Emergency Management Conference Planned

The agenda for the 2016 Ohio Emergency Management Spring Conference is now complete. The conference will be held on April 26 and 27, 2016, at the Crowne Plaza North in Worthington, Ohio.

This year we have a very timely line up of presenters that will be discussing topics such as flooding and also recent active shooter attacks. For a complete list of presenters, registration details and more information about the conference please view the 2016 brochure here: http://ema.ohio.gov/DirectorsConference.aspx

This conference is open to not just emergency managers, but also to our partner agencies at the local, state and federal levels.   We encourage you to forward the conference information to your local fire, law enforcement, public health, hospitals, schools and other partners in preparedness and response.

During the conference, staff from the Ohio EMA will be available at marked tables outside the main room to talk with attendees. If you have any questions about the conference please contact David Nunley at dbnunley@dps.ohio.gov or (614) 799-3677.

County directors should remember that attendance at both the Spring and Fall conferences are mandated for all county directors under OAC 4501:3-5-01(B) unless excused by the Executive Director of Ohio EMA.

Ohio Emergency Management Spring Conference 2016

Grants Hold EMPG Roundtables

Preparedness Grants Branch recently held a series of regional meetings with emergency management staff in the counties. The focus of these regional meetings was procurement and the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG).

Competitive procurement remains the standard, but there are continued questions and struggles in this area. This is one of the main reasons the Preparedness Grants Branch staff conducted the regional roundtables, to emphasize the need to document proper procurement practices, said

Jerry Mullins, Preparedness Grants Chief.

According to a presentation at a FEMA Region V meeting, DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) audits of FEMA disaster grants in Fiscal Year 2014 resulted in 32 recommendations related to sub-recipient failures to properly procure. OIG recommended up to $61,654,399 in disallowed costs. One of the most common finds was that items were procured via non-competitive contracting practices.

If you as a sub-recipient were not able to attend any of the roundtables or still have

procurement questions, please reach out to the staff of the Preparedness Grants Branch for guidance. If you fail to competitively procure an item with grant dollars and it becomes a disallowed cost, Ohio EMA will not assume the responsibility for the purchase and will not reimburse FEMA the questioned amount.

REMINDER: Fiscal will be doing their quarterly shut down as of March 9, 2016. All cash requests (with proper documentation) should be submitted to the Preparedness Grants Branch by close of business March 7, 2016.

Water Emergencies: Planning for Success

Emergency managers are no strangers to resource support and coordination. Whether natural, technical or human caused, events prompt the emergency manager's need to bring life-saving and life sustaining resources to the forefront of response. No resource is more important, as a human need and as a potential hazard, as potable (drinking) water. Ask your peers and you will quickly find the emergency manager that has had to deal with an event that resulted in the need for water provision.

Continue your conversation and it is likely that you will hear the challenges that were presented by needing to provide water. Many of these challenges can be minimized by taking steps familiar to us as emergency managers and planners. The following is a list of actions for consideration as you continue your emergency operations planning efforts.

Know Your Hazards and Vulnerabilities

One of the first steps we take in emergency or contingency planning is the identification of the hazards we face and how vulnerable we are to each. Often overlooked is the fact that systemic failures, contamination or environmental factors may turn water into such a hazard to which large portions of our population are vulnerable. Do you know where the potable water comes from for your jurisdiction? Is the source ground water or surface? Do they produce potable water or purchase it from another utility and re-distribute it? What is the status and history of the infrastructure in place to distribute water to their customers? What is the storage capacity and how long can they meet demand under emergency conditions? Answering these questions will put you in a prime position to ensure your planning efforts are comprehensive.

Build the Partnerships

As emergency managers, we invest significant time and energy into reaching out to our response partners. Regular meetings with first responders, volunteer groups and elected officials are a normal course of business. Unfortunately, in many cases, the first time water operators and emergency managers meet is at the time of the disaster – the scenario we all aim to avoid. Seek out these providers in your jurisdiction. Have the conversations – build the relationships – strengthen the response network available to you.

Identify Contingency Resources

Minimizing the duration of outage and restoration of distribution is paramount to the reduction in provision of potable water. Discuss with your water providers their resource gaps and available contingency resources. Encourage your utilities to explore (and join) Ohio WARN. As the mutual aid network for water and waste water utilities, membership in WARN can bring technical and direct material assistance to utilities that are not blessed with extensive resources. Utilities and emergency managers both can establish membership. Visit their website at: http://www.ohwarn.org/ for more information and to sign up (it's free!!).

