NEW YORK STATE | Disaster Preparedness Commission

2014 Annual Report

Prepared by the
New York State Division of
Homeland Security & Emergency Services
Office of Emergency Management

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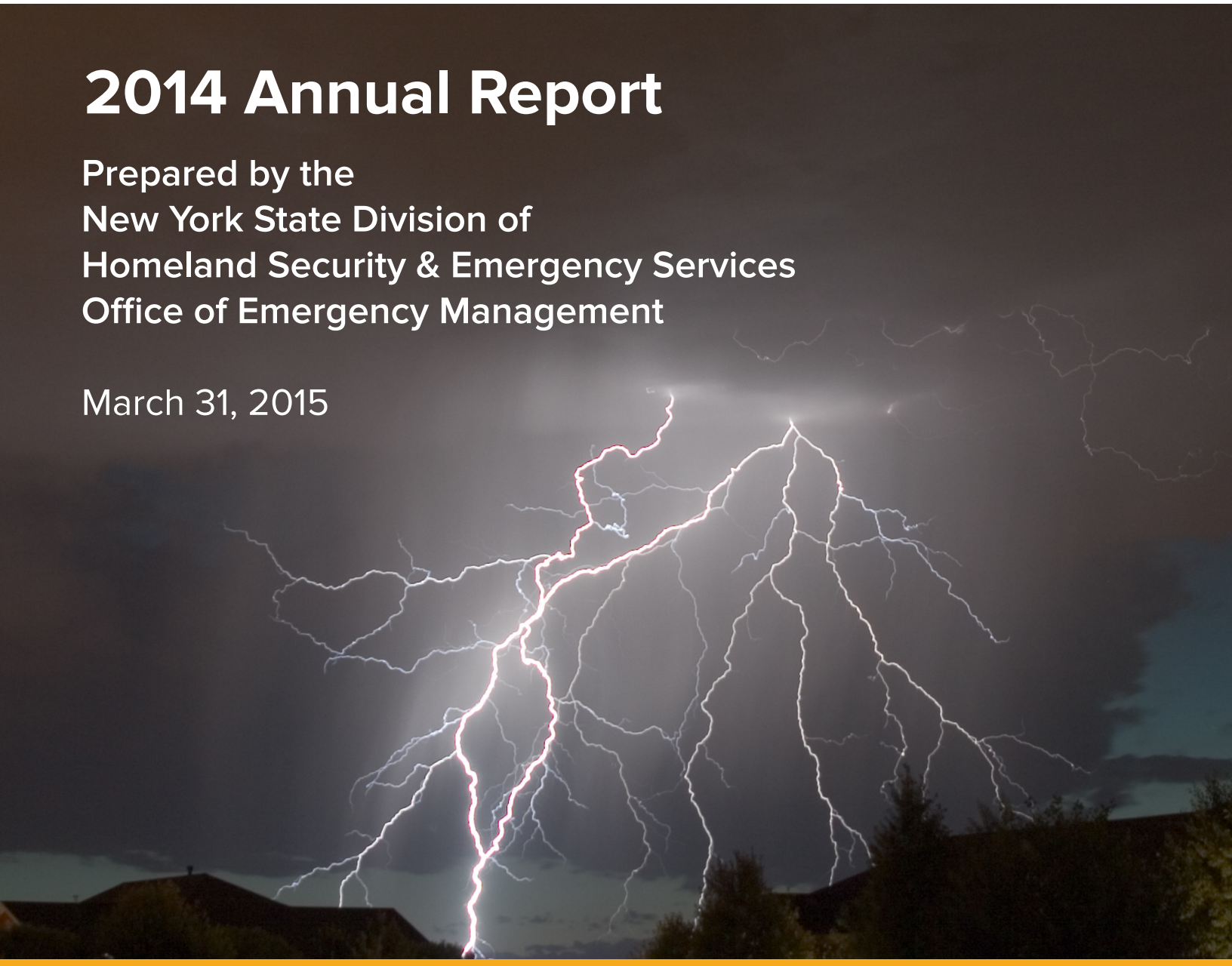

Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor

John P. Melville
Chairman

Members of the NYS Disaster Preparedness Commission

Office for the Aging
Department of Agriculture and Markets
Office of Children and Family Services
Department of Corrections and Community Supervision
Division of Criminal Justice Services
Education Department
Empire State Development Corporation
Energy Research and Development Authority
Department of Environmental Conservation
Department of Financial Services
Office of Fire Prevention and Control
Office of General Services
Department of Health
Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services
Division of Homes and Community Renewal
Office of Information Technology Services
Department of Labor
Office of Mental Health
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Division of Military and Naval Affairs
Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Office for People with Developmental Disabilities
Port Authority of NY and NJ
Public Service Commission
Division of State Police
Department of State
Thruway Authority
Department of Transportation
Office of Victim Services
American Red Cross

INTRODUCTION

The New York State Disaster Preparedness Commission (DPC) is comprised of the commissioners, directors, and chairpersons of 28 State agencies and one volunteer organization, the American Red Cross. The DPC's responsibilities include preparing State disaster plans; directing State disaster operations and coordinating the operations with those of local government; and coordinating federal, State and private recovery efforts.

