



# Idaho Office of EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

## EMERGENCY MANAGERS FROM ACROSS IDAHO DISCUSS SEVERE WEATHER RESPONSE



Dozens of county and Tribal Emergency Managers from around Idaho take part in a Tabletop Exercise (TTX) at the annual Idaho Emergency Managers Association (IEMA) meeting in Boise. IOEM facilitated the TTX that promoted discussion and coordination of responsibilities during a severe weather event.

Greetings,

As spring approaches, IOEM continues our work promoting a preparedness message throughout the state with our state and local partners. This quarter I have asked our Preparedness and Protection Branch Chief Ben Roeber to share with our stakeholders the significance and importance of March being "Flood Awareness Month."

Brad Richy, Director

Idahoans strive to be self-sufficient and resilient. We make it a priority to prepare for, and mitigate the effects of floods, fires, and severe weather. As it relates to flooding in Idaho, a great time to reinforce this preparedness mindset is during Flood Awareness Week which takes place March 18-23 this year. Almost every year in Idaho flooding related to either snow melt or severe storms causes significant damage. Many recall 2017 when flooding caused tens of millions in damage throughout the state, and led to multiple Presidential Disaster declarations. Communities learned many lessons during that time, including the importance of mitigating the future threat that exist for communities along rivers and streams. While our unique geography means that we cannot always prevent flooding in some areas of the state, we can mitigate the threat.

That's why the IOEM Mitigation Section works closely with counties and Tribes to identify threats and hazards unique to each community. It's interesting to note that across the state, flooding ranks in the top three hazards in every region so it is a statewide concern. As we develop and update our state mitigation plan we are acutely aware that preparedness and public awareness can be as important as specific mitigation projects. So learning what you can do to stay safe is critically important. Please use Flood Awareness Week to look carefully at your community and make sure the flood risks your community face are part of your emergency operations and mitigation plans.

Preparedness includes testing the plans we have in place. The last time IOEM organized and took part in a functional exercise was the summer of 2017. Fractured Grid was an incredible learning experience not just our staff, but also our county, state and federal partners. In just a few days we'll be immersed in another exercise. Operation Shared Response takes place March 5-7 and is another opportunity for us to further hone our skills in preparing for and responding to a major disaster. The exercise will include a flooding threat, and we look forward to testing our plans and procedures, and implementing new methodologies where any gaps may be identified.



On behalf of Director Richy, thank you for your help in making Idaho safer and more resilient for communities throughout the state.

Ben Roeber, IOEM Preparedness and Protection Branch Chief



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.

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The IOEM Severe Weather Tabletop exercise was part of the Idaho Emergency Managers Association annual meeting held at the Riverside Hotel. The annual event allows county and Tribal Emergency Managers and other officials to share best practices and maintain an awareness of significant events happening throughout the state.



# OPERATION SHARED RESPONSE TESTS MULTIPLE CAPABILITIES

March 2019 Exercise will include state, county, and federal players

Having a state emergency plan and testing it regularly is essential to what we do in emergency management. That's why all types of exercises – Workshops, Tabletop, Functional, and Full Scale are important.

## Operation Shared Response Players

- Ada County
- Boise County
- Canyon County
- Gem County
- Payette County
- National Weather Service
- FEMA
- USACE
- US Bureau of Reclamation
- 16 Emergency Support Functions (ESFs)

## Core Capabilities Being Tested

- Operational Communications
- Operational Coordination
- Cybersecurity

In March IOEM, along with all 16 Emergency Support Functions (ESF) and Ada, Boise, Canyon, Gem, and Payette counties, will participate in a three day functional exercise called Operation Shared Response. Also participating in the March 5-7 event are the National Weather Service, FEMA, USACE, and US Bureau of Reclamation. The exercise is the beginning of a lead up to Cascadia Rising 2022, a Full Scale Exercise involving Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Alaska, FEMA, Public Safety Canada, and US Northern Command.

The scenario involves a major earthquake and aftershocks along with the subsequent need for evacuations. This exercise will seamlessly transition to an Idaho National Guard Special Focus Exercise taking place March 8th through the 15th.