Response Plan Integration

Emergency managers may not know that public water systems are required by the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC 3745-85-01) to have contingency plans. The code further requires these plans to include likely hazards, alternate water sources, critical water users, a map of distribution and a statement of amounts budgeted for emergency use. The code highlights the importance of the relationship between utility and emergency manager by listing the local EMA as one of two entities (EPA being the other) to which the plan must be made available upon request. Take them up on the offer and review their plan to ensure it integrates into your Emergency Operations Plan.

Don't Hesitate

We regularly discuss the fact that our infrastructure isn't getting any younger. "Bridges, dams and pipes" echo as the items that "keep us awake at night". Recent events have launched water emergencies into the national and political conversation. Avoid the "it won't happen here" pitfall by ensuring you have taken the aforementioned steps to best prepare your jurisdiction to ensure the availability of this critical commodity. While these actions are only the starting point for this topic, they are key towards your planning for success.

Submitted by Andrew Elder, Ohio EMA Preparedness Branch Chief

Training Opportunities Abound

G205 Recovery from Disaster: A Local Community Role

March 9-10, 2016

Hosted by Ohio Emergency Management Agency

This updated two-day workshop is designed for local government disaster recovery professional (elected officials, city/county administrators, emergency management coordinators, public works directors, building inspectors, community planners, and unmet needs committee coordinators). The G 205: Recovery from Disaster: The Local Government Role course replaces the G270.4 Recovery from Disaster Course and meets the G270.4 course requirement for the Advanced Professional Series Certificate. This course also meets the Ohio Administrative Code County Director training requirements. The goals of this course are:

* To increase understanding of local government responsibilities and challenges associated with disaster recovery.

* Provide a forum for discussion of "lessons learned" in disaster recovery at the local level.

- Prepare participants to develop and implement a pre-disaster recovery plan.

- Target Audience : The target audience for this course includes the following local government positions and allied professionals: Local elected official (mayor, city/county council member, city/county manager staff, city/county planners and staff, regional planning commissions, economic development districts, finance director/assessor, emergency manager staff, public works director and staff, building inspector staff, floodplain manager staff, health care administrator or planner, public information officer, housing director or planner, voluntary agency coordinator or unmet needs committee coordinator, business organization representative, administrative director or manager, state recovery staff and partner. This is the ONLY scheduled offering of this course in CY 2016. This a "Required" course in the Advanced Professional Series (APS) program

OH386a Family Assistance Center (FAC) Operations / Victim Identification Program (VIP),

March 15-16, 2016

Hosted by Cuyahoga County EMA

A mass fatality event has just occurred. Devastated families are frantically trying to find their loved ones and get answers; meanwhile, you have the remains of unidentified victims gathering in your morgue. The families need answers and you need information. How do you get the two together in a safe, structured and compassionate setting? The answer is the Family Assistance Center. Planning for this asset is a critical component of your mass fatality plan. Did you know after the

Oklahoma City Bombing there were on average 1200 family members and supporting friends at the Assistance and Compassion Center at any one time? Is your community prepared to respond to such a need? To assist in planning we are offering Family Assistance Center (FAC) Operations / Victim Identification Program (VIP) training. This two-day course covers all aspects of set-up, operational organization, data collection, family interviewing, data entry and victim identification in the aftermath of a Mass Fatality Incident (MFI). The curriculum includes "hands-on" computer training and the development of live interviewing skills. The course was developed especially for Ohio by instructors who are recognized subject matter experts in the field of mass fatality incident response. The lead instructor is a member of the Ohio Disaster Mortuary Operations Team (DMORT) and was one of the contributors to the EMI G386 Mass Fatality Incident Response course. Target Audience: This course is designed for a wide audience, encompassing the range of personnel with a role to play in addressing victim identification and the unique needs of the family members of those who are killed and injured in a mass fatality incident. Coroners, medical examiners, funeral directors, department of health registrars, behavioral health, planners, emergency management coordinators and clerical personnel will benefit from this course.

