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Why Didn't We Think of it Sooner?



There are times when crisis leads to **clarity and opportunities** that were right in front of us all along suddenly become crystal clear. No doubt many of us have had such epiphanies while working remotely or from scaled back office settings since early spring. Emergency management is all about partnerships and that includes national policy development and implementation. Our collective voices are stronger when emergency management organizations and leaders strive toward a common goal.

Earlier this year such an epiphany became apparent to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), NEMA, and the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM). Why isn't there a more direct connection and relationship between NEMA, IAEM and the **FEMA National Advisory Council (NAC)**?

The **NAC** advises the FEMA Administrator on all phases of emergency management. The NAC consists of up to 35 representatives appointed by the Administrator including state, local, tribal and territorial government leaders and the private sector. Each representative serves a three-year term. NEMA and IAEM have members that sit on the NAC, but they don't represent the Associations. Thus, a bit of a disconnect.

FEMA recently reached out to NEMA and IAEM with the idea of having the three organizations work more closely together on national policy and program issues. NEMA and IAEM now have the opportunity to submit our own policy recommendations to the NAC for consideration and provide comments to the NAC on its recommendations to the Administrator before they're final. NEMA and IAEM can lend our national credibility and influence to support NAC recommendations that we want to see move forward and vice versa. The initial joint virtual meeting between the leaders of the three organizations confirmed there are lots of opportunities for collaboration.

We're in the early stage of this "new" partnership with old friends, but it holds great promise. As we consider how we want emergency management to evolve in the future, particularly post COVID-19, a shared vision between NEMA, FEMA, and IAEM is our best bet for success.

"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success." - Henry Ford

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