The core capabilities being tested during the Functional Exercise are Operational Communications, Operational Coordination, and Cybersecurity. The Operational Communication capability includes the processes of the technical part of communication - High Frequency (HF) radio, Ham/Amateur radio and Land Mobile Radio (LMR)

## IOEM HOLDS EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION COORDINATING GROUP DISCUSSION

Representatives from multiple Emergency Support Function (ESF) partner agencies met in mid-January to discuss, and prepare for the upcoming Operation Shared Response 2019 Exercise taking place in March. Each of Idaho's 16 ESFs will play a role in the exercise.



# IOEM RELEASES 2018 YEAR IN REVIEW



## IOEM Training and Exercise Program

Simulating threat and hazards that communities across Idaho can face is one of the most important ways IOEM helps to prepare our local, state, and federal partners for unexpected events that can threaten both lives and the economic wellbeing of our state.

On July 18, 2018, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), Boise Police Department, Boise Fire Department, and Ada County Paramedics and others were able to test their response protocols for an active assailant event. The functional exercise was planned and facilitated by IOEM to provide a realistic threat event for the agencies, and the opportunity for staff to benefit from Active Shooter training.

The official name for the exercise was the I-STEP Boise Highway Motor Carrier Full Scale Exercise (FSE) and was sponsored by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

I-STEP is TSA's Intermodal Security Training and Exercise Program. IOEM and ITD personnel acted as the

players in the exercise while the emergency services responded to the operations-based active shooter incident.

Approximately two weeks prior to this exercise a tragic event occurred in Boise when an assailant instigated a knife attack against children and a child's birthday party resulted in the death of a three-year-old girl and injuries to eight others. As a result, it was determined it would be appropriate to reclassify the exercise as an "assailant" rather than shooter.

### In 2018, the IOEM Training Exercise Section provided:

- 63 Classes across the state
- Trained 1,000+ students
- Offered Foundations of Emergency Management Basic Academy courses at Idaho State University in Pocatello to emergency planners in Idaho
- Continued preparation for a multi-jurisdictional exercise involving six counties and multiple state agencies.



## Idaho Wildfires in 2018

Wildfires in Idaho in 2018 caused significant destruction, but thankfully, no loss of life. The Rattlesnake Fire in southern Idaho County and northern Adams County had the potential for major impact to communities near Riggs. At several times evacuations were recommended by the fire management teams, and subsequently issued by Sheriff's Offices. Fortunately no homes were lost prior to containment. The Goose Rapids Fire in Nez Perce County also had the potential to go big due to its location in the hot, dry, and combustible Hells Canyon region. A strategy by wildland fire agencies to pre-stage a task force of equipment and personnel during the height of fire season was instrumental in suppressing the fire before it could expand and cause major loss of acreage.

In July, lightning ignited the Grassy Ridge Fire in Eastern Idaho. Arid conditions and high winds fueled the fast-moving blaze, prompting evacuations in the town of Dubois as the fire burned as close as two and a half miles away. The threat led to a FEMA declaration for a Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) to provide financial aid to eligible agencies that provided personnel, equipment and materials to the firefighting efforts. By the time mop-up efforts concluded, the fire had burned close to 100,000 acres.

In big fire years and when fire activity is relatively small, IOEM works with communities to plan, prepare, and mitigate the effects of fires in our state. An important and highly effective method for sharing fire information before, during, and after a fire, is our yearly wildfire awareness messaging through social media, the IOEM newsletter, and community outreach.



## Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) Deployments

Idahoans Assist with Hurricane Recovery Efforts in Florida and Devastating Wildfires in California. Mutual Aid Agreements between states makes such deployments possible.

Three IOEM staff members, along with seven Idahoans from state, county, and municipal agencies spent two weeks in Bay County, Florida to assist with recovery efforts following Hurricane Michael. The category 4 hurricane made landfall October 10, 2018. Weeks later, IOEM coordinated another deployment involving dozens of Idaho firefighting personnel who assisted with recovery efforts following California's deadliest wildfires in that state's history.