G272 Warning Coordination

March 17-18, 2016

Hosted by Delaware County EMA

Severe weather is on the way. How do you effectively work with the National Weather Service and your local media to develop and discriminate effective warnings your community? This two-day course is the latest in the hazardous weather series of courses produced in partnership with the National Weather Service (NWS). Every year, the United States experiences more severe weather than any other country in the world. In order to reduce deaths, injuries, and property losses, emergency managers must work closely with the NWS and the news media to provide effective warnings that can be received and under-stood by people at risk. This course is intended to help facilitate that process. Course topics include: The Social Dimensions of Warning Response; Developing Effective Warning Messages; Developing an Effective Community Warning Process; and Working with the News Media to Create a Weather Warning Partnership. In addition to lecture and discussion, the course includes case studies, exercises, and an opportunity for interaction with representatives of the local news media.

Target Audience: Emergency management personnel, municipal and corporate, who share some responsibility for or play a role in planning for a disaster.

1	ICS-400 Advanced ICS (MGT-905)	March 1 – 2, 2016	Ohio EMA
2	ICS-300 Intermediate ICS	March 1 - 3, 2016	Cuyahoga County
3	OH-305 Radiation Ingestion	March 4, 2016	Ohio EMA
4	OH-605 Damage Assessment	March 7, 2016	Richland County
5	G205 Recovery From Disaster	March 9-10, 2016	Ohio EMA
6	L146 Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program	March 9 – 11, 2016	Medina County
7	ICS-300 Intermediate ICS	March 12, 13 & 19, 2016	Preble County
8	OH386a Family Assistance Center (FAC) Operations / Victim Identification Program (VIP)	March 15 - 16, 2016	Cuyahoga County
9	ICS-300 Intermediate ICS	March 15 - 17, 2016	Portage County
10	OH235 Emergency Planning Course	March 17, 2016	Hamilton County
11	G272 Warning Coordination	March 17 – 18, 2016	Delaware County
12	ICS-300 Intermediate Course	March 18 – 20, 2016	Jackson County
13	ICS-400 Advanced ICS	March 19 – 20, 2016	Preble County
14	G235 Emergency Planning Course	March 22, 2016	Franklin County
15	G290 & G291 Basic PIO Series	March 22-24, 2016	Ohio EMA
16	ICS-400 Advanced ICS	March 29 – 30, 2016	Portage County
17	ICS-300 Intermediate ICS	March 29-31, 2016	Lake County
18	G366 Planning for Special of Children	March 30, 2016	Delaware County
19	ICS-300 Intermediate ICS	March 30-April 1, 2016	Hamilton County
20	ICS-400 Advanced ICS	April 2 – 3, 2016	Jackson County
21	G271 Hazardous Weather & Flooding Preparedness	April 5-7, 2016	Medina County
22	ICS-300 Intermediate Course	April 8 – 10, 2016	Portage County
23	PER-273 A Coordinated Response to Food Emergencies: Practice & Exec	April 11 – 12, 2016	Cuyahoga County
24	G288 Local Volunteer and Donations Management	April 12-13, 2016	Delaware County
25	L388 Advanced Public Information Officer (APIO)	April 18-22, 2016	Ohio EMA
26	ICS-400 Advanced ICS	April 18 - 19, 2016	Cuyahoga County
27	ICS-300 Intermediate ICS	April 18-20, 2016	Mahoning County
28	ICS-300 Intermediate ICS	April 19 - 21, 2016	Franklin County
29	ICS-300 Intermediate ICS	April 19 - 21, 2016	Summit County
30	L146 Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)	April 19 - 21, 2016	Montgomery Co
31	ICS-400 Advanced ICS	April 20-21, 2016	Mahoning County
32	ICS-400 Advanced ICS	April 21 - 22, 2016	Franklin County
33	OH-200 Spring Directors' Conference	April 26, 2016	Ohio EMA
34	ICS-400 Advanced ICS	April 27 - 28, 2016	Summit County
35	OH-301 Nuclear Power Plant Response Basic Course	April 29, 2016	Ohio EMA
36	G290 & G291 Basic PIO Series	May 3-5, 2016	Summit County
37	L449 ICS Curricula Train the Trainer Course	May 3 – 6, 2016	Ohio EMA
38	L969 Communications Unit Leader (COML)	May 3 – 6, 2016	Medina County
39	L146 Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program	May 10 – 12, 2016	Ohio EMA
40	ICS-400 Advanced ICS	May 12 – 13, 2016	Hamilton County
41	G366 Planning for Special of Children	May 12, 2016	Hamilton County
42	G191 ICS/EOC Interface Course	May 18, 2016	Hamilton County
43	G402 ICS For Executives	May 19, 2016	Medina County
44	ICS-300 Intermediate ICS	May 24 - 26, 2016	Defiance County
45	L958 NIMS ICS All-Hazards Operations Section Chief	June 14 – 17, 2016	Ohio EMA
46	L969 Communications Unit Leader (COML)	June 21 – 23, 2016	Hamilton County
47	ICS-400 Advanced ICS	June 28 - 29, 2016	Defiance County
48	G191 ICS/EOC Interface Course	August 4, 2016	Franklin County
49	MGT-323 Instructor Development Workshop	August 9 - 11, 2016	Ohio EMA
50	ICS-400 Advanced ICS	September 16 - 17, 2016	Portage County
51	ICS-300 Intermediate ICS	October 25 - 27, 2016	Summit County
52	ICS-400 Advanced ICS	November 2 - 3, 2016	Summit County

