

Minutes from BDPNN meeting, 20 May 2010

Speakers:

Sabina Emory, Asst Chief BFD

Khin Chin, OES

Jim Mallory, Red Cross and FEMA

Norine Smith welcomed everyone, and newcomers introduced themselves.

Announcements:

- Halcyon Park will have a drill on Sunday, 23 May, from 3-5 pm.
- Virginia Gardens will have a drill on Sunday, 19 Sep, from 11 am - 1 pm.
- The Chancellor's Grant, through the University of California, was submitted to hopefully receive some funding to continue the good work of the network. We should hear by mid-July if the BDPNN will receive any funding.
- A special thank you to the Berkeley Fellowship (where we hold the meetings) as they have volunteered to be the BDPNN's "Fiscal Agent" while the BDPNN gets their 501c status set up.
  - Everyone is encouraged at all times to give feedback, but especially when it is asked for via the website or the Yahoo group. Please let us know how to do things better.
- The committee reports will be given online, so if you would like to see what they have been doing, go to the message boards to find out.
- Don't forget to sign your green form for release of information and give it to Charlotte. If you are interested in having your group's info show up on the Yahoo website and Google map, you need to fill out that form.

Guest Speaker 1: Sabina Emory (Asst Chief of Berkeley Fire Dept) and Khin Chin (OES Berkeley)

- A reminder that primary communications in any disaster will be the radio at AM 1610.
- Sign up for the BENS (Berkeley Emergency Notification System), which is essentially "reverse 911." If something happens, this website has the capability to send voice, TTY, email, or text to let you know what's happened and what to do. Go to this website to sign up: (*City switched to AC Alert, July 2017: <https://member.everbridge.net/index/453003085612570#/login>*)
- ABAG (Associated Bay Area Governments) is an organization that includes all the local cities. They have already performed damage assessment estimates for disaster planning, based upon strength of an earthquake.
- In answering questions that we sent in advance:
- Water supply: The water for this area comes through a huge pipe called the Claremont Tunnel. This tunnel just had a retrofit in 2007-08 and is now able to withstand more seismic stress. Google on "Claremont Tunnel" for details.
- Helipads: The main location for the city's emergency helicopter landing pad (helipad) will be Cesar Chavez Park (on MLK) for military aircraft. The fire dept works on establishing helipads within city limits, and they must include a 100 foot by 100 foot clear area for the helicopters (no trees, power lines, etc.). There are several potential sites throughout the city, mainly parks and school playgrounds. If your group is near one of these sites, be aware that the site might become a helicopter evacuation point and/or a location for supplies to be brought in, if it is clear of people and debris.
- Multi-housing units: UC Berkeley has detailed plans for their dormitories and other large housing structures (like fraternities), including their own supply caches in some locations.

Most neighborhoods in BDPNN have some sort of apartment building, so planning for rescues in those buildings should be part of every disaster plan.

- Local schools: All schools in the area have their own supply caches to take care of their students if a disaster occurs during school hours. They are NOT city caches, so the city has nothing to do with them.
- Photovoltaic systems: There are many of these systems (aka, solar power) in the Berkeley area, some are on individual homeowner's property and some are businesses. It was suggested that the city might be able to come up with a plan to "borrow" this power in a crisis, but this would take a lot of work. Also, if you have someone in your neighborhood with solar power, you should look into using that power in a crisis and coordinate with the homeowners.
- New water system: The fire dept now has the emergency water supply system that can pump water from any body of water (such as the bay or a reservoir) and bring that water to a fire. They have started training with it, and you might see them practicing near the Marina.
- Communications: There was a push for an additional communications plan to include more 2way radio communications, possibly satellite phones, etc., so that the citizens can communicate with the City. However, the cost can be prohibitive, and thus the main plan is to use AM 1610 as the primary channel, and then ham radios at the fire stations for 2-way communications, per the national plan. The drill in the spring highlighted the limited range of most 2-way walkie-talkie radios, and thus the most reliable (albeit slow) way to communicate if all phone systems are down is to send runners to the fire stations to relay important information.
- ICS training: There are some training courses through the FEMA NIMS website that you can take to learn how FEMA uses the Incident Command System (ICS). The ICS committee in BDPNN is currently working on setting up ICS user's manual for the local groups to use, tailored for use at the local level. Hopefully this will be done by August.
- Additional training: El Cerrito and Kensington have CERT courses that Berkeley people are welcome to take. They are 10 week courses (meeting once per week) and can be found on their website: <http://www.el-cerrito.org/index.aspx?nid=577>
- Emergency Ops Center: A reminder that the primary location for the Berkeley EOC in a disaster is the City Building on MLK. The secondary location (if the primary is down) is the CERT training building at 9th and Cedar.

Guest Speaker 2: Jim Mallory (Red Cross and FEMA)

- FEMA must be invited by the Governor and then approved by the President before they can go anywhere. This can be as fast as 48 hours if everything works perfectly in the system, but it is likely to take 7-10 days before actual supplies and help can arrive. We will rely upon City assets for the first few days, but they will be overwhelmed. We will be on our own for longer than we thought !
- FEMA does some search and rescue, but most of what they do is interface with City and County officials already doing the work. The State is the one who runs the show in a disaster.
- Monetary assistance is the primary thing that FEMA can do, but this is after the disaster has been stabilized. (1) Individual Assistance is given for each homeowner (not renter), with a max of \$27,500. You would need to go to a FEMA center (once established) and fill out all the paperwork, even the paperwork that doesn't seem to apply (fill everything out). (2) Public Assistance is given to help the local governments get back on their feet, including rebuilding fire houses, streets, etc. They will get money to deal with the aftermath.

- It is extremely critical that you keep copies of all your important papers and documents in your emergency pack. If you can't prove who you are (drivers license) or can't prove you are a homeowner (copy of mortgage, insurance, etc.), then you can't get FEMA funds.
- Red Cross' primary responsibility is to feed and shelter the people. There are preset shelter sites in every part of the country, but not all of them will be activated in an emergency. It is important that you find out which ones are open for that disaster. Most of them are school gyms and other large structures with bathroom facilities and cooking facilities, but not always. Listen to AM 1610 to find out where to go.
- Red Cross has now partnered with the animal shelters of the local areas so people can bring their pets to the people shelter. Many people died in New Orleans because the people would not leave their pets behind (because the shelters didn't take pets, before now). - There are medical people in the shelters, but they will be limited by what they can do. Remember that ALL of them are volunteers. And you can volunteer too. There are also security folks now, including National Guard troops outside the shelters when needed.
- Each county has its own Red Cross office. There are some supply caches for their needs preset within each area, when the supplies are needed quickly.
- Red Cross has a website to post information about yourself. That way, family members can search for you and find out that you are okay. But, always make sure you have an out-of-state contact, preferably a cell phone number, that you can text message about your condition after the emergency.
- Red Cross offers "Red Cross Ready" which is a 2-hour course to train people how to prepare for disasters in advance (making your family cache). If your neighborhood has at least 20 people, you can schedule a Red Cross trainer to come to your neighborhood for free. Just go to the Red Cross website to find the phone number of the local county office.