**One of the most rewarding elements was how this team from Idaho was able to quickly and seamlessly function in a hurricane response situation. It really stood out to me how well the team worked together in such a dynamic environment.**

Rob Feeley, IOEM North Central Area Field Officer

This kind of assistance is made possible through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). Under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) mutual aid agreement, Idaho personnel are paid for their time and service by the requesting state.

IOEM 2018 Year in Review now available on our website  
<https://ioem.idaho.gov/Pages/NewsRoom.aspx>

# A LOOK BACK AT THE UNSUNG HEROES OF THE 1988 YELLOWSTONE FIRES

By: Liz Davy, Island Park Sustainable Fire Community  
Matthew Ward, The Nature Conservancy

A burning cigarette butt landed on a pile of sawdust, soaked with oil and gas. And like that, a firewood cutter started the North Fork "Yellowstone" Fire, a fire that would burn for four months and cover 531,182 acres. Eventually it affected over 1.6 million acres and almost burned down the town of West Yellowstone as well as the historic Old Faithful Lodge.

West Yellowstone was under threat, and residents, of course, were concerned they would lose all they that had worked for. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints' leaders drew on their connections and organized a response that supplemented the federal agencies' actions. Specifically, they asked for irrigation sprinklers to surround West Yellowstone, in hopes that they could create a wall of water.

The farmers operated the pump's irrigation lines 24/7, without pay. On the day now known as Black Saturday, the situation went from bad to terrible. With the fire fast approaching Old Faithful Lodge, firefighters evacuated the area. The last people to leave were the farmers operating the pumps. Thankfully, none of the farmers lost their lives and the lodge and town of West Yellowstone both remained standing.



Wildfires affect not only human structures but wildlife habitat. Firefighters encounter a Bison as it escapes the blaze.



To commemorate the 30-year anniversary of these fires, the Island Park Sustainable Fire Community organized several events to engage our community members. We were fortunate to have several farmers who had been a part of the 1988 fire response efforts come and present on their experience. One of the most notable was Leon Keith Birch; he was both humble and graphic about the wall of flames and the work it took to save West Yellowstone and the Old Faithful Lodge.

Island Park Sustainable Fire Community's approach to fire adaptation is multifaceted, and not solely focused on wildfire response. We invest in strategically placed defensible space, interagency partnerships, controlled burns and outreach.



# WORKING TO KEEP IDAHO ELECTIONS SECURE

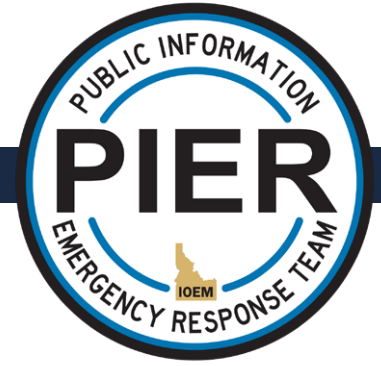
Hundreds of State of Idaho employees, along with employees of multiple Idaho counties, participated in an Election Security Table Top Exercise at the Riverside Hotel in Boise last month. A Tabletop exercise or TTX is a discussion based exercise that allows officials to test protocols and processes for various threats, hazards, and risks that could occur. IOEM Staff were among the facilitators of the exercise. The purpose of the exercise was to test the security of election procedures, expand general knowledge on Cybersecurity issues, and prepare for upcoming elections.

A critical component of being prepared for emergencies is participating in exercises and learning how to mitigate risks beforehand. The discussion-based exercise put on by the Idaho Secretary of State was designed by a group of Harvard students to test the security of our election process. The Harvard initiative is called "Defending Digital Democracy."





# MEMBERS OF THE 2019 IDAHO PIER TEAM DISCUSS UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES



Brig. Gen. Mike Garshak, Adjutant General of Idaho and Commander of the Idaho National Guard greets members of the Idaho Public Information Emergency Response Team. (PIER) The team is comprised of Public Information Subject matter experts from across the state. Public Information Officers (PIOs) who work for state agencies, can be collaterally assigned to the team during a state disaster declaration.

