

Idaho Office of **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2016

Idaho Participates in Cascadia Rising 2016

The Functional Exercise was eight years in the making and was intended to test the local, state, tribal and federal government's ability to jointly respond to a Cascadia Subduction Zone 9.0M earthquake and tsunami. In addition to the Idaho Office of Emergency Management and the Department of Health and Welfare exercise participants included nine northern Idaho counties



"The level of multi-agency cooperation during Cascadia Rising was outstanding. This opportunity to increase awareness of earthquake activity in Idaho, and to work seamlessly with our county and neighboring state partners made the exercise a success."

Brad Richy, Idaho Office of Emergency Management

Greetings,

As you can see by the banner on this newsletter the Idaho Office of Emergency Management (IOEM) incorporated our new name July 1st. While our mission remains unchanged and our focus continues to include homeland security and preparedness, IOEM best describes this agency's focus - prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery. Those key mission areas will be very much in play in the coming months as counties and tribes around Idaho brace for what could be a challenging fire season.

This newsletter focuses entirely on the Cascadia Rising 2016 Exercise that took place the week of June 7-10. The exercise, in which more than 800 people in Idaho participated, provided IOEM with the opportunity to critically evaluate our plans and processes. I am incredibly proud of the effort and professionalism that defined this effort. We hope you take a moment to read how each of the areas that participated viewed the experience. We know one thing for certain, the countless strong partnerships we cultivated during the last several years proved invaluable in how the exercise was successfully carried out in Idaho, and how we were able to assist our neighboring states. In the coming months IOEM will be producing After Action Reports (AAR) that will clearly assess how we responded and also provide the opportunity for modifications to our plans where necessary.

Thank you for your outstanding efforts to protect your communities from all hazards throughout the year.

Thanks,
Brad

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This is the official newsletter of the Idaho Office of Emergency Management. This quarterly publication produced in Boise, Idaho is intended for use by the State of Idaho's emergency management community, legislators, government officials and others who are interested in learning about Idaho's emergency management operations and procedures around the Gem state.

C. L. "Butch" Otter, Idaho Governor

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IDAHO OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (IOEM) EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER BRENT LARSON



Congratulations to the Idaho Office of Emergency Management (IOEM) Employee of the Quarter Brent Larson. It is appropriate and fitting that Brent would be nominated for this quarter considering the enormous work and dedication involved in the planning of the Cascadia Rising Functional Exercise. Brent's role as "Exercise Director" included untold amounts of coordinating and planning both within the state and with FEMA Region 10. This enormous task involved managing more than one hundred controllers. Brent, who in his real life is the State and Local Implementation (SLIGP) Program Manager had a steep learning curve as he managed and directed the exercise. His exercise team then supported hundreds of participants throughout Idaho. Through his direction and leadership, the exercise was successful and Idaho was able to shine throughout the region. Brent will also be intricately involved in the After Action Report for the exercise – a complicated and mammoth task in itself. Congratulations again for an outstanding job!

AFTER CASCADIA RISING – WHAT'S NEXT

Now that the exercise design and conduct phases of Cascadia Rising 2016 are behind us, we look forward to ensuring that all participating organizations yield applicable and tangible results from this enormous effort. IOEM is actively working on data analysis and the development of the draft After Action Report (AAR). The report is based on the exercise evaluation efforts and participant feedback. Once the draft AAR is reviewed by evaluators, it will be sent to agency/organization heads for review and comment.

In order to encourage participation, two After Action Meetings (AAMs) will be conducted; one in the Northern/North Central Area of Idaho and one in Boise. The purpose of the After Action Meeting is to finalize the AAR and begin the improvement planning process. Agency heads and leaders, including elected and appointed officials, are encouraged to attend the After Action Meetings. Each venue (IDEOC, JOC, SPHOC, participating health districts & counties) will be responsible for developing their own Improvement Plan, as well as monitoring and tracking corrective actions until completed.

