



SPRING NEWSLETTER 2017

Idaho Office of **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**



All hands on deck as neighbors in Washington County remove deep snow from roofs, a major hazard that leads to roof collapses

Unstable water soaked hills cause widespread landslides in northern Idaho. This home in Boundary County is destroyed by one such mudslide



Flooding in Gooding County in south central Idaho prompts creative methods of transportation

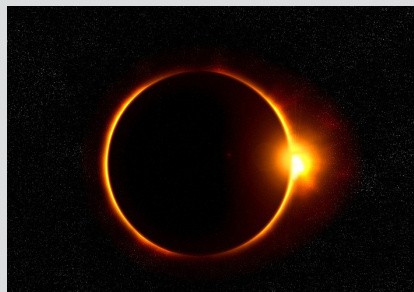
Greetings,

As the Spring IOEM Newsletter goes to print, widespread flooding continues to cause major challenges for municipalities and counties in every region of our state. As of early May, thirty-one Idaho counties have local or state disaster declarations. At print time, Idaho has one Presidential Disaster Declaration, with at least one additional declaration pending. The winter and spring of 2017 will go down in the record books as one of the most challenging ever for almost every region of the state. Unfortunately, the worst may not be over. The melting snowpack and high reservoir levels are being monitored statewide. This kind of extended weather event is precisely why planning is critically important. County and Tribal emergency managers in each of Idaho's 44 counties and five Tribes work year round to make sure the response to and recovery from these events is as seamless and efficient as possible.

As IOEM works with counties across the state with flooding issues, we are also planning and preparing for less predictable events. On May 10th almost one-hundred people, including representatives from private industry and the federal government took part in a tabletop exercise to discuss response plans to a major widespread power outage. This Tabletop exercise will be followed in mid-June with a two day functional exercise.



Emergency Management does not focus solely on disasters and unplanned events. Sometimes the events we plan, prepare and respond to are known about months, even years in advance. Such is the case with the Total Solar Eclipse that will happen August 21, 2017. If you are unfamiliar with the event, that is likely to change quickly as media, including social media interest grows. The number of visitors to our state in the days leading up to the total solar eclipse could be in the hundreds of thousands. Reportedly, nearly every hotel, motel, camping space and in some cases backyards for nearly 100 miles north and south of the path of totality has been booked for several months, if not years. For counties with small populations and limited resources the volume of visitors could be daunting, creating challenges for municipalities not accustomed to accommodating that many visitors. IOEM continues to host regular planning meetings with state agency partners that may be called upon to assist communities before and during the eclipse. IOEM is also offering emergency operations planning opportunities in the near future. For more information contact Training and Exercise Program Manager Rob Mace at Rmace@imd.idaho.gov



Thank you for your efforts to keep Idaho communities prepared.

Brad Richy
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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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Gen Brad Richy, IOEM, briefs local, state, and federal officials prior to a joint news conference addressing statewide flooding concerns.

Idaho Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter requested the April 19th briefing in an effort to further cultivate statewide collaboration and a common operating picture.



A BRUTAL WINTER

One county's snow disaster experience and the lasting impact of unprecedented weather

The winter of 2016-2017 brought near record breaking snow fall to Payette County along with an extended period of time where we experienced temperatures below zero. These winter snow storms were occurring so often, our Highway Districts and Public Works Departments were unable to keep up with clearing the roads. Some of these entities had to hire outside contractors to help remove snow from the roadways so the public and emergency vehicles could get through.

As the snow began to pile up, we also began to run out of places to put snow. There was also concern about the locations that we typically put snow, because of the possibility of spring flooding when that snow melted.



In early January Payette, Washington, and Malheur County across the state line in Oregon, began seeing roof collapses. Public messages began to be distributed to encourage citizens and businesses to have their structures checked to see if they were safe, or if they needed to have the snow removed from the roofs of their buildings. We began to see roofs collapses on sheds, carports, garages, barns and indoor arenas. The collapses then started moving to onion sheds and other commercial buildings including the grocery store in Weiser, Idaho.

These roof collapses had a significant impact to the community in this three county region. Our region is the largest onion producing area in the world. The roof collapses at onion sheds, which were storing last year's harvest, was devastating. Those onions were a total loss and could not be sold. The amount of onions that were damaged and the timing of the damage was also problematic as the annual date to have onions buried was quickly approaching. Onions must be buried prior to March 15th. If they are not buried there is a risk of a bug infestation that could affect the ability for the region to grow onions. A decision was made to extend this deadline to April 15th to allow these facilities some extra time to get the onions buried.