The PIER team is a state resource and provides assistance when needed during an emergency activation. Outside of emergencies, and state disaster declarations, the team works collaboratively among state and federal agencies, and with public health districts, county emergency management offices, as well as local police and fire departments on important messaging on a variety of issues. When activated, the team works in the Joint Information Center (JIC). The team's mission is to provide the right information to the right people at the right time.



IOEM Joint Information Center (JIC)



New members of the Idaho PIER Team include Marissa Morrison, Governor Brad Little's new Press Secretary. Morrison, a Pocatello native, has a background in television and has covered the Idaho Legislature. Morrison's goal in her new role is to ensure there is transparency and accessibility as it relates to public information and media.

PIER Team members aren't just state agency Public information Officers. The team includes public information subject matter experts from a broad cross section of state, federal, and municipal agencies. Kathleen Tuck is the Communications lead for the Nampa School district.



PIER Team member Kerry Hammon is the public information officer for the City of Idaho Falls, and the Idaho Falls Fire Department. She has extensive experience including a deployment to Florida last year following Hurricane Michael under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).

# WHAT I LEARNED WORKING IN A REAL WORLD JOINT INFORMATION CENTER FOLLOWING A MAJOR NATURAL DISASTER

An Idaho PIER Team PIO shares her EMAC experience

In April 2018 I attended a FEMA Advanced PIO training. During the opening remarks one of the instructors said, "We guarantee all of you will be in tears by the end of the week. We are going to put each of you under extreme stress to get you out of your comfort zones and used to working in disaster situations." He went on to say, "Then, at the end of the week we will tell you our why – why we are in this profession and why we share our knowledge and experience with others." Only six short months after that training I found myself working in a Joint Information Center (JIC) inside a fully-activated Emergency Operation Center (EOC) in Bay County, Florida following Hurricane Michael, the third most intense Atlantic hurricane since Hurricane Andrew in 1992. Bay County is where I found my why.

On October 17, 2018 our team of ten made our way to the Atlanta airport and then on to Florida, weaving around downed



power poles and trees. Due to communication challenges from the outages, our journey was full of unknowns. What our team did know was our initial mission of managing and operating a base camp for EOC personnel and first responders. On day three our mission shifted from the base camp to working into the incident management team rotation inside the EOC. Upon my initial arrival to the JIC, there were ten PIOs, most of them were from the state of Florida and most came as single resources. I was one of only two PIOs who came with an incident management team. There were two lead PIOs from Bay County who supervised and provided oversight to all communications that came out of the JIC. They had direct interaction with local and national media. Each of us had our strengths, and our assigned tasks matched those strengths. Mine included writing and editing a daily press release, posting on their social media pages, and writing the situation report, just like I would

do here at home. Our messaging focused on informing people about what was going on, where they could find food and shelter and how they could start rebuilding their lives.

I could talk for days about the experience and the lessons learned, but for this purpose I will share four takeaways: 1) Take advantage of every training opportunity possible; 2) Build on each other's strengths; 3) During an incident have one easily accessible email address, such as a Gmail account, where all entities send information to and where every PIO pulls information from. (This was extremely valuable once power was restored.); and 4) Never forget your why.

My why hit me like a ton of bricks the day I traveled to Mexico Beach where 90-95 percent of the structures were either destroyed or completely blown off their foundations. Check points kept residents from entering Mexico Beach because the damage was so extensive and there was no power; in fact, there was no longer a power grid in Bay County. On the road to Mexico Beach thousands of trees were snapped in half and people's belongs were scattered in trees, on the road and hanging from collapsing structures that once were homes. I cannot even begin to adequately describe the devastation. One of the hardest things to do was to pack up and leave knowing that there were people still living in those conditions while trying to rebuild everything they had lost. Sixty-one people lost their lives as a result of Hurricane Michael, thankfully most evacuated before it hit.



Perspective – that was the word that kept coming to mind throughout the two week deployment. This experience will forever put things into perspective for me, both personally and professionally. I am extremely grateful for the training I received and for the support we were given back at home; it made a world of difference. When asked if I would do it again my answer is always, absolutely and without hesitation.

