



Summer 2017
Volume 15 Issue 3

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Habersham County EMS Director retires



Jack Moody, left, accepts a certificate for service from Chad Black, the new EMS Director for Habersham County.

Jack Moody, Habersham County EMS Director retired on June 22, 2017 after 42 years of service. Many of his colleagues and friends were on hand to congratulate him on his long and storied career. Moody expressed his thanks to everyone who had helped him along the way and talked about the many changes in emergency medicine that he witnessed during his career. He said that he was humbled by all of those in attendance and was proud to have the opportunity to serve Habersham County for such a long time.

He pointed out that his career was almost as long as the history of EMS, which was started in 1974, only a few months before he became an EMT. Moody's successor is a person he has known for a long time and has worked with for 28 years, Chad Black.

Hurricane Irma blows through north Georgia, leaves destruction

During the days leading up to Hurricane Irma's invasion of northeast Georgia, District 2 public health participated in situation awareness calls with DPH, Regional Coordinating Hospitals, MRCs, and National Weather Service. EP staff monitored WebEOC and GHA911 and facilitated coordination with DHEART and staff for a possible response to the storm. The mass fatality trailer stored in our district was readied for deployment, and the cot trailer was repositioned in case it was needed. Three nurses from District 2 deployed to the shelter operations in Augusta, and Hall County Environmental Health supported a Red Cross shelter at First Baptist Church, Gainesville.

On September 6 ahead of the storm, Governor Deal issued a state of emergency for 30 counties and ordered evacuation for residents east of I-95 on the coast. Later, on September 10, he expanded the state of emergency to all 159 Georgia counties.

The District 2 Operations Center was activated on Friday, September 8. Based on reports that our area would get winds upwards of 50 mph, which would cause falling trees and power outages, the decision was made to close health departments. From Monday afternoon until the early hours Tuesday morning, rain and winds pushed through the area. The prediction held true as our counties suffered massive power outages and damage from trees. Depending on location, county health departments endured power



A large oak fell on the rear of Stephens County health department building knocking down the power and telephone lines.

outages lasting from a few hours to several days. This meant that vaccines at many health departments had to be relocated to predetermined safe locations per plans. In addition, telephone and internet services were also lost. These services took longer to restore than power.

Tuesday morning, the drone of generators could be heard at homes of residents that had prepared for power outages. These units powered refrigerators and small appliances. Some people used gas grills to brew coffee or to cook simple meals. Once stately oak, poplar and pine trees now became neighborhood road blocks as trapped residents began the arduous task of clearing a path to

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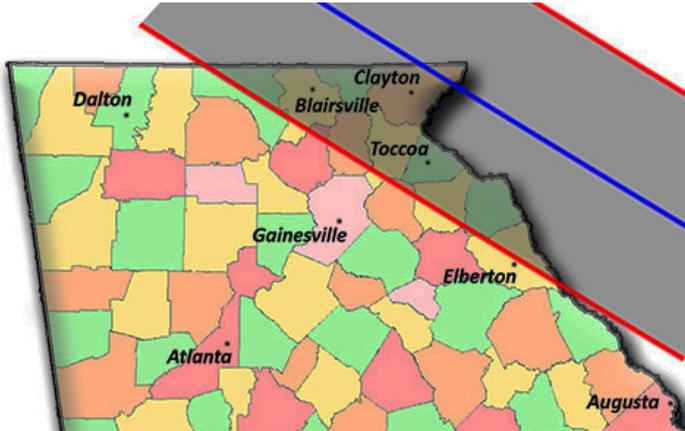
Tens of thousands of visitors join residents in District 2 for viewing of solar eclipse

North Georgia was bustling on August 21 as the steady flow of traffic took visitors to various locations to view the solar eclipse. While traffic was heavy there were

no major problems as public safety officials had anticipated and planned for the increased volume of traffic.

Many local cities and counties offered venues for viewing and activities before and after the historic event. There were also plenty of businesses and private organizations hosting viewing events. The path of the eclipse totality was approximately 70 miles wide with the center passing near Dillard, GA. in Rabun County. Other counties in the District 2 area that fell within the path of totality were Union, Towns, Lumpkin, White, Habersham, Stephens, Banks, Franklin and Hart.

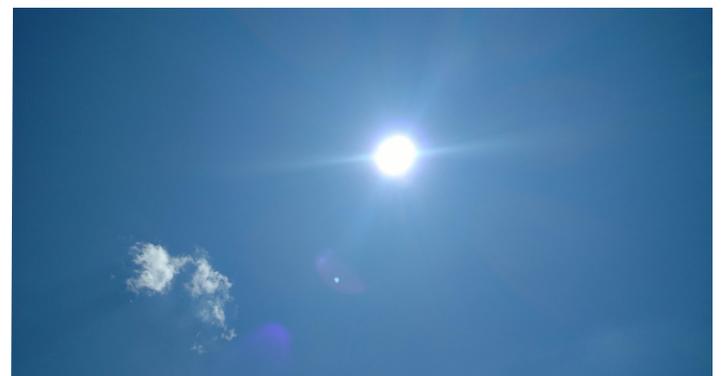
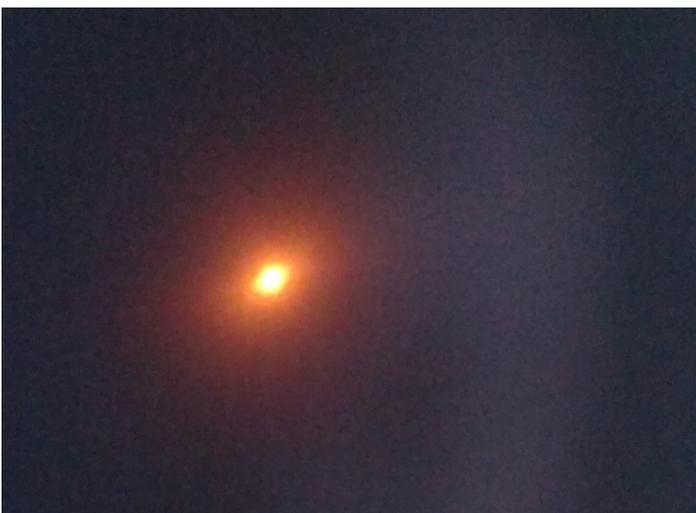
The next total solar eclipse in the U.S. will occur on April 8, 2024. It will enter the U.S. at Texas and follow a northeasterly path to Maine. For more information about solar eclipses, visit <https://eclipse2017.nasa.gov/>



Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School hosted a large event for the solar eclipse. Rabun County Emergency Management set-up mobile command at this location.



Above: Traffic was heavy leaving Rabun County and the pace was slow. Some reported it took up to six hours to get to Atlanta. Left and Bottom: The eclipse was well worth the time spent viewing and even the clouds in most locations cooperated.





Disaster mental health training for nurses held at Unicoi Park



The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, in partnership with the Department of Public Health (DBHDD), held a training “Disaster Mental Health for Public Health Nurses” on August 22, 2017 at Unicoi State Park Lodge. Research has shown

that both natural and human-generated disasters, associated with destruction, as well as loss of loved ones and irreplaceable belongings, often overwhelm one’s normal coping capacity. Disasters also stress emotional, cognitive, behavioral, physiological, and religious/spiritual beliefs.



Jeanette David from the DBHDD answers a question during the Disaster Mental Health for Public Health Nurses Training hosted by District 2 Public Health at Unicoi State Park.

Recent events such as Hurricane Irma, Hurricane Matthew and the January 2017 tornadoes in South Georgia exposed the need for increased behavioral health support for disaster shelter residents and staff. During this seminar, public health nurses learned information and skills to enable them to meet those needs with confidence and compassion. Training topics included:

- The biology of stress and trauma
- Self-care and peer support
- Engaging partners and identifying resources
- Suicide prevention
- Psychological First Aid

This course uses a participant-centered approach that enables learners to take advantage of their personal learning style and creates a fun environment. About 25 participated, including county health department nurses, state DPH office of nursing, state and District EP staff.

Region B Healthcare Coalition holds severe weather tabletop exercise

On August 2, 2017 members of the Region B Health Care Coalition participated in an exercise to identify gaps in preparedness and determine areas for improvement in response to a severe weather incident. During the exercise, 113 participants discussed various aspects of the scenario including loss of power, how to request resources, and mutual aid across organizational lines of authority.

During the exercise, the facilitator utilized various communications methods, including Everbridge, to

send and receive information to participants and facilitators. Each table had the opportunity to access GHA911 and learn how it is used during an incident. While it was evident that many hospitals, long-term care facilities, and health care organizations use GHA911, WebEOC, and Everbridge, it was noted that these platforms are not widely used by all organizations throughout the region. This was one area that was identified during the hot wash as an opportunity for improvement.



Hurricane Irma blows through north Georgia, leaves destruction

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freedom. People with individual wells found that having no power meant having no water.

Neighbors were out checking on each other, cleaning up debris from their yards, and inspecting their homes. Schools, government offices, health departments, and many businesses were closed. People who could get to work went - if their workplace had power and was open. Restaurants that could open were flooded with customers seeking a hot breakfast. Out on public roads, crews worked to clear trees and debris. Traffic lights hung darkly, watching over slow moving vehicles trying to avoid colliding with cross lane traffic.

On Tuesday, the EP staff continued to monitor WebEOC, GHA911, coordinate with county nurse managers, and answer calls from our partners. Everyone was attempting to recover from the effects of the storm. Requests from public safety to stay off the roads due to non-functioning traffic lights and crews working to clear debris, meant working at home for some. Working offsite without power proved to be a challenge as some devices (MiFi) kept displaying "No Data Service Available". Additionally, running

programs like WebEOC consumed the cell phone's battery charge so hours were spent in vehicles plugged into charging ports to stay online.

Still, work had to continue. District environmental health sent a message to all food service permit holders advising of actions to be taken if power had been lost. Messages were posted as needed on our web page and Facebook page recommending residents of actions to take and the status of our facilities.

White County's EMA Director and the health department staff coordinated care for several residents who required oxygen concentrators and were without power. Through teamwork, the EMA Director found a place to house these residents and health department nurses scheduled shifts to provide assistance to the individuals.

On Wednesday morning, four health departments remained without power. And, many of the nine health departments that opened, had phone and internet issues. By Friday, only Stephens County remained closed and without power due to the tree that had fallen on the building. Finally, late Saturday, power was restored and the health department opened on Monday.



Clockwise from left: cots are marked, counted and inspected in anticipation for deployment. A little help from our Canadian neighbors, Quebec Power. Below: a dangerous drive to work as intersections were without power. At left, one of the trees that had to be removed on the road to our trailer storage area.





Ethica Health hosts multi-county severe weather table top exercise



On August 23, 2017, representatives from five Ethica Health long-term care facilities joined with area partners to hold a severe weather tabletop exercise. As seen in the photo above, participation was excellent.

Right: Participants from Piedmont Athens Regional Hospital, District 10 Public Health, American Red Cross and Franklin County Health Department discuss their roles and responsibilities during an event.

Below right: GEMA Area Homeland Security Coordinator, Dave Shanks, clarifies a point with Ethica Health Safety and HR Coordinator, BJ Hollingsworth.

Below: District 2 Health Care Liaison, Donna Sue Campbell, explains some of the finer details of posting information in GHA911. She monitored the activity on this platform throughout the exercise.



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