New York State Executive Law, Article 2-B, enacted in 1978, shifted emphasis from civil defense to all-hazards preparedness activities and missions, created the DPC, and assigned responsibility for off-site radiological emergency preparedness for commercial nuclear power plants

OVERVIEW

In 2014, New York State experienced a variety of natural disasters that required the activation of the State Emergency Operations Center (State EOC) on several occasions, as well as the mobilization of DPC member agencies.

Between January and March of 2014, there were seven (7) severe winter weather events that prompted Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to declare States of Emergency in locations across the State and forced the closure of major roadways. None of these events reached the threshold to qualify for federal disaster relief; however, severe flooding from the Buffalo Creek in mid-January triggered the release of $500,000 in State funding to cover the costs of recovery in the Town of West Seneca.

Between April and August of 2014, there were five (5) major flooding events. In late April, flooding in the New York City metropolitan area resulted in Small Business Administration (SBA) loans being made available to six counties. In mid-May, flooding in the Finger Lakes regions was significant enough to warrant more than $28 million in federal disaster assistance funding to 11 Western New York counties and SBA loans for five counties. On May 23, Governor Cuomo launched the Yates County Disaster Recovery Assistance Program, which provided up to $10,000 in State-funded disaster assistance for homeowners and renters, and up to $25,000 in recovery funds for small businesses.

In mid-to-late November 2014, a severe winter weather system brought up to seven (7) feet of snow over several days to some areas in Western New York, again forcing the closure of several major roadways (I-84 and the New York State Thruway), and resulting in a State of Emergency for ten (10) counties. On December 22, 2014, Governor Cuomo announced that federal disaster assistance would be made available to nine (9) counties that assessed more than $49 million in response and recovery costs. SBA loans were also made available for five affected counties.

Other significant weather-related events in 2014 included:

- An apartment complex fire in Shelton, CT on January 6 that resulted in SBA loan assistance for three affected lower Hudson Valley counties.
- A gas explosion in New York City's East Harlem neighborhood on March 12 that caused a building collapse and resulted in SBA loan ass istance for four counties.
- In late June and early July, heavy rain and high winds, some from Hurricane Arthur (July 4), affected areas in the Capital Region, Hudson Valley, New York City, and Long Island areas, and severe storms caused power outages and damage to several locations in central New York State. (One particularly affected area was the Town of Niskayuna in Schenectady County, which received more than four inches of rain on June 25, and another 2.2 inches of rain on July 2.)
- Flash flooding in Long Island in mid-August that brought more than 13 inches of rain in a six-hour period, resulting in SBA loan assistance for both Nassau and Suffolk counties.

New York State also prepared for, responded to, and recovered from several non-weather-related events in 2014. From April 28 to May 2, more than 600 New York National Guard Soldiers and Airmen participated in a U.S. Department of Defense-sponsored exercise at the State Preparedness Training Center (SPTC) in Oriskany. The Homeland Response Force (HRF) exercise provided the opportunity for State emergency managers and local first responders to practice working with the National Guard and other military forces, and provided local emergency responders with a scenario and venue to hone skills and refine local plans for dealing with chemical, biological, and radiological emergencies. The U.S. Department of Defense chose the New York National Guard as one of only ten (10) units in the country to assist state officials and local responders as a certified Homeland Response Force.

On September 30, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced that a patient infected with the Ebola virus in West Africa had entered the U.S. (Dallas, TX), prompting Governor Cuomo and New Jersey Governor Chris Christie to announce additional screening protocols for Ebola at both JFK (in New York City) and Newark Liberty International Airports (in New Jersey). Additionally, Governor Cuomo designated ten Ebola Treatment Centers across the State, hospitals specifically designed to protect the public health and treat Ebola. On October 23, New York City's Health Commissioner confirmed that a doctor returning home from Guinea was diagnosed with the Ebola virus in New York City and was treated at Bellevue Hospital, one of the ten centers prepared to treat patients with the virus. On November 11, Dr. Craig Spencer was released from treatment and given a clean bill of health.

Upon Dr. Spencer's release, Governor Cuomo lauded the efforts of emergency and medical personnel, and the New York State and New York City Departments of Health, saying, "Today is proof that proper preparedness and erring on the side of caution can save lives."

As Governor Cuomo has often stated, we are living in a time where recurring severe weather events (such as Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee in 2011, and Superstorm Sandy in 2012) have essentially created a "new normal" – a reality where New Yorkers and their communities face major natural disasters on a regular basis. Such events necessitate the need for coordinated planning efforts

to mitigate the effects of future weather-related and man-made emergencies. To address this reality and take measures to prevent the loss of lives, properties, businesses, and other devastating effects of emergencies, the DPC member agencies met twice during 2014 to discuss various aspects of the State's preparedness, response, and recovery activities.

Member agency representatives were briefed on a broad range of preparedness issues, including Governor Cuomo's launch of the first-ever statewide Emergency Management Certification and Training Program. In addition, DPC meetings included updates on the Citizen Preparedness Corps Training initiative, crude oil transportation safety efforts, and the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) Office of Emergency Management (OEM)'s planning and preparedness activities.

The DPC member agency representatives also participated in disaster response exercises, which presented a hypothetical disaster scenario and then engaged members in various aspects of response and recovery actions. Similar training activities are scheduled for member agencies in 2015.
At the core of Governor Cuomo's comprehensive strategy for effectively and efficiently preparing for and responding to disasters is the essential need for better training, planning, and coordination. The DPC plays an important role in this process by ensuring that all member State agencies stay updated on all relevant disaster preparedness and response activities, while strengthening intra-agency coordination and cooperation during an emergency. The DPC will continue to fulfill Governor Cuomo's mandate that coordinated emergency preparedness and response efforts are designed to enhance the protection and safety of all New Yorkers.