Kerry Hammon, Public Information Officer  
Idaho Falls Fire Department & Region 3 IIMAST PIO



# HAZMAT/SPECIAL TEAMS – LOOKING AHEAD TO 2019

Jeff Rylee, Hazmat/Special Teams Program Manager

The State of Idaho Hazmat/WMD plan was tested on several serious incidents in 2018 including a leak in the main pipeline that brings fuel to the Treasure Valley in the Buhl area that caused the shutdown of the pipeline and long term cleanup solutions. Another significant event was an explosion involving magnesium in Owyhee County that resulted in one death, several contaminated workers, and a massive response from multiple levels of government and private resources. These incidents were in addition to the normal hazardous materials releases throughout the state involving varied situations and chemicals. The State Hazmat/WMD plan continues to provide for that “Common Operating Picture” that results in a comprehensive response.



Pipeline leak outside Buhl, Idaho  
April 2018

In addition to the actual incidents, IOEM co-sponsored a tabletop exercise known as the “Lightning Creek TTX” that involved a crude oil train derailment, and the response of local, tribal, state, federal, and private responders. Around 120 participants worked together in various aspects of the response to discuss how the problem would be addressed and ultimately solved. 2019 will bring more planning, training, and responding to numerous incidents around the State. The Regional Hazardous Materials Response Teams will begin planning for “Hazmat Week 2020”. This is a week of technician level training that involves hazardous materials technicians from around the State who engage in training courses that allow them to fulfill their federal legal obligation to maintain competency in hazardous materials response technology and tactics. Instructors from around the nation will present classes for the Idaho Hazmat Technicians.

The Regional Teams from IIMAST (Idaho Incident Management and Support Team) continue to develop depth and capability to support emergency efforts around the State and country. A recent All Hazards Incident Management Team course in Lewiston in December 2018 has helped to further the development of the northern Idaho component of IIMAST. These teams are made up of individuals from multiple disciplines that train to assist communities in organizing the response to Type 3 disasters. Stay tuned for more to come about this effort.

The Idaho Regional Bomb Squads continually train and respond to those “explosive” type incidents. These teams respond to materials and devices that could present a danger of explosion and render them safe. As usual, a variety of military ordnance, unknown devices, and commercial explosives are found and/or discovered throughout the State and need to be safely disposed.

The Idaho Technical Rescue Teams (ITRT) continue to train and prepare for those types of rescues that would require a technical expertise to gain entry and extricate any persons trapped. These incidents include confined spaces, high angle rescues, engulfment issues in trenches and silos, heavy machinery extrication, and collapsed structures. These teams are dedicated to maintaining the skills needed to provide this service to the citizens of Idaho.



US Ecology Explosion  
November 2018

2019 will certainly bring new challenges to the IOEM Hazmat/Special Teams program and those dedicated departments and individuals, who make up these teams, will endeavor to provide for the safety of the citizens of Idaho.

# IOEM LAUNCHES NEW YOUTUBE CHANNEL TO PROMOTE PREPAREDNESS MESSAGING

Bringing the right information to the right people at the right time has always been a cornerstone of IOEM's mission to create a safe and prepared Idaho. Part of this means a willingness to adapt to contemporary communication standards and technologies. This is why we are proud to announce the creation of the IOEM YouTube channel!

YouTube was the most used Google subsidiary in 2018, with an average of 1.8 billion users visiting every month. As more and more people turn to YouTube as a source for news, entertainment, and general information, IOEM will continue putting out our own videos and fully activating this critically important communication tool.