The following is the timeline for completion and the AAR and subsequent efforts:

July 28, 2016: Draft AAR submitted to evaluators (due by August 11, 2016)

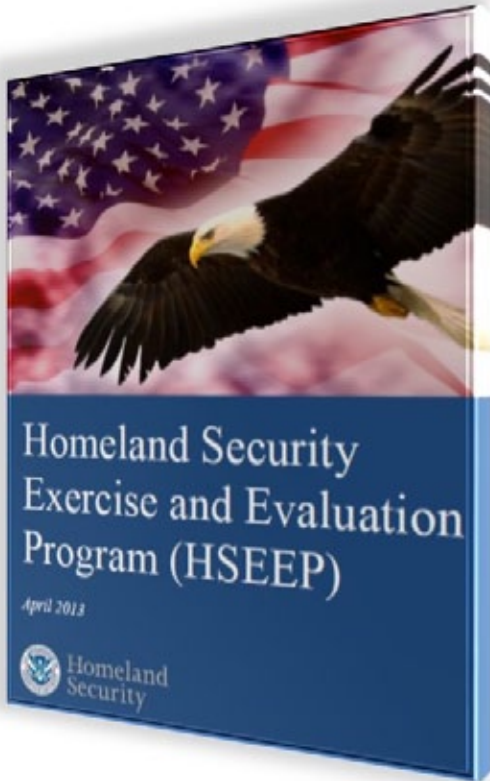
August 29, 2016: Draft AAR submitted to agency/organizations heads (due by September 6, 2016)

September 13, 2016: North/North Central Areas After Action Meeting

September, 15, 2016: Boise Area After Action Meeting

The goal of these efforts is to ensure that this exercise yields observable improvements in preparedness for future exercises and real-world events. Everyone's involvement in the process will help to ensure that we are all successful.

After Action Report

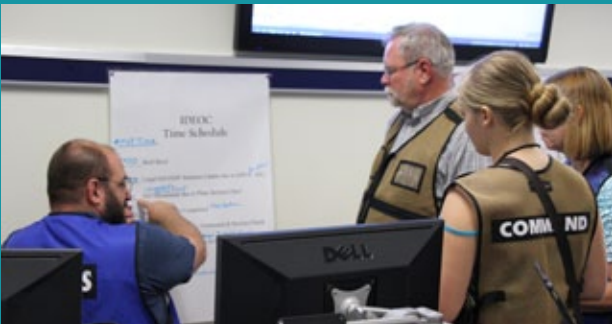


THE IDAHO EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER IN CASCADIA RISING (EOC)

The Idaho Emergency Operations Center's (IDEOC) participation in Cascadia Rising 2016 came with much excitement and apprehension. There were quite a few staff members and IDEOC Reservists who had been with the agency for less than three years. That meant both reservists and staff had not participated in an activation or a large exercise previously. In keeping with the work ethic of the organization there was a keen eagerness to function to the highest level in each position people had trained for. As is par for the course, there was some individual nervousness regarding training.

Staff and the IDEOC Reservists all came together with the intent on providing the support needed to Idaho counties and to Washington and Oregon. As the first day started, everyone arrived to the IDEOC excited and ready to learn. Everyone pulled together and supported one another to make sure the job was done. It was quickly determined that there was too much staffing in Logistics for the kick-off and not enough in Plans; Reservists were quickly taught to do new tasks and support both sections. Staff helped each other when questions came up, and job aids were pulled out to remember each of the steps needed for tasks to be accomplished.

It was amazing to watch how the IBHS staff (now IOEM), the Reservists, the Military Division staff and other State agency staff worked through each problem and came up solutions. There are areas where improvements can be made to ensure that processes work better but overall the operation was successful. The training and resources available to the staff worked to provide each person with a solid foundation to do the job for which they were trained. The IDEOC will build upon the After Actions of this exercise and be even more prepared for the next exercise or event.