DPC member agencies made great strides in 2014 in improving the State's resiliency, improving emergency preparedness capabilities to respond to future events by embracing Governor Cuomo's major initiatives in the wake of Superstorm Sandy.

New York State Stockpile Program

Governor Cuomo recognized the need for a region-based response capability to man-made and natural disasters. It was this vision that inspired the creation of the New York State Regional Emergency Response Stockpile Initiative, which established nine strategic locations to house emergency assets statewide.

The Office of General Services (OGS) has also embarked on and completed an exhaustive and all-encompassing maintenance effort for pumps, light towers, and generators in the stockpiles. OGS continues to develop and refine the use of the PeopleSoft inventory system for stockpile items. In addition to spearheading this effort, OGS has been training its partners at DHSES on how to use the system.

Strategic Fuel Reserve and Gas Station Back-Up Power Program

New York State established the country's first State Strategic Gasoline Reserve to avoid shortages for first responders and communities. The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) completed the development of two regional fuel reserves. The Downstate Strategic Fuel Reserve contains nearly three (3) million gallons of gasoline and ethanol, and the Upstate Strategic Fuel Reserve contains one-point-four (1.4) million gallons of diesel fuel, plus one-point-four (1.4) million gallons of gasoline and ethanol located at six separate distribution terminals across Upstate New York. The program is designed to fill a future supply gap in the routine resupply of fuel caused by an event leading to a declared emergency, as during Superstorm Sandy. The severity of the fuel emergency situation will determine whether gasoline and diesel fuel from the reserves will be released to meet fuel needs while the industry recovers from a disruption in routine fuel supply operations.

In collaboration with the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets, NYSERDA is administering the Gas Station Back-Up Power Program. The program helps retail gasoline stations comply with statutory provisions that require certain strategically located stations to be prepared to deploy and install an emergency generator in the event of a declared energy or fuel supply emergency. The Gas Station Back-up Power Program is designed to support station owner implementation costs associated with the installation of a transfer switch and related electrical modifications needed to accept a portable emergency generator or the installation of a permanent emergency generator. NYSERDA also worked to develop a Portable Emergency Generator Program to facilitate gas station compliance with the law.

Crude Oil Transportation

Transportation of crude oil by rail nationwide, specifically oil produced from the Bakken Oil Fields concentrated in North and South Dakota and adjoining areas of Canada, has grown exponentially in recent years from approximately 8,500 railcar loads in 2008 to more than 400,000 in 2013.

A significant percentage of the crude oil produced from these fields is transported through New York State by two primary routes, which include:

- Along the CSX rail line from the west through Buffalo to Albany, generally following the Thruway (I-90)/Mohawk Valley Corridor. From Albany, the crude oil is transferred onto ship or barge at the Buckeye Terminal for movement by water down the Hudson River, or the shipment continues south down the Hudson Valley by rail along the CSX line. CSX reported an average of 20 to 35 trains per week traveled from the west to Albany, with one to five of them ending their journeys at the Buckeye Terminal. The remaining trains continued south through the Hudson Valley.
- Along the Canadian Pacific (CP) rail line south from Canada through the Champlain Valley to Albany, where it is transferred onto a barge for movement by water down the Hudson River. CP reported an average of five to nine trains per week going south along the west shore of Lake Champlain and ending at the Global Terminal in Albany.

Destinations for both routes include refineries on the East Coast of the U.S. and Canada.

In a proactive response to this issue, Governor Cuomo signed Executive Order 125 on January 28, 2014 directing specific state agencies to examine the problem and to provide a comprehensive report with recommended actions to mitigate the situation. This direction resulted in Transporting Crude Oil in New York State: A Review of Incident Prevention and Response Capacity[1], a coordinated review by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Department of Health (DOH),

[1] http://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/archive/assets/documents/CrudeOilReport.pdf

Department of Transportation (DOT), DHSES, and NYSERDA. The agencies work together to integrate planning, preparedness, and agency-level response to promote a single coordinated response to any crude oil incident.

The New York State Interagency Workgroup on Crude Oil Preparedness (comprised of DEC, DOH, DOT, DHSES, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Coast Guard) formed to further support the efforts of Executive Order 125, The workgroup has focused its efforts on the local, State and federal actions recommended by the Governor's order, in addition to planning and preparedness for the northern rail corridor from Canada to Albany.

Furthermore, Executive Order 125 spurred the creation of a multi-agency Plume Modeling Working Group (established under the State Emergency Response Commission, or SERC) to predict and prepare for the effects of a plume of hazardous materials on surrounding areas in the event of a rail disaster. The workgroup produced a report with findings and recommendations that will help build and establish a robust capacity for New York State to conduct plume modeling for Bakken Crude Oil emergencies, and to support incident response involving other types of hazardous materials. Participating agencies include DHSES and its OEM, Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC), and Office of Counter Terrorism (OCT) divisions; in addition to DEC, DOH, DOT, the Division of Military and Naval Affairs (DMNA), the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – Office of Response and Restoration.