County EMA Directors, Prepare to say 'Cheese' at Spring Conference

EMA is in the process of updating the contact information for all county directors located in WebEOC. Our plans are to also include a current photo of each county director along with the county EMA office address, phone information and email address, etc. We are asking that each Director be prepared to have a portrait taken upon arrival and registration at the Spring Directors Conference on April 26, 2016, beginning at 11:30 a.m.

Training Opportunites, continued

G271 Hazardous Weather & Flooding Preparedness
April 5-7, 2016
Hosted by Medina County EMA

This course provides training for state, local and voluntary agency personnel who respond to hazardous weather events. The curriculum is designed to promote partnership and coor-dination between the National Weather Service (NWS) and the emergency management community. The training objective is to equip Emergency Managers' to appropriately plan for and coordinate effective responses to potentially hazardous weather and flooding situations. Target audience: The course is designed primarily for local emergency managers (i.e., county, city, parish, or other jurisdiction), state emergency management personnel, voluntary agency representatives and private sector emergency managers . This is the only offering of this course in CY 2016 and is an "Elective" course in the Advanced Professional Series (APS) program.

PER-273 A Coordinated Response to Food Emergencies: Practice and Execution

April 11 - 12, 2016

Hosted by Cuyahoga County Board of Health

Course Description: This free 16 hour course provides responders with training on all-hazards food emergency response procedures with an emphasis on enhancing communication to facilitate the response effort. For the purposes of this course, food emergencies may include terrorism, naturally occurring events, or accidents that impact the food chain with the potential for mass consequences. The course focuses on federal, state and local agency communication and coordination during the response to and re-covery from such emergencies.

L388 Advanced Public Information Officer (APIO)

April 18 - 22, 2016,

Hosted by Ohio Emergency Management Agency

The free five-day Advanced Public Information Officer Course provides participants the knowledge and skills to establish, manage and work within a joint information center. The training will allow students to develop the skills to coordinate a message once developed and to modify if problems or sources of confusion arise. It discusses techniques to develop strategic messaging in support of incident action plans, manage joint infor-mation centers, personnel and stress.

L969 Communications Unit Leader (COML)

May 3 - 6, 2016

Hosted by Medina County EMA

June 21 - 23, 2016

Hosted by Hamilton County

This free four-day course helps attendees establish the essential core competencies required for performing the duties of the COMM UL in an all-hazards incident. This course addresses all responsibilities appropriate to a COMM UL operating in a local- or state-level AHIMT. These responsibilities include the collection, pro-cessing and dissemination as needed to facilitate Operations of Command, general Staff, and Unit Leaders within the confines of a Type 3 AH Incident Management Team. The course is an instructor-led training that supports learning through discussion, lecture, and active participation in multiple exercises. By requiring attendees to bring Communications Unit Leader Kit to the in-struction, the course provides a realistic, hands-on approach to mastering the skills of a COMM Unit Leader.

L958 NIMS ICS All-Hazards Operations Sec-tion Chief

June 14 - 17, 2016
Hosted by Ohio EMA

Course Description: This free four-day course is designed to provide local and state-level emergency responders with a robust understanding of the duties, responsibilities, and capabilities of an effective PSC on an All-Hazards Incident Management Team. These responsibilities fall into two categories: PSC duties 1) managing the planning cycle and 2) tracking resources and incident status. Exercises, simulations, discussions, and a final exam enable students to process and apply their new knowledge.

