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Reporting on Preparedness



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Georgia responders attend 2016 EMAG Summit & Training

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The Savannah Fire Department displayed the capabilities of their fire boats during the Emergency Management Association of Georgia Summit and Training Session. The water canons could be used to extinguish fires on maritime vessels or for buildings along the shore.

During April 20 – 22 the Emergency Management Association of Georgia and Georgia Department of Public Health hosted the Annual EMAG Summit and Training Sessions in Savannah. Participants were able to attend training sessions to learn from experts in emergency management, emergency medical services, hospital preparedness, law enforcement and public health. Each day, keynote speakers delivered powerful messages to the audience.

On Wednesday, April 20, Lt. Michael Madden, San Bernardino (CA) Police Department described his experience of being the first officer to respond to an active shooter event that left 14 public health workers dead. On December 2, 2015 Syed Farook and his wife, Tashfeen Malik killed 14 of Syed's co-workers and injured a dozen more.

Lt. Madden was less than one mile away from the scene when the call from 911 reported that a suspected shooting was occurring. Quickly responding to the call, Lt. Madden was advised by dispatch that there were reports that multiple shooters were still actively shooting inside the building complex. Soon after he arrived at the scene, two more officers joined him. Together they advanced on the building and began the clearing process. Luckily the

shooters had left as they arrived and they were able to get medical help to victims quickly.

Lt. Madden shared the unique perspective of being the first responder on-scene and then having to pull back and take on the managerial role in the widespread response. Ultimately, more than 500 local, state and federal law enforcement officers responded to the City of San Bernardino.

On Thursday, participants learned from a very different type of speaker. Jan McInnis, comedienne, taught the audience how to use humor to diffuse tension in the workplace, kick off tough conversations, and how to facilitate communications. With more than 15 years as a corporate marketing director, and over 20 years on the full-time speaking circuit, Jan has coached employees at organizations like Anthem Blue Cross, the American Heart Association, the Federal Reserve Banks, and the Mayo Clinic. Jan believes that learning does not have to be boring and brings a humorous analysis to her presentation. She is the author of "Finding the Funny Fast: How to Create Quick Humor to Connect with Clients, Coworkers, and Crowds"

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Piedmont College hosts disaster drill with more than 200 participants



On March 30, some District 2 Emergency Preparedness personnel participated as evaluators for the annual Piedmont College disaster drill. This year's event included more than 200 participants from over a dozen agencies and departments. The scenario was a transportation accident whereby one vehicle carrying a supposed load of explosives collided with another vehicle. The wreck involved extensive injuries to drivers of the vehicles and in turn set off a make believe explosion that injured about 60 people. Victim participants were moulaged so that their fake injuries appeared real.

During the exercise, first responders assessed the situation, triaged the pretend victims, provided care and

transportation to those identified as needing further care. Participants were transported to Habersham County Medical Center where they were again assessed for care by the emergency department staff. The exercise tested plans for notification, communication plans, security and public safety, resource coordination, patient transportation, and triage of the exercise players.

Participants included Piedmont College students (nursing, theater and communications), faculty, and Campus Police; Habersham County Medical Center, Emergency Medical System, Emergency Management Agency, Health Department, Sheriff and Fire Department; Demorest Police and Fire Department; and District 2 Public Health.



Above: Piedmont College nursing students provide triage and care to exercise "victims". Notice players are separated by degree of injury. In this photo you will notice the green mat (foreground) for minor injuries and the red mat for more serious or life threatening injuries.

Left: The Air Life crew explains to nursing students and exercise participants how to properly load patients into the helicopter. The crew also shared some of the capabilities of their service.



Georgia Public Health personnel present at 2016 National PHEP Conference



Charlisa Bell (left), Planning and Exercise Manager - GDPH Health Protection Division, Mark Palen (center), District 2 Emergency Preparedness Director, and Charles Braxton (right), Exercise Coordinator - GDPH Health Protection Division, were presenters at the 2016 Public Health Emergency Preparedness Summit, April 18-22 in Dallas, TX. Their presentation discussed how state and local preparedness exercises and training helps build community resiliency. The three-part presentation discussed how to conduct a cost effective full-scale exercise by expanding partnerships, how to coordinate an exercise through collaboration, and the local approach to planning and participating in a statewide exercise. Collaboration for the exercise included a long list of partners who took part in both planning and participating in the exercise. The trio also described how the state of Georgia met Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) requirements while working within an established budget. The full scale exercise that was discussed fulfilled the five year requirement for the SNS program.

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and "Convention Comedian: Stories and Wisdom from Two Decades of Chicken Dinners and Comedy Clubs".

During the closing session on Friday morning, Stephanie Decker, who survived the 2012 tornado that ripped through Henryville, Indiana and destroyed her home, spoke about the life changing disaster. As the tornado destroyed her home around her, Stephanie shielded her two children with her body as the debris came crashing down crushing her legs.

Miraculously, her children were not harmed and her son was able to go for help. However, Stephanie would lie there severely injured for two hours before help could get to her. Her inspirational story describes how she fought through pain, had parts of both legs amputated and dealt with learning how to walk again with prosthetics.

Through adversity, she has rebuilt her life and started the Stephanie Decker Foundation that supports children with prosthetics and advocates for accessibility to leading-edge prosthetic products. During her rehabilitation, she found that many of the technologically advanced prosthetics were not available to everyone, herself included. This led her to work for wider accessibility to these products. This has included lobbying health care providers to recommend, and insurance companies to pay for, the more advanced and higher cost prosthetics for individuals based on need.

The three-day training was packed full of sessions covering topics such as making disaster plans for individu-

als with physical impairments and medical conditions, providing patient care during a disaster, and making sure everyone in your organization receives the right amount of training. Presentations also reviewed real-life events such as flooding in hospitals and how to deal with refugee communities during a disaster.

Below, Brandin Gillman, District 2 Training Coordinator readies the Public Health Planning Committee presentation at EMAG. The committee will make recommendations for aligning plans across the state. The committee's focus is on standardization of plans, continuity of operations, and evacuation/sheltering support.



The EMAG Summit and Training Sessions allow responders to not only gain knowledge from special guest presenters from around the country but to also learn from their peers from around the state.



District and State Risk Communicators/PIOs meet in Unicoi



Georgia Public Health Risk Communicators/PIOs met April 12-13 at Unicoi State Park to learn about new social media tools and techniques, to discuss risk communications planning and to get updates on current health issues and topics that are occurring in our state. The first day was devoted to discussions concerning plan development, training, and exercises as well as how best to utilize the tools that public health has for disaster response, such as WebEOC, SharePoint, and notification software. Updates from Eric Jens included opportunities for Crisis Emergency Risk Communications training, updates on the BioWatch program, and state initiatives.

On the second day, the group heard from several

expert speakers on social media. Presenters included Jessica Shindelar, Health Communications Specialist/CDC, Jana Telfer, Health Promotion Team Lead for CDC International Ebola Response, and Bethany McDaniel, Editorial Director/Georgia Technology Authority. Each speaker brought a different perspective to the world of social media and how their organizations manage the issues surrounding this ever changing medium. One new technology discussed by Bethany McDaniel was User Experience (UX). Website developers versed in UX make sure that the user can use a website in the most efficient way possible. "The foundation of UX", stated McDaniel, "is getting to know your audience. This is important in all forms of social media."

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