The Payette County Assessor's office estimates that we lost more than \$2.8 Million in assessed value worth of property during these winter storms, due to roof collapses. The impact to our community will be a lower tax base with a lower amount of taxes coming into the taxing entities. Along with the expected lower tax base, our taxing districts such as the school districts, highway districts, cities and the county have spent in excess of \$1.6 Million in clearing snow from roads and roofs to protect critical infrastructure. That is significantly above and beyond the normally budgeted amounts.

Payette County is a resilient community and our citizens continued to provide services throughout the unprecedented winter storms. During this time we reassigned a county employee who works in our Vehicle Registration Department to assist with Public Information. Kaitlyn Stratton was instrumental in setting up two separate Facebook accounts that were used to put information out to the public. This information was spread quickly through social media.

Stratton also assisted in putting out traditional press releases to the media to help keep the whole community informed on the current situation. We also assigned Kathy Manning, an employee of the Treasurer's Department, to take all the calls from the Payette County Citizens in reference to the Winter Storms. Manning also collected all preliminary damage assessment forms from citizens and businesses. These forms were later used by FEMA while they were conducting the damage assessment in our county. We also began to receive daily weather briefings so that we could begin to plan our responses to the incoming storms.

Payette County asked for and received help from volunteers. We had three individuals who came forward to work with the county and helped clear snow from roofs, driveways and sidewalks of some of our elderly citizens. We also had church groups and Team Rubicon come to our county to assist in clearing snow from the roofs of houses. Many of these groups completed this work without asking for any kind of recognition and the details of their work is largely unknown.

Payette County is now in the process of reviewing the response that occurred during the winter storms and looking for lessons learned. We are hoping through this process to be able to identify areas where we can make changes and be better prepared for the next disaster that would occur in our county.

Andy Creech
Payette County Emergency Manager



January 2017 Bowling alley in Weiser (Washington Co.) buckles under the weight of snow on the roof; such roof collapses caused widespread destruction

COMMUNITY RALLIES WHEN FLOODING CAUSES WIDESPREAD DESTRUCTION

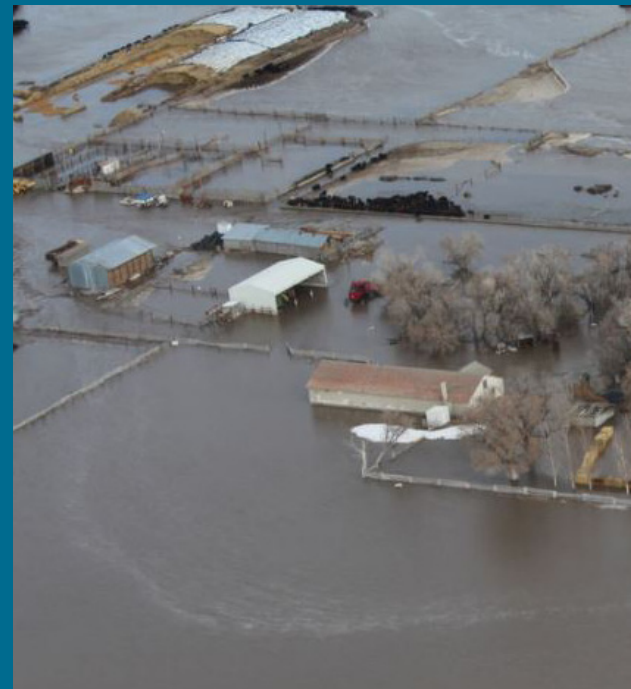
Minidoka County Officials Laud the efforts of local and state partners

Minidoka county residents were pleased and relieved to hear that President Trump signed a Federal Disaster Declaration April 21, 2017 making Minidoka and ten other Idaho counties affected by relentless and destructive flooding eligible for public assistance. The assistance we hope to receive for the repair or replacement of damaged public facilities like roads, bridges, utilities, buildings, schools, and other publicly owned property is for us – priceless. Minidoka County continues to be severely affected by snowmelt related flooding. It started in early February, and the cleanup and rebuilding continues. To make matters worse, experts tell us there's more to come.

While we are still managing the flooding, we are able to say many valuable emergency management lessons. The most important lesson was the critical need for situational awareness and a common operating picture. Reaching out as quickly as possible to our partners at the Idaho Office of Emergency Management (IOEM) helped us hit the ground running when it came to revving up our public information machine and collecting Damage Assessments.