MGT-323 Instructor Development Workshop
August 9 - 11, 2016
Hosted by Ohio EMA

Course Description: This free three-day course primarily serves to give instructors, most of whom already have years of instructional experience within their own organizations, insight into adult education principles as well as the opportunity to comment on and im-prove their instructional style. The course focuses on enhancing instructional skills that may be applied within DHS-certified courses, but it also discusses organization-specific policies, procedures and practices. The goal of this course is to ensure instructional excellence by providing a forum for experienced instructors to share their experiences with participants and learn together, both during discussions of instructional techniques and in commenting on each other's presentation skills during pre-pared teach-backs.

Butler County IMT deploys to Baltimore

Recently, the State of Ohio / Butler County Incident Management Team deployed to Baltimore, Maryland in response to the severe winter weather which blanketed a large portion of the eastern seaboard. Fifteen members of the team, from various local agencies and disciplines, assisted the City of Baltimore for up to seven days. The team was requested to support "technical snow removal" operations.

Technical snow removal is a technique used to clear snow when snowfall amounts exceed the ability of traditional methods. Traditional methods generally rely on first using plows to remove the fallen snow and then switching to a deicer to reduce the likelihood of ice. This method is effective when snowfall is within the normal levels generally experienced during winter. Some severe winter storms, such as the storm which covered the City of Baltimore, drop snow in such quantities, and with such speed, that traditional methods are rendered ineffective. To remove this extensive amount of snow, communities must switch to technical snow removal operations.

Technical snow removal operations require the use of skid-steers, commonly known as "Bobcats," to remove snow from covered streets. The snow removed from the streets is then piled and loaded into dump trucks by front-end loaders. The trucks, complete with snow, are then moved to dumping sites throughout the city. The entire process is quite a remarkable operation.

To accomplish this operation requires significant coordination between the city and the private contractors brought in to assist with the snow removal operations. The City of Baltimore requested the State of Ohio / Butler County Incident Management Team to handle the Logistical Staging Area (LSA), or the area where resources are placed while awaiting orders. The team, well-versed in developing and managing LSAs after their previous experiences in New York City during Hurricane Sandy and a previous staging area developed in Baltimore for the law

Incident Commander Jeff Galloway (Right) and Logistics Section Chief Steve Miller observe the snowfall at the Pimlico LSA. Some areas of the LSA received up to 30 inches of snow.

enforcement resources responding to the recent civil unrest in the city, developed and staffed the LSA at Pimlico Race Course for 24-hour operations.

The team encountered several challenges in the development of the LSA, most notably the 30 inches of snow covering the parking area for the resources. The team also worked to develop accountability of the more than 900 vehicles and 1,500 individuals who would operate out of the Pimlico LSA, each resource logged and accounted for through-out their stay in Baltimore.

The team worked with the City of Baltimore to coordinate technical snow removal operations to open up important areas of the city. The team painstakingly tracked resources as they worked to clear the downtown business district, main thorough-fares known as "gateways" and several affected neighborhoods. The team, split into two shifts, worked 16 hours per day to ensure uninterrupted logistical support to the technical snow removal operations.

The State of Ohio / Butler County Incident Management Team also worked with the City of Baltimore to ensure proper documentation and records were kept. The team not only tracked which resources were assigned to which task, but also the amount time these resources worked.

The team also brought back several lessons to their own agencies and departments. Planning and Operations Manager Jim Bolen

of the Butler County Emergency Management Agency, spoke about the value of these types of deployments. "Experience is vital when it comes to disasters. We learned so much from this deployment that can be brought back to our home agencies and used in future operations. It doesn't matter if you're dealing with snow, debris or contaminated water, there are always certain common themes which run through these events. We were given the opportunity to learn what works and what doesn't."

Battalion Chief Doug Wehmeyer of Deerfield Township Fire Department, who served as the Operations Section Chief for the team, echoed these sentiments. "The likelihood of our community facing a similar event (in complexity) is certainly high. Our communities are infinitely more prepared because of our experiences in Baltimore."