In addition, the New York State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)[2] and its associated subsidiaries identify agency roles and responsibilities for hazard mitigation, response, and recovery for emergencies, including hazardous materials releases.

Other short-term actions underway or completed include:

- Improved coordination of spill and incident notifications.
- Crude by Rail training for participating agencies, sponsored by the railroads at the training facility operated by the Association of American Railroads (AAR) in Pueblo, Colorado.
- Updated and new training programs focused on crude oil and foam firefighting operations (OFPC).
- Containment and collection boom training for OFPC and DEC staff, sponsored by CP Rail.
- "Safety Train" training provided across New York State by the railroads, addressing rail safety and crude oil for OFPC, DEC, and local response personnel.
- Development of strategic and tactical guidance for both foam and spill response operations, along with public health actions for first responders.
- Acquisition of Class B foam response equipment and foam inventory to improve operational capabilities and support or sustain local and county foam operations (OFPC).

[2] http://www.dhses.ny.gov/planning/#cemp

Additional planned actions include:

- Establishment of a New York State Foam Task Force to include pre-positioning of State-owned firefighting foam response equipment and supplies at locations across the State, and training of local or regional responders to deploy and operate the equipment. The effort is supplemented and supported by OFPC to better provide an operational response capability for incidents involving crude oil and other ignitable liquids.
- Increased training and exercise resources to support and sustain integrated planning efforts, the Foam Task Force, and newly developed spill response capabilities.
- An ongoing series of annual in-service training, drills, and exercises, which is critical to maintaining response capability.

Emergency Management Certification and Training (EMC & T)

The EMC & T program supports Governor Cuomo's strategy of creating unified emergency management training for county chief executives and other emergency management stakeholders. DHSES has worked with the local emergency management community to develop standardized curriculum for three tiers of training aimed at: county chief executives or their designees (Tier 1), county emergency managers (Tier 2), and other local public officials within the counties (Tier 3). County chief executives and county emergency managers must complete the training for DHSES grant eligibility purposes. The training covers all facets of emergency management, including disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. It also outlines the legal authorities and responsibilities related to emergency management in New York State. DHSES partnered with the New York State Association of Counties for a chief executive training sessions in February and September, and conducted an EMC & T Academy for county chief executives and county emergency managers in June. Additionally, DHSES partnered with county emergency managers to provide more than 30, Tier 3 training sessions for more than 950 local public officials.

Citizen Preparedness Corps Trainings

Launched in February 2014, the Citizen Preparedness Corps provides New Yorkers with tools and resources to prepare for natural and man-made disasters, to respond accordingly, and to recover as quickly as possible to pre-disaster conditions. The New York National Guard (DMNA), working with experts from DHSES OEM and OFPC and local county emergency management personnel, educated participants about how develop a family emergency plan and stock up on emergency supplies, among other critical precautions. A key component of this training was distribution of free New York State Disaster Preparedness Kits to participants at public regional events listed on the prepare.ny.gov website. The kits contained important items to assist individuals in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. Since its inception, more than 40,000 New Yorkers have completed Citizen Preparedness Corps training, through the efforts of DHSES and DMNA or the American Red Cross, or via the online training course.

New York State Preparedness Training Center

The New York State Preparedness Training Center (SPTC), located in Oriskany, NY, is managed and operated by DHSES and is supported by the University at Albany's National Center for Security and Preparedness (NCSP).

The SPTC serves as a centralized training facility for New York State and as well as local and federal first responders from all disciplines. The SPTC provides first responders and officials with the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to safely and effectively prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from terrorist acts and other major/catastrophic incidents, such as natural disasters.

In addition to the courses that the SPTC sponsors for statewide and national audiences, many agencies and organizations use the SPTC facilities to train personnel, including Oneida County Sheriff's Office, City of Utica Police Department, New York State Police, Mohawk Valley Police Academy, and other organizations.

Mohawk Dam Improvement/Canal Flood Warning and Optimization System

Multiple projects are under construction for the improvements to the NYS Canal Corporation's movable dams on the Mohawk River in Schenectady and Montgomery counties.

The Corporation proposed these improvements to FEMA in order to mitigate future flooding in this region following the devastating storms in 2011 - Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, which caused $84 million in damages to Canal infrastructure alone. Extensive hydraulic modeling and analysis shows, these $28 million in flood mitigation improvements, along with revised operational procedures, will lower 100-year peak flood levels by 2.2 to 7.6 feet, depending on location. The improvements involve replacing the dams' vertical uprights using stronger steel components, replacing specific mule (winch) gear and shaft components for increased lifting capability under greater head differential conditions, and installing catwalk lighting for safe nighttime operations. FEMA approved the project in April 2013. The improvements are currently 78% complete and are expected to be fully implemented in 2017.

As part of the Mohawk dam improvement effort, the NYS Canal Corporation instituted new operating procedures to adequately prepare for extreme high flow events in Montgomery and Schenectady counties. Although the structural improvements are not yet complete, these new procedures were tested over an elongated timeframe during Superstorm Sandy and fully tested during the June/ July storms of 2013, and proved to be effective. Minor revisions, due to lessons learned, have been analyzed and will be formalized in early 2015.