We also learned that community spirit is invaluable. We had so many community members step up and help their neighbors; everything from filling and placing thousands of sandbags at homes during extremely cold weather (for days on end), to mobilizing social media resources to keep everyone informed. Volunteers helped people evacuate their homes when needed, gave them a place to stay, and fed them. Our local emergency entities worked sometimes 12-15 hours a day in order to take calls and help people wherever they needed or could. So, while the cleanup and repair will continue for months to come we are grateful to so many people for minimizing the effects of this destruction and doing so in an inspirational and effective way.

Kim Vega
Minidoka County Emergency Manager





MARY MOTT NAMED IOEM EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER



Mary Mott, Mitigation Program Assistant, is IOEM's employee of the quarter! Mary's professional manner keeps the Mitigation Section organized and on track. Throughout the past three years, she pleasantly and competently managed the tasks, and the mound of documents generated by mitigation and disaster projects. Mary is a knowledgeable resource and dedicated employee. She keeps the mitigation team focused on priority tasks, provides timely responses to internal and external partners, and backs up Admin as needed. There are no qualms in leaving Mary to handle office responsibilities when staff is on the road. She has been an incredible support this past year with six disasters adding to the already full mitigation plate while being short staffed and doing it all part time. Don't underestimate her mild manner. Highly adventurous world travelers define Mary and her husband. She takes pride in her beautiful family and yard and enjoys feeding the quail that flock to her home. Congratulations Mary!

DISCUSSION-BASED TABLE TOP EXERCISE FOCUSES ON LONG TERM POWER OUTAGES

IOEM to further test state's plans in the coming year

If areas of Idaho were to encounter long term power outages following an extreme weather event, how would the Idaho Office of Emergency Management coordinate with their local and federal partners during the event? The Idaho Office of Emergency Management is participating in a series of exercises designed to help answer that question. Two tabletop exercises have been conducted in Idaho in preparation for a two-day operations-based functional exercise which will be held in June.

The most recent Table Top Exercise (TTX) was facilitated by the National Exercise Division of FEMA. Participants included representatives from various state agencies including the Idaho Office of Emergency Management, Idaho State Police, Idaho Public Utilities Commission, Idaho Office of Energy Resources, Idaho Transportation Department, Idaho National Guard, Idaho Department of Agriculture, and Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. In addition, several federal partner agencies and private power utility companies provided valuable input.

In June, the Idaho Office of Emergency Management will participate in a two-day functional exercise testing our plans for managing during a long term power outage. The Idaho Emergency Operations Center will be activated during the exercise and will coordinate with our federal partners at FEMA, as well as our private power company partners. The exercise will provide an opportunity to identify the most effective way for IOEM to support the local jurisdictions during such an incident. For more information on upcoming exercises please contact IOEM Training and Exercise Section Chief Rob Mace at RMace@imd.idaho.gov



Rob Mace
IOEM Training and Exercise Section Chief

WELL SAFETY

Citizens in areas currently experiencing flooding, or at risk of flooding, are encouraged to create a sandbag barrier around their well(s) to prevent damage of the well casing and minimize surface water from infiltrating the well and contaminating the aquifer.

It is important to note that sandbag barriers will not protect the drinkability of your well water. These barriers are solely for minimizing flood water inflows and contamination of the ground water. The aquifer is the primary source of water for the entire valley and is used for irrigation and public water supplies.

If you suspect your well water has been contaminated, err on the side of caution. Do not use the well water until it has been tested and is determined to be contaminant free.



LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE MINIMUM HIRING AND TRAINING STANDARDS

9-1-1 Emergency Communications Officers (dispatchers) in Idaho are not currently required to meet certain hiring and training standards. The majority of Idaho's Emergency Communications Officers (ECO) are highly trained and capable, but there has been nothing mandating that. No state standard existed dictating what their basic training should be, nor were there any mandated credentialing standards of these individuals as the professionals they truly are.

This all changed with Senate Bill 1083 in the 2017 legislative session. The Idaho PSAP Standards & Training Committee put forth this legislation, through the Idaho Sheriff's Association, requiring minimum hiring and training standards for local and state ECOs. This is in keeping with direction from our parent organization, the Idaho Public Safety Communications Commission (9-1-1 Commission) and is in keeping with national initiatives and objectives, led by major industry leaders such as the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International (APCO) and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA). It is noteworthy that a majority of states now mandate varying levels of training and/or minimum hiring standards for their ECOs.

Under this legislation, which is effective on July 1, 2017, Idaho POST (Peace Officer Standards & Training) will be the certification agency. The standards require, at a minimum, a one-week (40 hours) academy, or approved online training, in basic emergency dispatch. It will also require a minimum of 40 hours of continuing education every 24 months. The change was strongly supported by numerous stakeholders, if not all, and will not increase any local or state taxes or fees.

Emergency Communications Officers are the first, first-responders, and their role/responsibility in the administration of public safety is extremely critical and consequential. If there was a compelling argument for Idaho to require certifications for hairdressers, nursing home administrators, and countless others, then how much more compelling could it be that those rendering life and death instructions to panic stricken callers also be properly credentialed and trained.

ECOs are often the first link in the chain of public safety services provided to all within Idaho. There are few, if any, other vocations that can deliver life back into a lifeless baby over the telephone, through calming instructions and reassurances while also sending emergency assistance. The ECO tirelessly and relentlessly watches over the safety of their officers, firefighters, and medics and arguably contributes the greatest role in ensuring their safety over the course of their careers. These professionals serve their communities and state 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. We owe them our thanks.

Lt. Kevin Haight
Idaho State Police



IOEM MITIGATION SECTION WELCOMES NEW PLANNER



This past quarter IOEM Mitigation Section welcomed Lorrie Pahl, Mitigation Planner, (208) 258-6508 lpahl@imd.idaho.gov, with responsibilities to provide assistance and approval of state and local all hazard mitigation plans.

Lorrie brings thirteen years of experience managing mitigation and other grants and will now increase her programmatic knowledge of mitigation. When not at work, she loves to beautify her yard, travel with her husband Scott, devote time to grandkids and family, and looks for delicious ways to improve her recipes.

IDAHO COUNTIES AND STATE PARTNERS PREPARE FOR AUGUST 21, 2017 TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

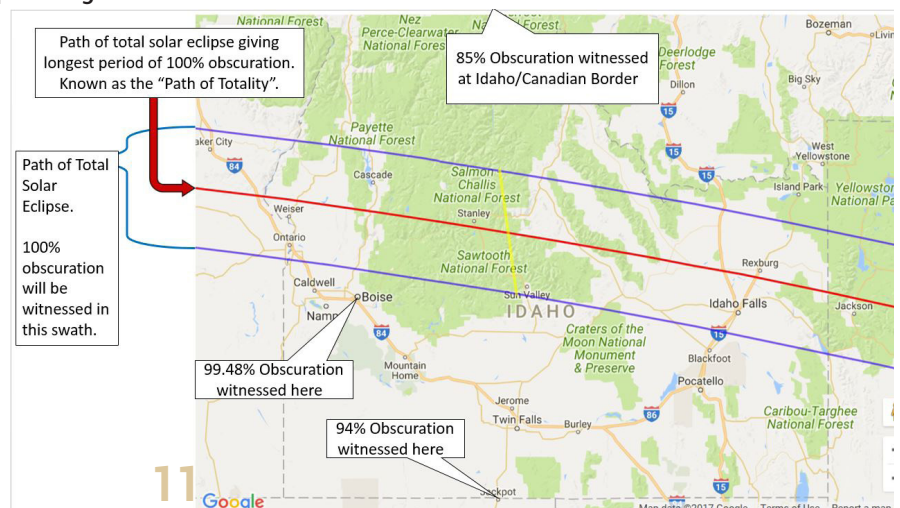
Idaho will be one of the best places in the country to see the total solar eclipse August 21, 2017. Nineteen Idaho counties are along what is called the "path of totality," a 312 mile path from west to east; stretching from Washington County to Teton County. The number of visitors to our state in the days leading up to the total solar eclipse could be in the hundreds of thousands. The website www.greatamericaneclipse.com lists Idaho's Snake River Valley as one of the best places in the entire country to view the total eclipse, an event that will take place shortly after 11:30 AM MST. In Idaho's major population center, the Treasure Valley, places like Boise will experience 99.48% obscuration.



The Idaho Eclipse Working Group, made up of multiple state agency partners, continues to meet bi-weekly to grow situational awareness. At IOEM this includes plans to activate the IDEOC in the days leading up to, and during the event, and providing training and exercise opportunities prior to the event. In the coming months, IOEM will be working with individual counties who request assistance to organize their event planning.

For counties interested Eclipse Planning workshops please contact Rob Mace RMace@imd.idaho.gov

Idaho Commerce has a resources webpage available on their site www.commerce.idaho.gov/eclipse that has information pertaining to communities, businesses, and visitors looking for information. Stay tuned for more information



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Idaho Spring Flooding Joint News Conference (April 19th)

Local and state media attend a joint news conference at the Idaho Statehouse.

Pictured: Brig. Gen. Brad Richy, IOEM, LTC Damon Delarosa, USACE, Tom Dale, Canyon County Commissioner, Jay Breidenbach, National Weather Service Meteorologist, Idaho Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter, Gary Spackman, Idaho Dept. of Water Resources