Director Matthew Haverkos of the Butler County Emergency Management Agency talked about the value of Incident Management Teams. "All hazards incident management teams, such as the State of Ohio / Butler County IMT, can provide the much needed support to a jurisdiction impacted by a disaster by running the ncident, and not letting the incident run you. The incident management concept forces those in crisis mode to forecast and communicate needs to ensure resources are secured. The example our team set in Baltimore shows that this process has real and practical applications in any disaster."

The State of Ohio / Butler County Incident Management Team is a multi-jurisdictional, multi-discipline team which responds to and assists during times of disaster. The team is composed of members from state, county and local government officials and members of the private sector. The team has previous-ly served during the Moscow (Clermont County, Ohio) Tornado, Hurricane Irene, Hurricane Sandy and the 2015 Civil Unrest in Baltimore Maryland. Additional Information can be found on the team's website at http://www.bcrert

FEMA Rule Proposal includes PA 'deductible'

On Jan. 20, 2016, FEMA published an advance notice of proposed rulemaking in the Federal Register. FEMA is proposing the use of a "deductible" as the declaration threshold requirement for the Public Assistance (PA) Program. The current threshold requirements are meeting a statewide and county wide per capita, recent disaster history, mitigation measures and consideration of other federal assistance available to meet the needs of the disaster. The PA Program is a cost share program that assists local governments, state agencies and eligible private non-profit organizations with costs related to emergency work (debris removal, fire/police, etc.) and permanent work (roads, utilities, etc.). The "deductible" threshold is in response to reports issued by the General Accounting Office and the Office of Inspector General regarding the increased administrative cost and frequency of disaster declarations related to the PA program.

FEMA considered several options for the reduction in cost, one being this "deductible" concept and another being a significant increase in the statewide per capita. FEMA first proposed the per capita requirement (set at $1) in 1986 but never adopted it. However, it was an internal indicator considered by FEMA when evaluating disaster declarations requests. In 1999, the per capita indicator was put into regulation, at the original $1 threshold. The proposed increase in the per capita would account for that "missed" decade but could also consider other financial indicators such as a state's total taxable resource. Changes in the per capita could see an increase for Ohio by as much as three times the amount currently used (range of $23-53 million). For Federal Fiscal Year 2016, a disaster in Ohio must exceed $16.1 million in order to be considered for PA.

The advanced notice of proposed rulemaking puts forth several questions and considerations for commenters ranging from determining a state's deductible, how that deductible could be credited by state disaster programs, non-federally funded mitigation measures, building codes to promote resiliency, etc. Comments are due to the Federal Register no later than March 21, 2016 and be submitted at http://www.regulations.gov under FEMA Docket ID FEMA-2016-0003. Ohio EMA encourages all interested parties to review the advance notice and provide comments. If you have any questions, please call Laura Adcock, Disaster Recovery Branch Chief, at 614-799-3667 or ladcock@dps.ohio.gov.

Lessons Learned From Recent Gas Outages

PERRY COUNTY

A gas transmission line leak was reported in Perry County on Feb. 1. Perry County 9-1-1 utilized the Perry County Mass Notification System to inform the residents of the Village of Crooksville that lived within a half-mile radius of the reported leak to evacuate their homes. The residents were advised of the opening of an American Red Cross shelter, located at the Crooksville High School, which had 75 registered evacuees, with 51 evacuees remaining overnight.

Perry County EMA coordinated the response to the incident, which included representatives from a litany of state and local agencies. This incident represented a significant hazardous incident response that is consistent with the response exhibited for previous natural disasters.

ERIE COUNTY

A recent 900-customer gas outage due to a valve malfunction lead to initial full recovery estimates up to 36 hours with the low temperature around 15 degrees. The main feed was shutoff and all customers had to then be individually shutoff, the lines purged and then each

customer turned back-on.

A few lessons learned included:

Call for a shelter early, it can take several hours to setup if needed.

Erie County used the Fire Department as a command post and the gas company used the bays for briefings.

There were about 10 percent of the homes that access could not be gained and no key holder could be contacted. The standard procedure, according to PUCO and the gas company is to gain access with a lock smith to these homes so the gas could be turned on and appliances could be relit. After talks with the gas company and a conference call with PUCO and the Law Director it was determined no risk to the public was present from any explosion or gas leak. So entry would not be made into the homes. To reduce property damage and protect water pressure the water to these homes was shutoff in case a pipe would break. Contact info for both gas company and water department was left at each home. All costs were covered by the gas company.