The New York State Canal Corporation is implementing a Canal Flood Warning and Optimization System which encompasses three river basins (Mohawk, Oswego, and Upper Hudson) along the Canal system. These basins cover 13,000 square miles and 27 upstate counties. The system will provide web-based early warning of flood inundation areas and peak flood timing to emergency managers and the public, and will allow operational optimization of water control systems. Early warning saves lives, protects human health, and has been shown to reduce flood induced property loss by more than 15%. The $8.5 million project was initially approved by FEMA in November 2013 and was approved at 100% funding reimbursement in October 2014. The project is currently 39% complete, and is expected to be fully operational by the end of 2015.

RESPONSE EFFORTS IN 2014

Throughout 2014, the state was inundated by a variety of incidents, the majority being weather related. However, in the fall of 2014, in response to terror threats, Governor Cuomo requested an additional presence by the New York National Guard within the metropolitan New York City area. Additionally, the Ebola virus entered the United States prompting Governor Cuomo and New Jersey Governor Christie to announce additional screening protocols for Ebola at both JFK and Newark Liberty International Airports. On October 23, New York City's Health Commissioner confirmed that a doctor returning home from Guinea was diagnosed with the Ebola virus in New York City.

The table below shows the incidents where the EOC was active during 2014

Date	Incident Name
Jan. 2–3	Winter Storm / Blizzard
Jan. 7–8	Winter Weather / Flooding
Jan. 20	Winter Weather
Jan. 26–Feb. 2	Super Bowl XLVIII
Feb. 3	Severe Weather
Feb. 4–5	Winter Weather
Feb. 12–14	Winter Weather
Mar. 12–13	Winter Storm / Blizzard
Apr. 15–17	Flooding
Apr. 24	Wildfire Conditions Watch
May 13–22	**Western NY Flooding**
Jul. 3	Severe Weather
Jul. 8–9	Severe Weather
Jul. 14–15	Severe Weather
Aug. 13	Heavy Rain
Sep. 23–Nov. 27	2014 ISIS Security Concerns / U.N. Event / Ebola Incidents
Nov. 17–25	**Lake Effect Snow**
Nov. 26–27	Winter Storm
Dec. 9–11	Winter Weather

The federally declared incidents are described below:

Severe Storms and Flash Flooding - May 13-22

An extremely slow moving weather system brought a seemingly endless volley of storms, including an F3 tornado, that pummeled the State repeatedly from mid-May through early June causing catastrophic damage to impoverished rural communities in some of our most economically challenged areas. Torrential rains in excess of one inch per hour repeatedly moved through the same areas, wiping out the emergency repairs that were constructed. Residents of the area had to evacuate their homes not once, but multiple times. Governor Cuomo declared a State Disaster Emergency on May 14th within the counties of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Delaware, Herkimer, Lewis, Livingston, Ontario, Otsego, Steuben and Yates. Local States of Emergency were declared by the Villages of Penn Yan and Gowanda and the Towns of Jerusalem and Sanford.

The economic blows to these communities were devastating, and in many instances the damages were concentrated in the smallest of their communities, magnifying the effects. Virtually all the damage in Lewis County is in the tiny Village of Port Leyden, (population 672). In three hours seven inches of rain deluged an area of only 5 miles in length and ¾ of a mile in width, completely destroying the village's sewer lines and devastating their streets. Additionally, 30 homes sustained uninsured damages from flooding, adding more stress to residents already struggling economically.

In the Yates County Village of Penn Yann (population 5,159) people were awoken by shattering glass as an eight foot wall of water crashed through their homes, forcing evacuations of terrified residents. One home has collapsed into the nearby stream and several others were condemned. Rainfall at the airport equaled the county's total monthly average for precipitation in just a few hours. The County 9-11 Center handled more than 2,000 calls during the incident, an exponential increase in volume which overwhelmed local first responders.

At the height of the storms more than 6,500 customers were out of power. The American Red Cross opened 2 shelters in the impacted area, distributed 238 clean up kits, served 374 meals and provided 35 mental health contacts. The Salvation Army distributed 569 clean up kits, served 5,066 meals and provided mental health counseling to 308 individuals. The Red Cross reported more than 130 families who sustained significant property damage, ranging from severely flooded basements, first floor flooding and loss of furnaces, hot water heaters, driveways and electrical systems to homes that were completely destroyed. In response to this immediate need, Governor Cuomo ordered the creation of a State assistance program for individuals.

State agency support provided to local governments included:

- The New York State Department of Transportation provided more than $7 million in emergency infrastructure assistance utilizing a combination of State assets and contract support.
- The New York State Division of State Police deployed troopers to the impacted counties to assist in EOC and field operations.
- The Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) coordinated the deployment of Swift Water Rescue teams to Yates County and activated the State Fire Mobilization Mutual Aid Plan. OFPC also deployed Storm Emergency Fire Units to assist in dewatering operations in the impacted counties.
- The New York Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services deployed response staff to Cattaraugus, Yates, Lewis and other impacted counties to assist in coordination of State resources and conduct of damage estimates and assessments.
- State Department of Financial Services deployed their Mobile Command Center to Penn Yann and other locations in Yates and Allegany counties to assist in implementation of the Governor's direct assistance to impacted homeowners.
- The New York State Department of Correctional Services and Community Supervision deployed work crews and corrections officers to support debris removal operations throughout the impacted area.
- In support of the Governor's 2014 Yates County Disaster Recovery Assistance Program initiative, led by New York State Housing and Community Renewal, Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) staff was deployed to Yates County to assist in the recovery effort May 23-24, 2014 to conduct intake of applications for state disaster funding.

