to schools throughout California. For more information or to arrange a FEMA-for-kids emergency preparedness event call FEMA Region IX headquarters in Oakland at 510-627-7079.

Contest brings out ideas for catastrophic emergency homes (Newsday (NY), 2/7)

Where would New York City put nearly 40,000 families left homeless by a catastrophic hurricane? Possibly in expandable, stackable storage-like containers that range from 385-square-foot studios to 800-plus-square-foot two-bedroom units. Or hexagon-shaped units with a fiberglass exterior that could be linked together to form larger apartments. Or even prefabricated units built on barges that could be floated to different locations or joined together with common green spaces. The proposals are among the 10 finalists in a city contest in which architects, designers and engineers worldwide were asked to come up with a solution to what officials say is a uniquely urban problem: the lack of room in New York City for trailers or other types of single-family temporary housing to serve large numbers of displaced residents in the event of a calamity. The contest, called "What if New York City ... ," drew 117 entries from 30 countries. From those, a panel of emergency management officials and architectural experts chose 10 that will receive \$10,000 to flesh out their designs. Eventually, one or more winning designs will be chosen, and the city says it will seek federal funding to construct prototypes. "The winning designs were chosen because they balanced poetry with pragmatism in innovative, new ways," said Mayor Michael Bloomberg in announcing the finalists at a news conference at the city's Office of Emergency Management in Brooklyn. The city co-sponsored the contest with the Rockefeller Foundation and Architects for Humanity New York, devising an elaborate scenario in which a fictional neighborhood - Prospect Shore - is hit by a Category 3 hurricane. Entrants had to come up with a plan to provide housing

that could be built quickly, is sturdy enough to be used for at least a year and could be easily taken apart and reused in other disasters.

FEMA Releases On-Line National Response Framework Course (FEMA, 2/5)

Course Information: The course introduces participants to the concepts and principles of the NRF.

Course Objectives: At the end of this course, students will be able to describe:

- The purpose of the National Response Framework.
- The response doctrine established by the National Response Framework.
- The roles and responsibilities of entities as specified in the National Response Framework.
- The actions that support national response.
- The response organizations used for multi-agency coordination.
- How planning relates to national preparedness.

Audience: This course is intended for government executives, private-sector and nongovernmental organization (NGO) leaders, and emergency management practitioners. This includes senior elected and appointed leaders, such as Federal department or agency heads, State Governors, mayors, tribal leaders, and city or county officials - those who have a responsibility to provide for effective response. Senior leaders, emergency management practitioners, disaster workers, and first responders who have previously completed IS-800 or IS-800A are not required to complete IS-800B as part of NIMS compliance activities. However, FEMA strongly urges emergency management professionals across the nation to complete this new independent study course on the NRF. Additional information on the NRF can be obtained from the NRF Resource Center at www.fema.gov/nrf

GULF COAST RECOVERY NEWS

Tiny local agency gets a giant responsibility (Houston Chronicle, 2/6)

A small, Houston-based agency with 25 employees has been chosen to administer housing assistance for about 11,000 families around the country who were displaced by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The Harris County Housing Authority will pay rent and provide social services to about 6,000 families in the Houston area, 4,000 in New Orleans and neighboring St. Bernard Parish and about 1,000 more families in 37 states, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development officials said Tuesday. This represents more than one-third of the roughly 30,000 families enrolled nationally in HUD's Disaster Housing Assistance Program, or DHAP. The HUD program, which began Dec. 1, will require participating families to make gradually escalating payments toward their rent starting in March until the program ends in March 2009. It will provide case management and counseling services to help evacuees find jobs and take other steps to rebuild their lives. "DHAP means the road to self-sufficiency," said Guy Rankin, the Harris County Housing Authority's executive director. As part of its new role, the housing authority will also build and operate a 33,000-square-foot facility in New Orleans to assist the DHAP-eligible families in that region. The expansion of the Harris County agency's responsibility beyond local evacuees was based on effective systems the agency

developed to identify qualified families, help them enroll and connect them with case managers and social workers, said Milan Ozdinec, HUD's deputy assistant secretary for public housing and voucher programs. The housing authority began working with DHAP families locally last fall.