THE JIC IN CASCADIA RISING

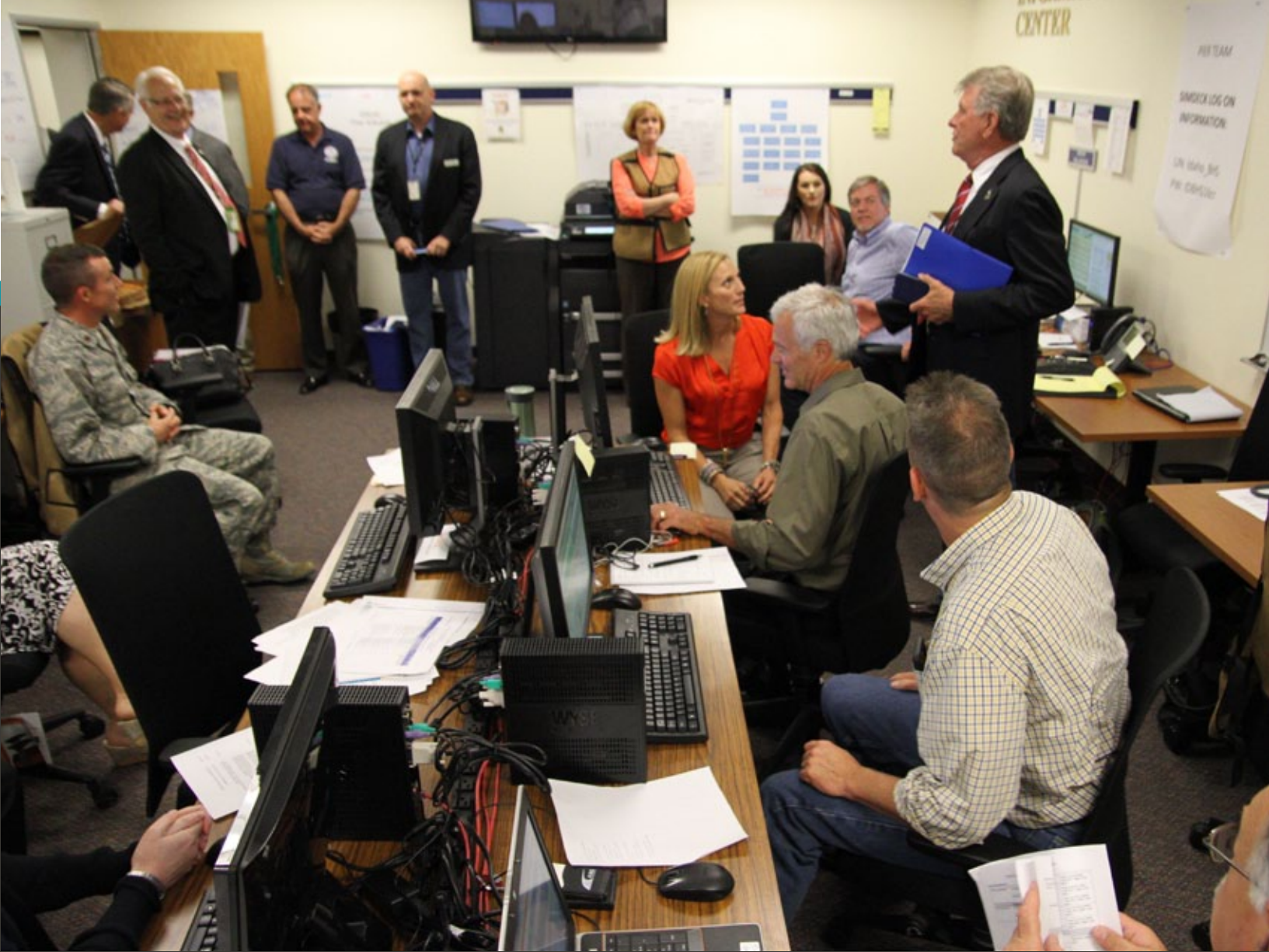
An activated Joint Information Center (JIC) looks and sounds like a beehive during an exercise or a real event. Staffed by Public Information Officers (PIOs) who function as event reporters, the energy level and enthusiasm can be invigorating. In the weeks and months leading up to the Cascadia Rising 2016 (CR16) exercise the PIOs repeatedly practiced and walked through how we would function when faced with various scenarios. Our goal was to operate precisely as we would during a real world event.

During the four days the Idaho Public Information Emergency Response Team (PIER) was activated in CR 2016, anywhere from nine to thirteen Idaho state agency PIOs worked to maintain accurate and timely situational awareness for both the IDEOC and the simulated public. As with all PIOs the primary focus is to provide the right information to the right people at the right time. In a fluid event such as a tsunami and earthquake staying on top of events as they unfold is vital.

This was the first experience working in an activated JIC for all but three of the PIER Team PIOs. Challenges we anticipated we would have, did in fact happen. Other challenges we anticipated we would face never materialized. The most important take-away for the group was the critical importance of having a calm, cool and collected team. No one lost their cool and everyone interacted in a respectful and professional manner.

