



Winter 2019
Volume 17 Issue 2

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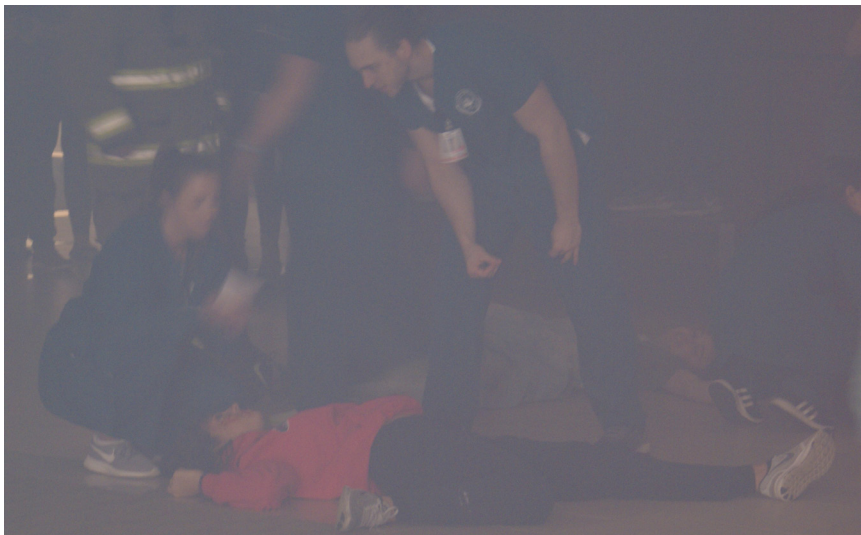
Piedmont College disaster drill challenges students

Piedmont College's annual disaster drill was held March 27 in Demorest. The scenario was a simulated fire in the Swanson Center. Drill participants had to secure the building and determine when it was safe for responders to evacuate the victims. Student actors served as casualties and were moulaged and tagged with injuries ranging from minor to major injury and some marked as deceased.

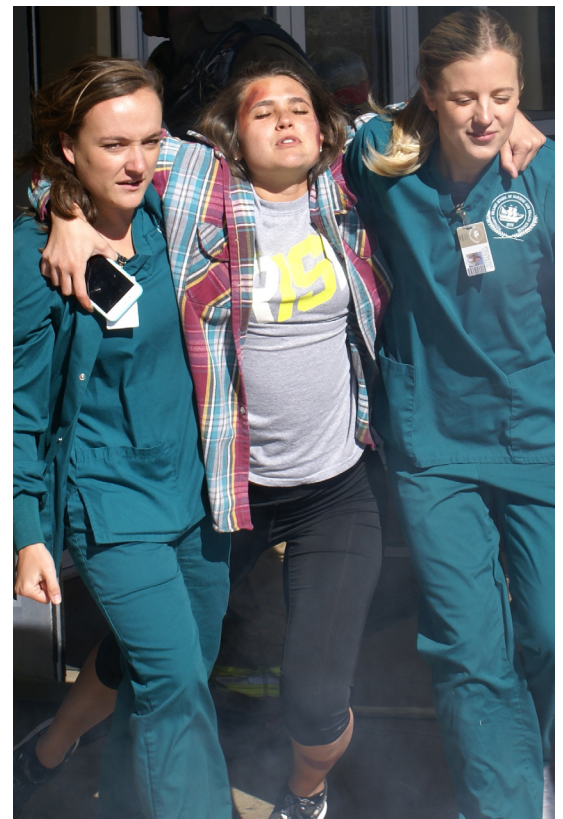
Outside, in a safe area, color-coded tarps identified the severity of the injured awaiting further care or transport to the hospital. The Air Life helicopter

crew demonstrated their capability to take the most seriously injured for care.

In addition to moulage, the drama department provided lots of smoke for the exercise. There was even a large boom from a mock explosion in the paint room of the theatre. As seen in the photo below, students made the exercise realistic by acting injured as nursing students scrambled to evacuate them to safety.



Smoke filled the Swanson Center (above) as responders extracted victim role players to the triage area outside (below). At right, student nurses assisted individuals to safety while responders kept radio contact with those inside.





Piedmont College disaster drill challenges nursing students



Students were challenged during the drill with making decisions while providing care to the injured.



Air Life made a grand entrance (above) and landed in a safe spot away from the scene. Mass communications students participated in a mock news conference (below left), while first responders conducted an ICS briefing (below right).





