

**NEMA Pacific and Territorial Caucus Committee
2010 NEMA Annual Conference
Sunday, October 17, 2010**

Meeting Summary

Chair: Ed Teixeira (HI)

Roll Call: conducted by Ed Teixeira. Committee members attending: Ed Teixeira (HI), John Madden (AK), Jacinta Brown (American Samoa), Frank Ishizaki (Guam), Jim Greene (past president liaison).

Welcome and introductions: Ed Teixeira (HI).

Brief history of caucus.

- The Pacific region's island communities have similar challenges—largely in communications. Kudos to John Madden and staff for their work in defining the group with such resources as a brochure on who the caucus is.
- The PTC has been ambitious in its goals, and it's important to discuss the things that are important in following the proper route.

OCONUS (Outside the Contiguous United States) Task Force initiative.

- John Madden (AK) began the OCONUS discussion by describing Alaska's severe flooding about a year ago, when the Yukon River broke up with a vengeance. The first community hit had one third of its homes destroyed. Though other communities down river had time to evacuate, the question had to be raised: what if the event had resulted in more communities' being destroyed? In such a scenario, Alaska would be more similar to Hawaii and other islands than to the contiguous United States in both emergency management and homeland security views. These member states face issues the contiguous U.S. does not.
- How to face these issues? The Alaska team provided a small proposal by which Pacific and Caribbean states can help each other through distance collaboration. Other PTC members responded, and the group has worked with NEMA and NGA. Stephanie Tennyson (DHS) facilitated a group of fifteen from various federal disciplines in determining how to approach this.
- Problem-solving is the necessary step before ordering the resources. John and Ed have talked much about how to serve each other with *experience* (not *commodities*). To discuss this, a distance collaboration effort might be the answer, recognizing that there would never be a time when all the NEMA PTC members would be electronically on the same line, so to speak.

Distance collaboration.

- Mike O'Hare (AK) joined John to speak about problem-solving through distance collaboration issue. How can the PTC, with twelve time zones, all get together to discuss mutual emergency management issues?
- Alaska has found the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) to work well. Alaska is interested in having the other PTC members to collaborate using this posting system. A PACTS portal is already set up; what Alaska needs now is contact information from the other PTC states, including e-mail and contacts.

- John Madden provided an example of how such collaboration could exist: start a virtual discussion on how to deal with tourists (an element common to all the PTC members) when an emergency happens—how to deal with the food supply, medical, housing, etc. Other partners would likely also need to be included: Department of Defense, Coast Guard, FEMA, etc. Such tools as teleconferencing and even Webinars could be used.
- Jacinta Brown said she does currently participate in VTCs with such organizations as NOAA, and she believes a system such as what John proposes could be quite cost effective. One problem she's experienced with Webinars is that the information to log in often arrives too late for her and staff to participate.

Relationship of OCONUS to NEMA.

- John stated his belief that NEMA and NGA should support the OCONUS initiative, *not* that it be an initiative of NEMA or NGA. NEMA and NGA would provide enabling support that, with the right connectivity, could enhance services so that more information available.
- How does this relate to EMAC? John noted that EMAC can be regional in nature. The PTC members could thus pre-script EMAC. EMAC doesn't solve logistics or supply lines issues, but it does provide structure the PTC needs.

Frank Ishizaki said that the Guam governor is always reaching out to the islands regarding mutual assistance. The question comes when there are reimbursable expenses.

- Ed reiterated John's operative word: *enabling*. The PTC doesn't want to do things totally independently but, rather, wants to use what is common to all. It is not competing against EMAC; rather, the caucus feels it needs to do more work of its own because it has different needs.
- Ed recognized Nancy Ward (FEMA) for her role in gaining funds for catastrophic disaster planning in FEMA Region IX. Ed stated that the logistical challenges in a catastrophic disaster are so daunting that he is convinced that Hawaii needs to continue to develop its in-state capabilities and become less reliant on outside resources. The OCONUS task force idea allows the PTC to be somewhat independent of NEMA in figuring out operational and logistical areas.
- John Madden noted how an event affecting one of the PTC areas can impact an area far, far away. As an example, Alaska earthquakes have killed in other countries and continents. Using the OCONUS initiative, the PTC can develop ways to prepare schools, other institutions. Limited only by imagination.

NEMA dues and the PTC.

- Regarding dues and NEMA, the Republic of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, and Republic of the Marshall Islands have received reduced rates for dues from NEMA in the past, but even so, those islands have not become involved with NEMA or attended the conferences. Ed welcomed the assistance of the other PTC members to encourage these members to remain in NEMA. Ed asked Frank and Jacinta to reach out to these members if they can.
- Jim Greene asked if it would be appropriate to get contact through the State Department. John noted that if such contact is difficult on a sunny day, how can we hope to have good communication when emergency strikes? Frank said he could see if the governor of Guam could

discuss this issue with those three members' presidents when they meet annually. Chris Maier (National Weather Service) noted that his organization might be able to help because it has an office in all three member states.

PTC member updates.

- Jacinta (American Samoa): Community outreach activities on a weekly basis. Just completed drills, evacuations, etc. in villages, schools, government agencies. Lessons learned from the last event: realized how they need to bring in private sector partners. Ed noted there had been some criticism on siren systems during the American Samoa event; Jacinta said they were dealt some undeserved criticism, as CNN had interviewed only a few people, not homeland security.
- Frank (Guam): Guam, too, had received criticism on all-hazards warning system. He thinks all Pacific islands are so alarmed by the threat of tsunami that they feel they have to do a better job. Frank stated that FEMA has completed the Guam Typhoon Catastrophic Operations Plan.
- John (Alaska): Alaska has warning systems in about twenty communities. Major preparedness programs are scheduled: Responder Ready, Critical Employee Emergency Planning training, etc. Improving wording of forecasts. Getting ready for uncertainty.
- Jim Greene (past president liaison): Someone in a full-time capacity will be needed to do the OCONUS Task Force coordination and planning. Attending to this initiative on a part-time basis will likely take a very long time to do.
- Ed (Hawaii): Hawaii is currently experiencing severe drought and has the highest drought rating in the country.

Concluded at 5:16 p.m.