The diverse skill sets of each PIO proved incredibly helpful. Many of the PIOs are former television or print reporters. That background provided a keen awareness that when significant events unfold, wrong information can be shared if there is not a vigorous system of checks and balances and multiple approvals. The group worked in very close confines and completed the exercise with an even more robust desire to hone our skills so that when real emergencies occur in our state or other states we can be effective communicators and serve the public well.

Elizabeth Duncan
IOEM Public Affairs Officer



CASCADIA RISING 2016 AND THE IDAHO NATIONAL GUARD (JOC)

In keeping with the Idaho National Guard’s motto “Always Ready-Always There,” the Cascadia Rising 2016 exercise certainly challenged that notion for the Idaho Joint Operations Center and the Joint Staff members in what perhaps was the largest Defense Support to Civil Authorities exercise for Idaho in recent memory. In close collaboration with the Idaho Office of Emergency Management and their Emergency Operations Center, the Idaho National Guard quickly discovered how a 9.0 magnitude earthquake off the Pacific Northwest coastline will present an incredibly complex situation even for those not directly impacted.

The Cascadia Rising 2016 scenario initiated a full-scale activation of the Joint Operations Center and its part-time Joint Staff members who otherwise have duties elsewhere. Comprised of both Idaho Air and Army National Guardsmen, the 28 member Joint Staff came together under this simulated crisis in superb fashion. Gathering and managing information across all disciplines operationally and logistically, they planned and presented viable options to The Adjutant General and The Governor of Idaho on how best to assist civil authorities here in Idaho and westward to our neighboring states with Idaho’s Citizen Soldiers and their unique equipment capabilities.

The Idaho National Guard and its Joint Staff members are the military extension of Emergency Management in the State of Idaho. In times of crisis, like a Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake, these professionals bring a wealth of talent, and skill, including an arsenal of federal military resources to help those in need in the aftermath of both natural and man-made disasters.



THE NORTHERN IDAHO EXPERIENCE DURING CASCADIA RISING

Over the past several years Northern Idaho Emergency Managers have dealt with a variety of disaster situations including flooding, wildland fires, windstorms, and severe winter storms. They deal with the local impacts of these disasters very well.

Cascadia Rising was an opportunity to respond to an event that required the need to consider issues exceeding regional and even national capabilities. The exercise earthquake and tsunami scenario did not result in direct impacts on northern Idaho but rather the cascading events. The scenario's disruption of supplies through coastal ports, the compromise on the fuel and electrical supply lines, and the effect of thousands of people evacuating the affected impacted area and arriving in Idaho with limited resources presented a new challenges for local emergency management officials.

The emergency managers identified specific capabilities they wanted to evaluate in their Emergency Operations Centers (EOC). The exercise was designed to ensure there were opportunities to assess those capabilities. As the exercise progressed the local EOC staff worked to gain situational awareness. They received little accurate information from the affected area - which is very realistic. The lack of specific information required local officials to use their best guesses to plan for the needs for evacuees coming to the area.

An evacuee aircraft crash at the Kootenai County airport provided an incident within an incident and provided the opportunity to meet their requirement to conduct an FAA exercise. It included fire, mass casualty, fatality management, and hazardous material response.

In partnership with the American Red Cross and other health districts in the state, the Panhandle Health District established a medical needs shelter. The hospitals in the 5 northern counties and Coeur d'Alene Tribe used the opportunity to evaluate their ability handle large numbers of trauma patients.

In the end, the exercise participating agencies gained significant insight into their ability to respond to a major influx of disaster victims under realistic conditions. They were able to evaluate their current plans to determine what worked well and where improvements can be made.