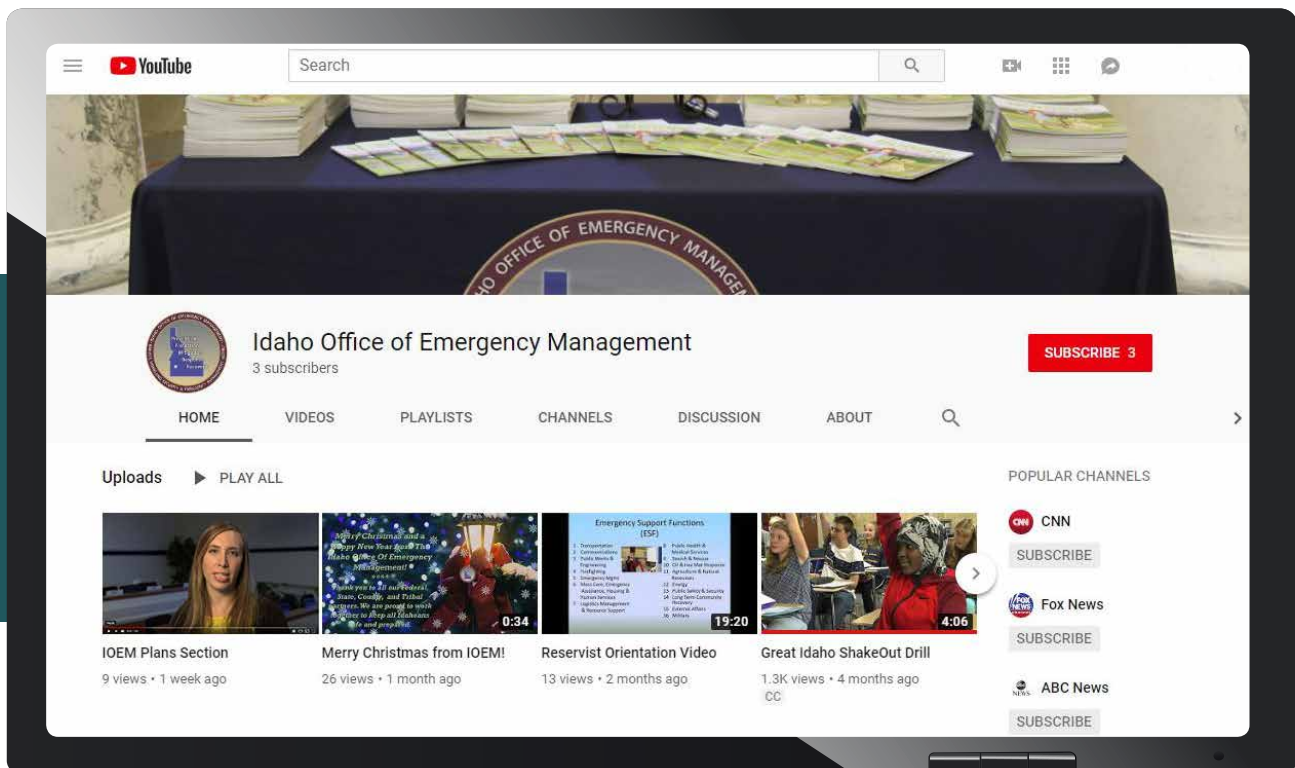
We have already utilized the IOEM YouTube channel to post a message on drone safety and an instructional video on what to do during an Earthquake! Our latest video is an introduction to the IOEM Plans Section, and how they work to craft preparedness plans for the state of Idaho.

"Our plan is to use this channel to expand the amount of preparedness resources and materials that the citizens of Idaho have access to," said Ben Roeber, IOEM Preparedness and Protection Branch Chief. "This movement is yet another arm of our general outreach that will help to ensure self-sufficiency in the event of an emergency or natural hazard."

"Idaho is known for its particularly resilient citizens, and endowing them with resources that foster that resiliency is a priority that the development of this YouTube channel will aid." Mallory Wilson, IOEM Plans Section Chief.

We are excited to generate this new content and continue to promote IOEM through YouTube. Please make sure to find our new channel and subscribe to us @IdahoOEM.