Western NY Snowstorm - November 17-25

The Buffalo, NY and Watertown, NY areas experienced a significant lake effect snow event from November 17-21, 2014. The highest snow accumulation reported from this event was 88 inches in Cowlesville (Wyoming County), NY. Several locations in Erie County exceeded 50 inches. As a result of the heavy snowfall during this event, Governor Cuomo declared a State of Emergency in 10 counties: Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Franklin, Genesee, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Oswego, and Wyoming. A total of 13 fatalities (12 Erie County, 1 Niagara County) and 6 injuries (Erie County) were attributed to the event. Over 370 structures experienced roof damage and approximately 30 roofs collapsed on homes and businesses from the weight of snow. Additionally, one health care facility had to be evacuated as its roof began to buckle under the incredible weight of seven feet of snow. Hundreds of people sought shelter in Red Cross and local sheltering facilities. . During the event, 112 miles of the New York State Thruway were closed in both directions from Exit 46 near Rochester to Exit 59 in Chautauqua County with hundreds of travelers stranded on the road for over 24 hours.

Impacts to the economy throughout the area were heavy. In rural communities, barn collapses killed and injured livestock, including cattle and horses. Dairy farmers were forced to dump more than a quarter of a million (250,000) pounds of milk. Agricultural losses were estimated at approximately $19 million.

Commerce in the City of Buffalo, New York State's second largest city and the economic engine of the region came to a virtual standstill for an entire week. Trucks bringing critical supplies to the area were forced to stop short of the city as they waited for emergency crews to clear roads, rescue snowbound motorists and remove abandoned vehicles. Major sporting events in the city were moved out of the State or cancelled entirely, at a loss of literally millions in revenue to the local economy.

DPC Agencies coordinated with local governments for response efforts for the storm and actions included:

- The Office of General Services (OGS) activated stockpiles in Alden, Oriskany, Binghamton and Guilderland to support the lake effect snow and flooding risk event in and around the City of Buffalo and Erie County. OGS issued light towers, pumps, sandbags and sand bagging machines to local municipalities.
- A total of 959 members of the NY National Guard supported efforts in Western New York. The Division of Military and Naval Affairs deployed more than 793 National Guard personnel and 210 pieces of heavy equipment providing ground transportation (equipment, meals, and medical personnel), communications support, public works and engineering (snow clearance from roads and buildings and sand bag operations), emergency management (staffing EOCs), fire department augmentation with high axle vehicles, humanitarian assistance, emergency medical services augmentation, and traffic control points for road closures.
- The American Red Cross mobilized a workforce of 175 people (80% volunteers) to support 19 shelters that provided 603 overnight stays, provided 6,696 meals and snacks, distributed 3,939 relief items and provided 1,019 health and mental health contacts.
- The New York State Department of Transportation deployed more than 2,200 personnel and 675 pieces of equipment.
- The New York State Division of State Police deployed four wheel drive vehicles, ATVs and more than 100 troopers.

- The New York State Thruway Authority deployed 146 pieces of heavy snow removal equipment and 243 personnel
- The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation deployed Rangers, four wheel drive vehicles and ATVs/snowmobiles for rescue operations.
- The Office of Fire Prevention and Control deployed personnel, four wheel drive vehicles, and swift water rescue teams.
- The New York State Department of Corrections and Community Services deployed personnel and inmate work crews engaged in filling out sandbags and digging out fire hydrants.
- The New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation deployed personnel, ATVs/Snowmobiles, and heavy snow removal equipment.
- The Office of General Services supplied structural engineers to assess snow load risks for facilities and dispatched sandbags and sandbagging equipment from State managed stockpiles.
- The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets deployed personnel to assist farmers in relocation of livestock from damaged barns and assist in moving bulk milk to prevent environmental damage and economic loss from dumping product.
- The New York State EOC was opened for nine days -- State OEM dispatched personnel to Erie and contiguous counties.

RECOVERY IN 2014

Mitigation Efforts

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) provides grants to states and local governments to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures after a major disaster declaration. The purpose of the HMGP is to reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters and to enable mitigation measures to be implemented during the immediate recovery from a disaster.

IN 2014, the Mitigation efforts continued in support of Hurricane Sandy, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, the three largest HMGP natural disasters in State history. A majority of the focus continued with the HMGP for projects submitted under Sandy. The State received 2,500 Letters of Intent (LOIs) requesting more than $11.5 million; of those, more than 1,200 submitted applications in response to the Governor's commitment to support proposals that ensure continuity of critical government, transportation and communications services, implement the recommendations of the NYS Ready, NYS Respond, and NYS 2100 Commissions, provide back-up power, monitor streams and/or tides, and train local floodplain officials. The State's HMGP funding is based on all FEMA disaster spending and, with the request of the State, this has already been increased twice; it currently stands at $1.17 billion and is expected to increase again.