Ohio EMA adds EMAC financial analyst

The Emergency Management Agency Fiscal Section has a new senior financial analyst, Stacy Mixon, who will be the point of contact for reimbursement requests from jurisdictions for Emergency Management Assistance Compact Deployments (EMAC).

Stacy recently attended a team training in Indianapolis to gain an understanding of the assistance compact. She will be reviewing and auditing documentation submitted by jurisdictions for the recent Baltimore winter event to ensure expenses and supporting documentation being claimed are consistent with the cost categories and estimates provided in the EMAC agreement. Please include Stacy in all EMAC related correspondence. Her contact information is: Stacy Mixon, 614-889-7179, smixon@dps.ohio.gov.

Preparedness Grants Monitoring Visits Explained

The Preparedness Grants Monitoring Section is responsible for visiting Ohio EMA sub-recipients who have been identified via a risk assessment criteria as being due for a monitoring visit. Please note, these monitoring visits are NOT audits. Our hope is these monitoring visits help sub-recipients identify and correct any issues prior to an actual audit being conducted. Our goal is to work with the counties to provide at least 30 days of notice in advance of any upcoming monitoring visits.

The process for a monitoring visit includes the identification of recent grant projects and:

- The associated Chart of Accounts to include their respective funds and account codes.

- A copy of the Detailed Revenue, Expenditure and Cash Balance Ledgers for each fund, which is usually retrieved from the County Auditor.

- A copy of the procurement policies and procedures for the sub grantee.

- Receipts and pay-ins for the identified funds.

- Equipment and Inventory Listings along with any equipment hand receipts or transfer documentation

- Copies of all reconciliations completed between the County EMA's records and County Auditor's records conducted for the identified/requested years.

- Supporting documentation for identified projects including copies of: cancelled warrants, invoices, proposals and contracts, requisitions, and purchase orders.

To maximize the time effectiveness of our visit, we ask counties to copy, scan and label the documents referenced in the letter and e-mail them to us no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled monitoring visit. This allows us to complete our pay-in testing forms in advance of the monitoring visit. On the day of the monitoring visit, we follow up on any questions regarding the pay-in testing forms, physically review the equipment identified in the letter (which has been collected for review ahead of time - when applicable), and complete the monitoring visit questionnaire.

Upon completion of the monitoring visit, a written summary of the on-site monitoring review and any recommended corrective action will be provided within 30 days. The counties then have an opportunity to implement the recommendations. Upon completion of recommended corrective action, we will consider the file closed.

Although these monitoring visits are not audits, it should be noted that in some circumstances, if funds are identified as having been misposted, misspent, or otherwise misused, there will be a requirement to refund money. In addition, any equipment that is unaccounted for, without proper disposition documentation, will also be need to be refunded.

Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant Funding Available

COLUMBUS – Local governments may apply for Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant funding, the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (Ohio EMA) announced today.

"These hazard mitigation grants fund activities that reduce disaster losses and protect life and property from future damages," said Sima Merick, executive director of the Ohio EMA. "Here in Ohio, the majority of these funds go toward the acquisition and demolition of repetitively flooded structures."

"The remaining land is then deed restricted as open space to ensure nothing is constructed on the property in the future," said Steve Ferryman, Ohio EMA's mitigation branch chief. "Elevating homes in place above flood levels, and the construction of community safe rooms to protect lives during a tornado are examples of other frequently funded project types."

Mitigation project priorities are identified in local hazard mitigation plans. In Ohio, most mitigation projects address the hazards of flooding or wind, Ferryman said.

In accordance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency guidelines, the application period for two Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant programs -- the Flood Mitigation Assistance program and the Pre-Disaster Mitigation program – begins in March.

There are two application deadline dates for Ohio applicants:

March 18, 2016 – Communities/counties considering the development of an application for PDM or FMA must send an email to Ohio EMA with a brief project description

April 29, 2016 – Date for all applications to be submitted to Ohio EMA for review and comment prior to final submittal to FEMA in June.

Additional information on the Ohio grant deadlines and the HMA grant programs is available on Ohio EMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance webpage: http://ohiosharpp.ema.state.oh.us/OhioSHARPP/Grants.aspx#grantWorkflow