



**Maryland Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (MD VOAD)
Annual Meeting Minutes
Friday, 12 March 2004**

This meeting of MD VOAD was held at the Chesapeake Conference Center of the Seventh-Day Adventists located Columbia, MD.

CHAIRPERSON'S WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Mickey Gomez, who is the chairperson for MD VOAD, began the meeting by welcoming everyone with some opening remarks and thanked everyone for their attendance at the meeting.

HURRICANE ISABEL – LONG-TERM RECOVERY ACTIVITIES

Kevin Burr, of the American Red Cross (ARC) Central Maryland Chapter, stated that the burden of long-term recovery is increasing being transferred to not-for-profit organizations and that there is still a need for volunteers to assist in long-term recovery efforts. To that end, he introduced Gwendolyn Ross, of the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC). NCCC may be able to offer volunteer resources to the Isabel unmet needs relief effort. Ms. Ross stated that volunteers can be made ready very quickly, but would need adequate lodging and transportation arrangements for any projects located south of the Baltimore Area. NCCC can have a 10-person team available immediately for 3-4 weeks of work and could also deploy 1 or 2 more teams on a long-term basis.

The NCCC is an Americorps program and their volunteers can assist the Maryland Interfaith Recovery Team (MIRT) by entering case data and working in the field cleaning/repairing homes impacted by Isabel. The NCCC volunteers would be originating from Perry Point, MD (Cecil County).

MIRT is a cooperative arrangement designed to address the unmet needs still present in communities affected by Isabel. MIRT has been in need of volunteers to perform casework (processing individual requests for assistance) for the past several months. The NCCC along with the renewal of a state worker volunteer program, which was last used following the LaPlata tornado, should help provide some extra help to the MIRT.

Rev. Norman Payne, Chairman of the MIRT, was present to discuss utilization of NCCC resources with Ms. Ross. Hurdles to overcome include how to transport the NCCC volunteers, where to house them, and will look to provide them with ample work.

Liz Gibson, FEMA Region III Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL), reminded all MD VOAD members that the MIRT needs money to perform its mission. Ms. Gibson encouraged all

members of MD VOAD to solicit their respective organizations for contributions to MIRT. MEMA will work on getting public information out so residents can contribute to MIRT.

EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION (ESF) 15 – DONATIONS AND VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY UPDATE

Steve Welzant, the All-Hazards Planner for the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), gave a brief update regarding activities associated with the improvement of ESF 15. Steve recently completed a draft standard operating procedure (SOP) document to help establish a plan of action for future donations and volunteer management endeavors. This SOP was distributed to members of MD VOAD for further comments and additions. Mr. Welzant stated that every member of MD VOAD and ESF 15 needs to input their agency specific information into the SOP to make it effective and practical for use in disaster response and recovery.

The group felt that it would be a good idea to develop a canned press release for the ESF 15 SOP that can be tailored for release in a moments notice. MEMA will add one to the SOP.

GOSV, the ESF 15 lead, will coordinate future ESF 15 meetings to further develop ESF 15 planning. The next ESF 15 Meeting is scheduled for 19 May 2004 @ 10 AM at MEMA.

MEMA ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATE

Mr. Welzant also provided a brief update regarding organizational changes that are ongoing at MEMA. As of 5 January 2004, Mr. John Droneburg assumed the position of MEMA Director from Don Keldsen. Mr. Keldsen will remain with MEMA and serve as MEMA's emergency management coordinator for the National Capital Region (NCR).

The new organizational structure will coincide with the format included in the Federal National Incident Management System and will feature a Director at the top with four Deputy Directors, who will be respectively leading their own divisions. Ruth Mascari is now Deputy Director for Plans, Wally Mueller is the Deputy Director for Budget and Logistics, Russell Strickland is the Deputy Director for Operations (replacing Paul Mitchell, who was formerly the Operations and Readiness Director. He has chosen to move on to pursue other interests), and Warren Campbell is the Deputy Director for IT and Communications.

211 INIATIVE IN MARYLAND

Cole McMahon, of the United Way, gave a presentation on the soon-to-be implemented 211 phone system. The FCC has designated 211 as the national access number for human and health services. It will act as a clearinghouse for information that individuals can use to locate various community services. Agencies can use it by referring individuals who mistakenly call their number. Maryland is shooting for statewide implementation of the system for 2005.