Projects are reviewed on a rolling basis, and those submitted to FEMA support statewide resiliency goals and critical transportation and healthcare objectives. Examples include:

- Generators at downstate gas stations on evacuation routes (expanded to Upstate): $25,868,119
- Upgrade 106 scour-critical bridges Statewide: $518M
- Mesonet Statewide Weather Monitoring System: $23.6M
- Power and resiliency upgrades at hospitals: $64.3M
- LaGuardia flood control: $30.5M
- Spring Creek wetland / upland restoration (151 acres) to protect neighborhoods: $3.3M
- 26th Ward WWTP: $3.1M

Efforts also continued to assist communities on buyout and elevation projects approved under Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. More than half of the 700+ properties to be acquired have had closings and structures continue to be demolished, restoring the floodplain function. The elevation program consists of 100+ structures, of which many are in the engineering phase and then will continue with construction of elevating the structures.

DHSES and partner agencies continued to work with FEMA to enhance the NYS All-Hazards Mitigation Plan, which significantly expands the discussion of possible climate change consequences and provides good sources of information for local communities that want to consider climate change impacts in their own mitigation plans. The Plan qualifies the State for federal Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA), which includes the HMGP as well as the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) programs. Together, these programs provide significant opportunities to reduce or eliminate potential losses to State and local governments in New York State through hazard mitigation planning and project grant funding.

Even more significant from a financial perspective, the approved 2014 Plan maintains New York State's eligibility for mitigation opportunities through the Public Assistance program, through which FEMA provides supplemental federal disaster assistance for debris removal, and repair, replacement, or restoration of disaster-damaged, State-owned facilities and certain private non-profit organizations' facilities. New York State's 2014 Plan allowed the disbursement of billions of dollars in federal disaster assistance to repair damages from past and future disasters, including Hurricane Irene, Tropical Storm Lee, and Superstorm Sandy.

Public Assistance

According to FEMA, the mission of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Public Assistance (PA) Grant Program is to provide assistance to State, Tribal and local governments, and certain types of Private Nonprofit organizations so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies declared by the President.

Through the PA Program, FEMA provides supplemental Federal disaster grant assistance for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and the repair, replacement, or restoration of disaster-damaged, publicly owned facilities and the facilities of certain Private Non-Profit (PNP) organizations. The PA Program also encourages protection of these damaged facilities from future events by providing assistance for hazard mitigation measures during the recovery process.

The following table illustrates federal and State share funding for recent federally-declared disasters under the FEMA Public Assistance program:

Public Assistance Disaster	Incident Period	FEMA #	Federal Share	State Share
Severe Storms and Flooding	May 13–June 17, 2004	DR-1534	$106,439.81	$17,388.58
Severe Storms and Flooding	Aug. 13– Sept 16, 2004	DR-1564	$12,684.14	$264.49
Severe Storms and Flooding	Apr. 2–4, 2005	DR-1589	$627,706.10	$44,545.51
Severe Storms and Flooding	Jun. 26–Jul 10, 2006	DR-1650	$13,928.95	($19,406.60)
Severe Storms and Inland and Coastal Flooding	Apr. 14–18, 2007	DR-1692	$956,418.03	$310,080.30
Severe Storms and Flooding	Jun. 19, 2007	DR-1710	$402,712.95	$130,844.11
Severe Storms and Flooding	Aug. 8–10, 2009	DR-1857	$877,185.21	$204,518.15
Severe Storms and Flooding assoc. with T.D. Ida and Nor'easter	Nov. 12–14, 2009	DR-1869	$10,402.93	$1,733.82
Severe Storms and Flooding	Mar. 13–31, 2010	DR-1899	$835,040.61	$90,875.27
Severe Winter Storm and Snowstorm	Dec. 26–27, 2010	DR-1957	$345,135.77	$57,522.63
Severe Storms, Flooding, Tornadoes and Straight-line Winds	Apr. 26– May 8, 2011	DR-1993	$1,973,848.56	$324,910.21
Hurricane Irene	Aug. 26–Sep. 5, 2011	DR-4020	$23,244,186.98	$31,934,246.91
Tropical Storm Lee	Sep. 7–1, 2011	DR-4031	$16,086,842.61	$7,852,612.30
Hurricane Sandy	Oct. 27–Nov. 8, 2012	DR-4085	$1,705,770,654.31	$0.00
Severe Winter Storm and Snowstorm	Feb. 8–9, 2013	DR-4111	$80,954.32	$0.00
Severe Storms and Flooding	Jun. 26–Jul. 10, 2013	DR-4129	$16,328,976.59	$0.00
Severe Storms and Flooding	May 13–22, 2014	DR-4180	$13,816,044.94	$4,333,623.44
		TOTAL	**$1,781,489,162.81**	**$45,283,759.12**