Photo locator: Coeur d' Alene Airport



INSIDE THE RADIO ROOM

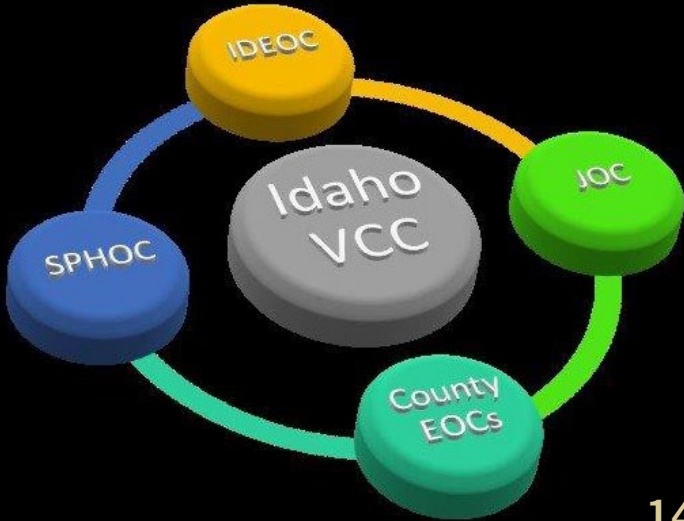
Cascadia Rising, Idaho calling! The Idaho Office of Emergency Management, Auxiliary Communications Services (ACS) (Radio) had a week of outstanding testing, exercising and learning. The Idaho ACS program was fortunate to have 21 volunteers completely staff the Idaho ACS Radio Operations Center. There were four days, eleven shifts, 161 man hours of operations and numerous radio contacts performed using multiple methods and technologies. The exercise lived up to its billing as a great opportunity to test our methods, processes, staff, and equipment. Using FNARS (FEMA National Radio System), SHARES (SHARED RESources), Idaho Secure and the HAM Radio Bands, the Idaho ACS team established daily communications with FEMA Region X, Washington State, Oregon, INL (The Idaho National Laboratory), the Nine Northern Counties of Idaho and numerous HAM radio operators across the Pacific Northwest. The Idaho Team served as Network Control for all 60 Meters communications. Using HF (High Frequency) voice and data methods, the Idaho ACS team transmitted, received and relayed information across the region as needed. A significant real world event occurred during the exercise, when a serious weather event hit the Umatilla County region. Without missing a beat the Idaho ACS team moved Umatilla radio ops to a stand-alone radio position, requested a representative from the National Weather Service and put that person on headphones with the Idaho ACS operator who then collected real time, real world, serious weather information. All this happened while the other ACS radio operations, relative to Cascadia Rising 2016 continued on uninterrupted; a true testament to the Idaho ACS teams' professionalism. What we learned fills 20 plus pages of notes and includes the need to partner with and include multiple additional organizations in our regular weekly testing. The goal of the Idaho ACS team continues to be to provide communications during emergencies whenever needed.



THE CASCADIA RISING 2016 IDAHO VENUE CONTROL CELL: THE HUB OF THE WHEEL

During the 2016 Cascadia Rising Exercise, the Idaho Venue Control Cell (VCC) served as the control and simulation cell for exercise play across the state. The Idaho VCC provided a central facility in the state to coordinate and oversee all exercise control activities during the four days of exercise play. In close coordination with exercise controllers and evaluators at all locations across the state, the VCC monitored the pace of the exercise, tracked the notional flow of resources within and outside of the state, and managed the Master Scenario Events List (MSEL). In addition, the Idaho VCC acted as the exercise simulation cell (SimCell) for Idaho, allowing participants to interact, via simulation, with a wide variety of nonplaying organizations and officials. The Idaho VCC was staffed by the Co-Lead Controllers, a MSEL manager, a resource tracker and 16 simulators/inject launchers.

The simulators/inject launchers represented a number of different agencies in Idaho, including the following: Idaho Office of Emergency Management; Idaho Military Division; Central District Health Department; Boise State University; Canyon, Kootenai, and Bonner County Offices of Emergency Management; Coeur d'Alene Police Department; Rathdrum Police Department; and South Boundary Fire District. We were also fortunate to convince a retired Area Field Officer to assist in the VCC. The mix of subject matter and geographic expertise provided a well-rounded VCC. Because this exercise was primarily a functional exercise containing many simulated elements, these dedicated volunteers provided a level of realism that otherwise would not have been attained. We cannot thank them enough for spending such a great deal of time and energy helping to make the exercise successful!



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FEMA Region 10 Administrator Ken Murphy, Idaho Governor C. L. “Butch” Otter and Deputy FEMA Administrator Joe Nimmich answer media questions during Cascadia Rising real-world press briefing.

All Hazards Preparedness Safety Tips

- Have a family plan in place including text communications, an out-of-area contact and a meeting place
- Build an emergency kit – carry it in your vehicle. Don't forget your pet's needs
- Help each other – know your neighbors and community resources