Annual EMAG Summit and Conference held in Savannah, April 17-19

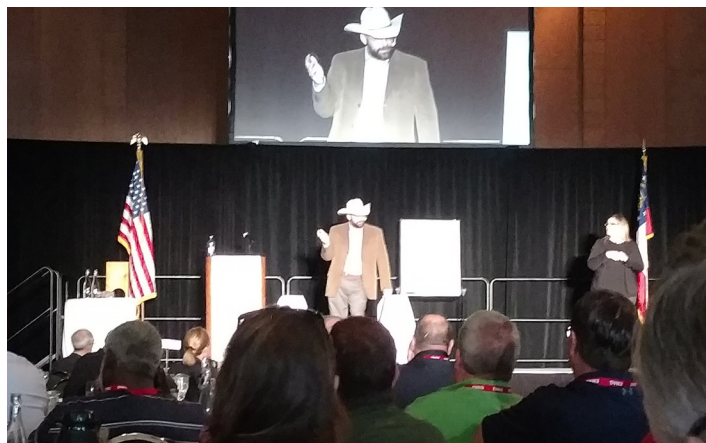
The 2019 Emergency Management Association of Georgia Summit and Training Sessions was held at Savannah International Convention Center April 17, 18 and 19. More than 1,100 people from Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee and Florida, which are part of FEMA Region 4, attended the event. EMAG has three specific goals: to assist members in their efforts to save lives and protect property from the effects of disasters; to provide a forum for professionals to discuss current issues in the emergency management field; to serve as a policy advisory board to local emergency management agencies as well as to the Georgia Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security.

The annual conference brings responders together with the opportunity to share experiences and lessons learned as they respond to emergencies. Breakout sessions include tracks for both emergency management and health. These presentations offer insight into everyday responsibilities from documentation and record-keeping to more unusual events like responses to tularemia. Keynote speakers each day during lunch bring a message of encouragement to responders testifying to the important work that they do each day.

On Friday, awards are presented for Emergency Management Agency of the Year and EMA Director of the Year. Habersham County EMA Director, Lynn Smith was awarded EMA Director of the Year. Laurens County EMA was awarded the Agency of the Year award.



Hall County EMA Director, Casey Ramsey and Greg Harper, Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC) for United States Environmental Protection Agency discussed the response to a fire at a chemical plant in Hall County. This was more than an ordinary fire as the resulting chemical spill required a multi-agency response. This included coordination between local, state and federal agencies, as well as the private business that was destroyed by the fire, and contracted private firms to assist with the clean up and monitoring of the environment (air and water).





Statewide Strategic National Stockpile Table Top Exercise held May 17

More than 300 participants from agencies and organizations around the state came together to discuss a unified response to a hypothetical anthrax incident during the Georgia Department of Public Health SNS Tabletop Exercise on May 17. Federal, State and Local partners discussed their organization's role in each of the modules presented during the exercise.

The exercise walked participants through four modules of activities related to the event. At the end of each module, participants were required to answer questions about how they would respond to the event. Each module built on information from the previous module and prompted robust discussion about needed steps to address the many issues that would arise during an event.



Multiple disease outbreaks prompt public health response

Public health professionals on the local, state and federal level have been busier lately with several different incidents of disease outbreaks. In June of 2018, Georgia Department of Public Health began seeing an increase in Hepatitis A in several areas around the state. There have been 400 cases reported since June 1, 2018 with 269 hospitalizations. Most cases have been in northwest GA, Fulton/Metro Atlanta, and the Augusta area.

Hepatitis A is transmitted person-to-person through the fecal/oral route, or consumption of contaminated food or water. Among young children, hepatitis A is most commonly spread when a child handles a toy or other contaminated object and puts their hand in their mouths. The disease is also seen in illicit drug users (both injection and non-injection drug users), men who have sex with men (MSM), household members or people who have close contact with persons infected with Hepatitis A, persons experiencing homelessness or other unsanitary environments, and travelers to countries where Hepatitis A is common.

Prevention includes getting vaccinated against Hepatitis A and practicing good hand washing hygiene. Public health departments in Georgia have increased

efforts to vaccinate individuals and groups that are most at risk. For more information, visit <https://dph.georgia.gov/hepatitis> or <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/outbreaks/2017March-HepatitisA.htm>

In April, GPH and CDC confirmed 17 cases of E. coli 0103 infection in Georgia. These illnesses were part of a multistate E. coli outbreak that sickened at least 196 people in 10 states. Hand washing and food preparation are key in preventing exposure to E. coli infections. Raw vegetables should be washed thoroughly and meats should be cooked to the proper temperature to kill the germ. When preparing food, make sure to keep raw meats separate from other food items. For more information visit <https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/outbreaks.html>.

Measles, declared eliminated in the US in 2000 has made a strong comeback. From January to June 2019, CDC has reported 1,022 cases of measles in 28 states. This is the greatest number of cases in the US since 1992. The CDC reports that these cases are linked to travelers who brought measles from countries where outbreaks are occurring. Vaccination is the best defense against measles. For more information, visit <https://dph.georgia.gov/measles> or <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/cases-outbreaks.html>.

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