Four existing call centers, including MD First Call for Help, will serve as jump points for the new system. Primary function will be crisis response and is designed to lessen the load on 911 centers. The call takers will be trained information and referral specialists.

Mr. McMahon stated that the United Way would like to be more involved with MD VOAD as 211 gets going.

MD VOAD Chair Mickey Gomez called for a vote from MD VOAD members to support an official endorsement of 211 of Maryland. The vote passed unanimously and MD VOAD will sign an official resolution of endorsement for the system.

ISABEL RELIEF EFFORTS – AGENCY REPORTS

American Red Cross (ARC) – Kevin Burr stated that the ARC will be reorganized under a regional – instead of state – response mechanism. Kevin added that there will be lay offs (including Ms. Cathy LaFleur, of the Central Maryland Chapter). He said the regional office in Raleigh, NC, will be answering the calls for help. He said there will be a lot fewer people to deal with all the problems that all the regional chapters used to deal with (i.e. when a chapter makes a call for help, the region will get the call, not the state ARC). He made the announcement because by the next VOAD meeting, these changes will be in place. He voiced concern that the GEMAC has a heavy focus on law enforcement and antiterrorism issues and little dealings with the human need. ARC supported responders at the water taxi accident with food. ARC has had mobile cleanup and relief teams on the road in Baltimore County. They will also be supporting and animal rescue training in May.

Church of the Brethren – Jane Yount stated that the Brethren will continue to be involved in rebuilding and repair efforts, and will maintain and refocus these efforts once the casework process has established target areas, projects.

D.C. Cares – Lynn Crabb stated that they are currently working on a volunteer coordination plan for the National Capital Region (NCR) and are also coordinating VISTA volunteers to perform disaster preparedness outreach activities in Prince George’s and Montgomery Counties, as well as, Washington D.C. A volunteer recruiting and awareness event entitled “Serve-A-Thon” is planned for May 22nd.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – Liz Gibson and Betty Shumate announced that FEMA is keeping the travel trailers open. Despite the many rumors, they are not taking them away. Over 200 travel trailers remain in use in Maryland. FEMA reps make monthly visits to Isabel victims still living in the trailers and discuss issues and short to long-term housing plans.

The Governor’s Office on Service and Volunteerism (GOSV) – Robin Frazier stated that GOSV will be meeting with both of the Interfaith Recovery Teams to assist with volunteer needs.

Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) – Ollie Davidson reminded the members who were present that the HSUS is having a convention in Philadelphia with a focus on “Animals in Disasters”.

Lutheran Disaster Response – Cindy Camp stated that Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries is the local regional partner. They have contributed \$40,000 to casework on the eastern and western

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shores of the Bay. They have targeted “Camp Noah” for summer outreach to affected Baltimore and eastern shore. There is also a 50-person mission team coming in May.

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) – Gail Wowk stated that DHMH has four teams of mental health providers working with Isabel survivors and they are continuing work on the disaster medical corps (there are 5 approved units/groups statewide).

The Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) – Vicki Rideout stated that DHR maintains its own command center and has been very busy with casework activities designed to assist storm victims. DHR established the Community Emergency Relief Tracking System (CERTS) to help manage and coordinate all of the casework. The MIRT teams will be using information from CERTS and going door to door to help individuals and families. MIRT deals with everything west of the Bay and ESIRT deals with everything east of the Bay in MD. The Maryland Insurance Administration also has teams of case workers out in the field to assist victims with insurance issues.

The Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) – Fred Frey added to Steve Welzant’s earlier MEMA update and added that leftover supplies in the donations warehouse (at the GSA Depot on Eastern Blvd.) were turned over to the GSA and that anyone needing some of the cleaning solution should speak now.

The Maryland Interfaith Recovery Team (MIRT) – Norman Payne stated that he was pleased with the recent efforts being made to secure volunteer help for the MIRT.

United Methodist Church (UMC) – Sandy Ferguson stated that UMCOR is working with the MIRT to perform case management. Sandy thanked the Lutherans on behalf of UMCOR for their financial assistance. UMC will be hosting a training module entitled “Silver Linings”, which is designed to be used following disasters and other traumatic events to address mental health concerns (03 April 2004 in Turner’s Station).

The Volunteer Center Serving Howard County – Mickey Gomez stated that they are fulfilling their priority goal of assigning volunteers before events.

OTHER BUSINESS

THE NEXT MD VOAD QUARTERLY MEETING IS TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR FRIDAY, 11 JUNE 2004 FROM 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

LOCATION TBD.