[Janice Witherspoon](#)  
IOEM Social Media Coordinator



# THE REVIEWS ARE IN - IDAHO LIBRARIANS LOVE THE IDA BOOK!

Digital copy available to view at

<https://ioem.idaho.gov/Resources/PDF/IdaBook-DIGITAL-08222018.pdf>

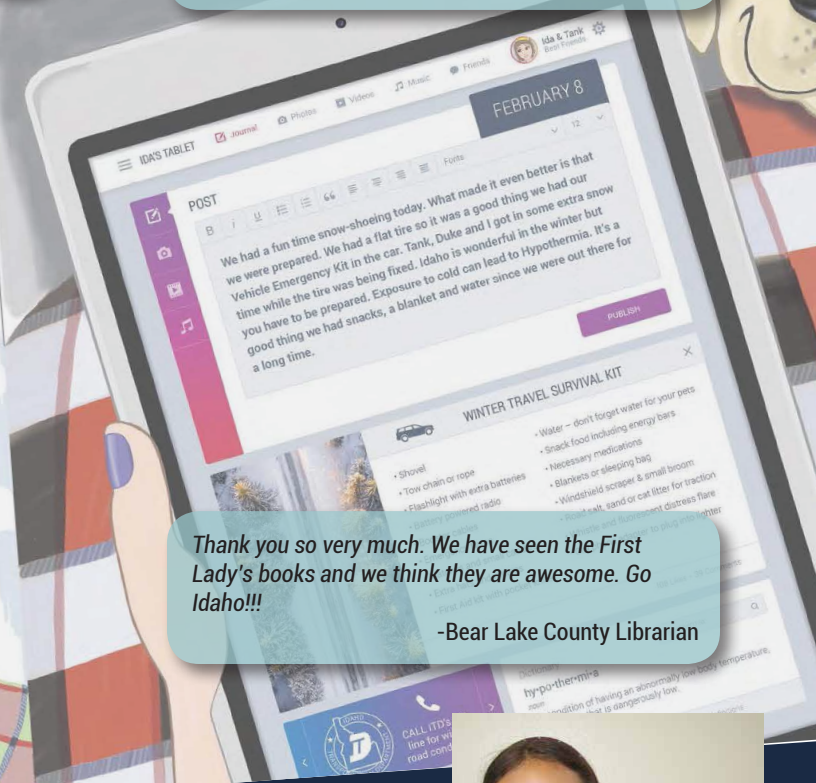


We received the books yesterday. Thank you so much!!

-Bickel Elementary Secretary

Wow! Thank you for sending the books! We love when we receive a donation and can have fun distributing them to children in our community! Can't wait until our box arrives!

-Blackfoot Librarian



Thank you so very much. We have seen the First Lady's books and we think they are awesome. Go Idaho!!!

-Bear Lake County Librarian



What I like about this book is how to stay safe. Now I know what to get if I go camping or go on an adventure. This books is very helpful, thank you!

-Emilie Broyles

Always try to be prepared! I liked how many different things they showed so we can be prepared for any kind of an emergency.

-Hailey Wilkes



This book is great because it talks about great and amazing safety tips.

-Kaija Stevens



I like the book because I know what to pack for different emergencies.

-Presley Woody



Get 'em while they last. If you would like a copy of *Ida Prepares* for your local public or school library contact [eduncan@imd.idaho.gov](mailto:eduncan@imd.idaho.gov)

# CONGRATULATIONS TO JULIE CROOKS

IOEM Employee of the Quarter



IOEM is pleased to announce our Employee of the Quarter, Julie Crooks. In her role as Finance Grant Specialist, Julie's positive support of the IOEM team is recognized and appreciated by all her co-workers.

Whatever the task, Julie takes it on and conquers- even tasks that may be difficult or routine. Due to her longevity (almost 30 years!) and agency knowledge, Julie has been instrumental in implementing new procedures more efficiently and effectively. We recently began HMGP reporting in GMS; Julie took on the task, and has guided the sub-recipients so effectively that the transition was painless. The strong relationships she has built with the jurisdictions are golden. We appreciate Julie's commitment and significant contributions to IOEM.

## IOEM WELCOMES NEW PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MANAGER

Jon Hanian joins IOEM as the agency's new Public Private Partnership Program Manager. Jon served most recently as the spokesman and senior advisor to former Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter and brings significant experience working with Idaho's vibrant business community.

Jon has lived and worked in Boise, Idaho for the past 29 years. He has a BA in Government from Southeastern Louisiana University and a Master's in History from Boise State University. He served as the Governor's liaison to the Public Information Emergency Response (PIER) Team and was responsible for all internal and external communication for the Office of Governor.