Other Notable Recovery Efforts in 2014

- Empire State Development Issued the $50 million Hurricane Irene – Tropical Storm Lee Flood Recovery Grant for storm-related repairs and restoration, as well as flood mitigation and flood control projects for creeks, streams, and brooks.
- Following Superstorm Sandy, the Department of Financial Services (DFS) Insurance and Financial Frauds and Consumer Protection Divisions maintained – and continue to maintain – constant contact with the insurance industry. Immediately after the storm, the Department convened the Insurance Emergency Operations Center (IEOC). The IEOC is a joint effort that brings together the resources of both the industry and Department so our collective efforts can be focused on specific emergency situations. The IEOC enabled the Department to communicate directly and expeditiously with insurance carriers representing 90% of the market in storm-affected areas, giving DFS the opportunity to identify and address specific problems and troubleshoot any difficulties with the industry on a real-time basis. The Department also used its IEOC contacts to fast track many new complaints filed in 2014 and to resolve on going sensitive issues.
- During 2014, DFS continued to support communities that were damaged by Superstorm Sandy. DFS personnel staffed Disaster Assistance Centers (DACs), and maintained a presence at town meetings sponsored by legislators. In 2014, DFS processed approximately 700 Superstorm Sandy complaints; of those, DFS recovered in excess of $3 million for 90 consumers and businesses.
- DFS also enforced the Governor's decision ordering insurers to not apply deductible to hurricane claims. During 2014, DFS renewed the emergency amended regulation needed to continue a mediation program to expedite resolution of claims settlements. In addition to the complaint process, policyholders with unresolved Storm Sandy claims also had the option of filing for mediation through a program established by the Department and administered by the American Arbitration Association. There have been a total of approximately 3,000 requests for mediation, 2,627 of which have been completed. In 2014, approximately 300 requests were received and completed. All told, approximately 68% of the mediation requests have either been settled or withdrawn.
- New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) chairs the State-Led Disaster Housing Task Force and in that capacity coordinates member agencies and organizations to develop strategies to efficiently and effectively respond to housing-related needs following a disaster event, and facilitate the receipt of Federal resources and support for housing.

THE NEW YORK STATE COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY PLAN

DHSES staff in concert with state agencies continued to improve the State's level of preparedness by completing the annual review and revision of the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) and supporting annexes, including posting to the DHSES Website[3]. This effort also included continued refinement of all planning guidance documents. An in-depth overhaul of the Pandemic Annex to address changes in health planning at the State, federal, and World Health Organization (WHO) levels was also completed.

Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP)

The Emergency Management Standard by EMAP is the set of 64 standards by which programs that apply for EMAP accreditation are evaluated. The Emergency Management Standard is designed as a tool for continuous improvement as part of the voluntary accreditation process for local and state emergency management programs.[4]

The State received a conditional accreditation in December 2013 and was required to re-demonstrate compliance on eight standards. The second assessment was conducted in June 2014 and resulted in the EMAP Commission granting the State full accreditation for the next five years.

Enterprise Information Security

The Office of Technology Services Enterprise Information Security Office (EISO) developed uniform State security policies and standards, and enhanced information asset protection, monitoring and detection capabilities in the Statewide Data Center. EISO routinely performs vulnerability and threat assessments, system security and critical infrastructure reviews to ensure adequate controls and resiliency.

Continuity of Government Planning

DHSES, in conjunction with state agencies is developing a robust State Program for Continuity of Operations Planning and a Continuity of Government Planning (COOP/COG). This effort consists of reviewing/rewriting the State's current guidance on COOP/COG, including sample plans to be used by State agencies and local governments. OEM Planning will provide training to all State and local governments in the coming months.

New York City Delaware Aqueduct System

Progress continued on the New York City Delaware Aqueduct System planning project. The system is owned, operated and maintained by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) and serves as the primary municipal water supply for several Hudson Valley jurisdictions and New York City. The system experienced several areas of leakage and there are ongoing concerns regarding a potential failure of the system. The effort is supported by DOH – Bureau of Water Supply, NYCDEP, and emergency management officials from New York City and Ulster, Putnam, Orange, and Westchester counties.

[3] http://www.dhses.ny.gov/planning/
[4] http://www.emaponline.org/index.php/what-is-emap/the-emergency-management-standard

Regional Catastrophic Planning Grant (RCPG) Program.

The base plans created under the RCPGP are complete. Current focus is planning for an improvised nuclear device (IND), consolidating federal integration planning efforts, and working to consolidate a high-level regional structure to tie in multiple federal, State, and local Joint Field Offices (JFOs) under one regional unified coordination group structure. Efforts are ongoing and will continue through the end of the grant (August 31, 2015).

2015 AND BEYOND

Governor Cuomo has proposed a bold agenda for 2015 and beyond with the goal of keeping New Yorkers safe. The threat of global terrorism to New York and the nation has required New York to remain on heightened alert. Plans for increasing New York's safety and security include a state-wide terrorism preparedness audit to review the state's plans for combating the threat of terrorism and identify solutions to confront these threats.

Additionally, plans are well underway to open the nation's first College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cyber Security at the State University of New York at Albany. Students will be able to earn advanced degrees in law enforcement, security, public and international affairs, counterterrorism, emergency management, cyber security and forensics. A satellite campus is also planned in Oriskany, NY at the site of the SPTC where students will be able to train under realistic conditions and complement their classroom component.

An extreme weather prediction system, is currently being planned which will provide an extensive picture of current weather conditions by collecting real-time data every 1-15 minutes. Currently, the existing weather network has only 27 weather stations and some of these stations are 100 miles apart. [5]The State will be installing 125 state-of-the-art Mesonet weather detection stations state-wide. These stations will provide real-time localized information and environmental data which will prove to be an invaluable tool for forecasting and emergency response efforts.

This Disaster Preparedness Commission, under the leadership of Governor Cuomo, will continue to strive to make the safety, security and quality of life of all New Yorkers paramount. The Commission will continue to actively address emerging threats whether natural or man-made and will continue to enhance the state's plans for preparing for, responding to, recovering from incidents and will continue to implement strategies to make New York the most resilient state in the nation.

[5] https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/2015_Opportunity_Agenda_Book.pdf p. 263