Prior to his twelve years working in the Governor's office, Jon spent 20 years as a journalist in roles including news director, managing editor, and investigative reporter at stations in the Gulf South and Pacific Northwest. In that time he has covered a wide-range of events including natural and man-made disasters from forest fires in the west, the Columbine shootings in Littleton, Colorado, the Ruby Ridge stand-off and trial in Idaho, to ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. His Master's thesis involved the production of an hour-long documentary that took a family of Bosnians, who relocated to Idaho, back to their war-torn country providing an intimate portrait of refugee life and survival.

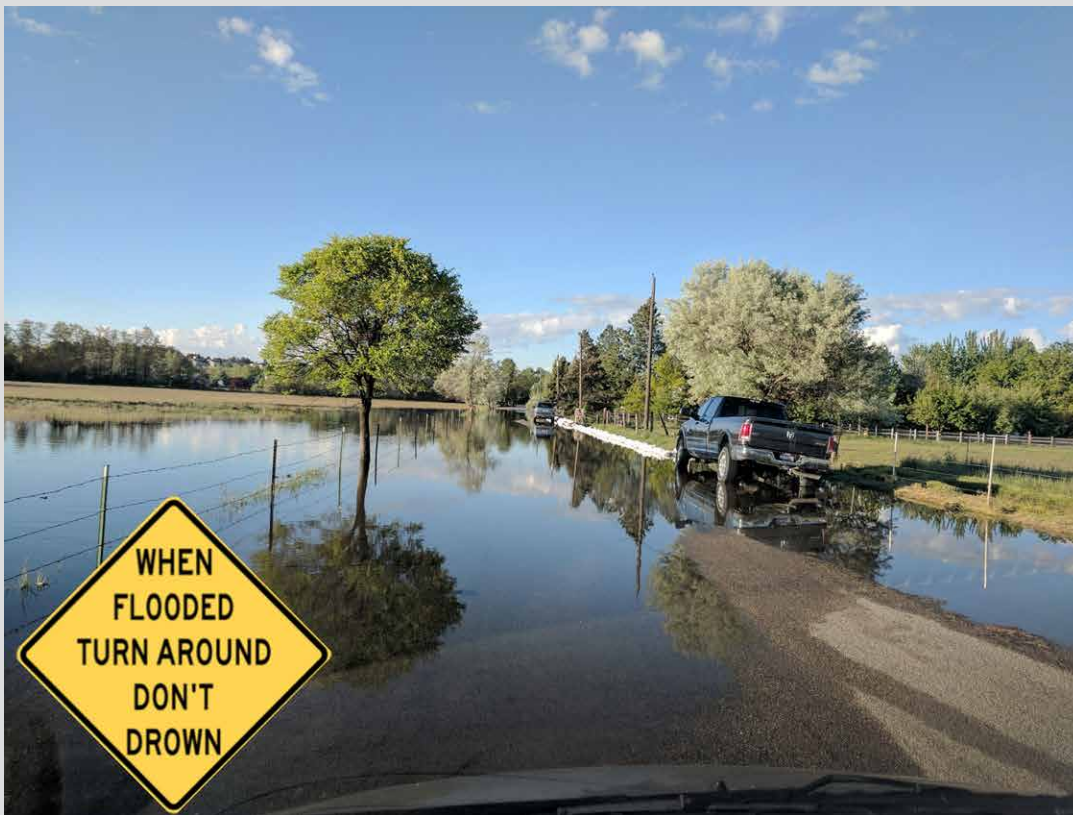
A former Sunday school teacher and scout leader, Jon has served on two non-profit boards, including Very Special Arts Idaho and the Idaho Alliance for the Mentally Ill. His diverse background will be invaluable to IOEM and our county and Tribal partners in assisting to foster relationships and agreements with private industry. He and his wife Diane spend their free time working on their cabin in the mountains, they share three children.





**Idaho Office of Emergency Management**  
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## MARCH IS FLOOD AWARENESS MONTH



- **6 inches** of water can knock over an adult
- **12 inches** can carry away a small car
- Flood water can be contaminated with hazardous materials, such as sharp debris, pesticides, fuel, and untreated sewage.
- If you come across Flood Water after a disaster, make sure to **Turn Around, Don't Drown.**

For more tips and safety information, follow us @IdahoOEM on Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube

