



Emergency Management Program Update

Purpose

- Provide an overview and program update on the Emergency Management program
- Provide an update on how Emergency Management is preparing the city with advanced notifications and emergency communications, preparedness initiatives, and public education and outreach
- Emergency Management collaboration and partnerships

Responsibilities of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) –

The mission of the San Marcos Office of Emergency Management is to maintain community resilience in the face of natural, technological, and man-made hazards. To meet this goal, we strive to build the city's response capability and coordinate with regional, state, and federal partners. We conduct regular training and disaster exercises, in accordance with federal standards, to test and improve our ability to protect against the unexpected. We are engaged with the community to ensure the citizens of San Marcos are educated and informed. We are committed to preparing for, responding to, recovering from, mitigating against, and preventing threats posed to San Marcos.

The Office of Emergency Management coordinates emergency management and homeland security activities with Hays County agencies, the Capitol Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG), Capital Area Public Health and Medical Coalition (CAPHMC), private organizations, faith-based organizations, volunteer organizations, and other local, state, and federal agencies.

San Marcos Office of Emergency Management conducts:

- emergency management and homeland security planning, policy, and grant administration
- city-wide emergency management training and exercise program
- public preparedness and education
- enhancement of city's response and recovery capabilities

Advanced notifications and communication

Our goal in regards to advanced notifications and communication is to have the proper tools with the latest technology without having to rely on sending staff out in the field during a major weather event. To achieve that goal, we've established a set of Early Warning Tools to monitor severe weather and potential weather-related disasters as well as warning the public –

- **WeatherGuidance** – an annual weather service subscription with Site Warn/WeatherGuidance to provide real-time weather information for COSM.
 - Local meteorologists in New Braunfels
 - Used during **Iconic Village** response monitoring weather patterns for isolated rain and heat index values with first responder safety
- **iNWS** – direct subscription through the NWS for immediate weather alerts affecting our area; EM receives the alert before it is pushed to the public
- **NWSChat** – Live chat room with NWS meteorologists to obtain immediate answers to questions regarding live weather events
- **Hays County WetMap** – Dashboard from Hays County that allows us to view all of the information for water levels at all of the dams, river gauges, and low water crossings in one view. This includes information on ground saturation levels, hot spots, etc.
- **Crisis Track acquisition** – Incident management software used to manage disaster operations to include debris monitoring, damage assessments (replaces collector app), and automated incident documentation for FEMA reimbursement. It allows real-time information tracking in the Emergency Operations Center for things like damage assessment costs. The software also allows the Office of Emergency Management to easily create Incident Action Plans, Situation Reports, and State Agency Reports with the information collected from multiple users

These systems will improve our overall strategy of using the latest technology to give us the best information available. Moving forward we have some additional work we are doing to improve our capabilities even further and we are focusing on these key areas:

- Improve monitoring capabilities at lift stations across the City
- Create inundation maps and tables for use in the Emergency Operations Center
- Collaborating with local, regional, and federal partners through the Capital Area Council of Governments Flood Forecasting Committee to develop real-time forecast systems and modeling
- [Flood Early Warning System (FEWS):
 - Finalizing phase 1 in the Flood Emergency Warning System project including an evaluation of the City's current system, meetings with regional partners, findings, and developing short-term and long-term recommendations]

We've been looking into the **storm sirens** and their effectiveness. What we've found is that they are not an effective or efficient tool for what we're trying to achieve with early warning to the public. However, we do have many new tools with the latest technology that we are using for this such as:

- **Warn Central Texas:** Used in collaboration with the Communications Department as an Emergency notification system funded by CAPCOG
 - Software used for this is CodeRED – this will be changing over to a new vendor (Everbridge) in September
 - External use for our citizens: early warning of pending weather, public health concerns, nearby dangers for evacuation (gas leak, etc)

- Internal use for city employees: To distribute emergency information, inclement weather updates, as well as important non-emergency information. We used this during the response to the winter weather event in January 2018.
- **103.1 FM radio station** – a radio requires power in the home to receive the transmission over the airwaves.
- Encouraging the use of **weather radios** – weather radios can run on power through the home as well as battery operation in the event of a power outage.
- **Adobe Connect** – We are working to implement the use of this system for communications with council and other city leaders during an incident. It allows us to set up a live feed open only to those with log in information for incident briefings. We can also record the briefing so that anyone not able to attend can log in and watch the recording to obtain the same briefing.

Getting Citizens Prepared –

We have initiated a public outreach campaign for the first time in the City, and conducted public education on disaster preparedness at local events such as the playscape opening. We have been getting citizens to sign up for emergency alerts through Warn Central Texas as well as prepare and distribute basic emergency supply kits to our citizens. We have presented at Neighborhood Commission meetings getting citizens to sign up for emergency alerts and conducted public education with individual neighborhoods; our next preparedness efforts are with Blanco Gardens. In collaboration with the Hays County Office of Emergency Management, we will be participating at the Hays County Preparedness Fair conducting preparedness education.

In collaboration with the Communications Department, we've initiated a Social Media campaign publishing preparedness information at least weekly to all of our social media sites.

We've revamped the San Marcos Office of Emergency Management website to include the most current information on being prepared in our community.

- The social media feeds were linked to our city emergency management website during the **Iconic Village** response as well.

We are currently in the process of our annual notifications to those located in the flood plain and informing them about the National Flood Insurance Program.

We are implementing the **State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR)** which is a registry of citizens in our community who are disabled or with access and functional needs that allows the office of emergency management to plan for those who may need assistance during evacuations.

Most recently, the City of San Marcos has achieved the designation of being a **StormReady®** community by the National Weather Service. This prestigious designation recognizes those communities that are better prepared to save lives from the onslaught of severe weather through advanced planning, education, and awareness. No community is storm proof, but StormReady® can help communities save lives.

Getting City staff prepared:

We have established a structured National Incident Management System (NIMS)–compliant emergency operations center that is scalable to any emergency.

- We have 34 positions within the Emergency Operations Center organizational chart composed of city staff. Staff are assigned specific roles for disaster response making the Emergency Operations Center scalable to the size of the response.
- Policy Group composed of City Leadership was established to provide oversight in the Emergency Operations Center. The group also makes business impacting decisions, such as opening a shelter, easier by having all of the proper staff in a private room separate from the emergency operations center

We have established an Emergency Management Training Program. We currently have approximately 30% of our staff trained. By this time next year, city staff will have completed their emergency management training classes for emergency operations center response.

We have established a progressive disaster exercise program. In compliance with grant requirements, we must conduct three (3) exercises per year:

- One (1) Operations-based exercise per year
- Two (2) Discussion-based exercises per year

San Marcos has completed three (3) exercises this fiscal year since February, and we have a fourth exercise scheduled for Sep 12th, which will bring us more funding in the next grant year by exceeding the minimum requirements set by FEMA.

Over the next five years, the Office of Emergency Management will have re-written and updated all 22 emergency operations plans in accordance with Texas Code 418. We are taking information we've collected from our exercises, feedback received from City staff, and state and federal guidance to draft the new revisions. This also includes drafting new plans not yet written such as the new Debris Management Plan.

We have established a grant management program for managing current public assistance and emergency management grants as well as looking for new grant opportunities. With that, I'd like to provide an update on our current grants:

- FEMA public assistance grants – From the two 2015 flooding incidents, we had 16 individual project grants. Since November 6, 2017, we have received reimbursements totaling over **\$636,000** for a total reimbursement of over **\$664,500**.

We are working on the collection of additional funds previously unclaimed totaling **\$304,828.61**.

- We have also applied and been accepted to the Emergency Management Performance Grant bringing in potentially another **\$143,710.70** to the City annually which resulted in the ability to add a new position to the Office of Emergency Management.

Emergency Management collaboration and partnerships

We have continued to build partnerships across the city with all departments. During our response to Hurricane Harvey, those partnerships are what allowed us to respond in such an effective and efficient manner. City departments, such as communications, IT, community services, public services, and many others, were called upon for assistance and they responded without question or hesitation to the immediate needs of the incident.

We have been enhancing our operations by continuing to work with the county in joint Emergency Operations Center operations. During the Iconic Village incident, I was able to reach out to Hays County Office of Emergency Management for assistance in providing resource support for the city. Staff were provided in the Emergency Operations Center to assist with setting up the assistance center and answering phones for the emergency information line.

Our local community partnerships have been strengthened over the last year as well. During our past responses to disasters such as the April 2017 flooding, Hurricane Harvey, and the Iconic Village incident, to name a few, many of our community partners reached out offering their assistance. Texas State University, SMCISD, Blanco River Regional Recovery Team (BR3T), Central Texas Medical Center (CTMC), HEB, our local churches and businesses, the American Red Cross, Austin Disaster Relief Network, Central Texas Food Bank, the Salvation Army, and many others reached out and offered most anything we needed to help our response and the community. New partnerships have been developed with the City of New Braunfels, Comal County, and Guadalupe County Offices of Emergency Management.

We've been building our regional relationships as well. For the Capital Area Council of Governments, the Office of Emergency Management is involved with the Homeland Security Task Force; several committees such as regional technology, regional training and exercise, and the flood forecasting committee; and various workgroups. We serve as coalition members on the Capital Area Public Health and Medical Preparedness Coalition and assist in exercise planning and evaluation throughout the region.

Next Steps for Emergency Management:

We will continue our pro-active efforts for education, communications, and planning with the citizens and staff of the City of San Marcos. We will conduct a Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment. We will also conduct a workshop with city staff to plan for future training and exercises. Lastly, we will be implementing new technologies and advancements.

Supplemental Information

Specific details regarding our Public Assistance Grants are itemized below.

Total amount of grant reimbursements received:

- Prior Nov 2017: **\$28,212.11**
- After Nov 6, 2017: **\$ 636,375.57**
- For a combined total of **\$ 664,587.68**

Working collection of additional funds previously unclaimed: **\$304,828.61**
DR 4159 – October 2013 Flood

- 1 project remains open – Bugg Lane Outfall (work completed in 2016)
 - Original project was for \$98,178 (\$73,633 reimbursable)
 - COSM spent \$467,000 to conduct repairs and mitigation measures without prior approval from FEMA
 - Currently working with TDEM and FEMA to gain approval for this additional reimbursement of **\$276,616.50**
 - Total reimbursement sought - **\$350,249.50**

DR 4223 – May 2015 Flood

- 6 Projects totaling \$457,164.66 in reimbursements
 - All 6 projects are complete
 - 5 projects have been closed and reimbursed
 - 1 project is awaiting the state to initiate compliance testing = \$135,710.15
 - Total reimbursements paid to COSM: **\$321,454.51**

DR 4245 – October 2015 Flood

- 9 Projects totaling \$544,606.02 in reimbursements
 - 7 projects are complete and closed
 - 1 project is awaiting approval from FEMA for a change in scope to begin work (but has been *paid* the amount originally awarded)
 - 1 project is 35% complete
 - 8 projects have been reimbursed
 - Total reimbursements paid to COSM: **\$343,133.17**

Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)

- Accepted into the program Feb 2018
- 50% reimbursable grant
- Award letter not yet received determining amount awarded.
 - Amount applied for **\$287,421.40**
 - Eligible reimbursement amount: **\$143,710.70**

Further details on how the Office of Emergency Management is involved in Regional activities is identified below:

- Capital Area Council of Governments
 - Homeland Security Task Force
 - Serve as an Affiliate member with monthly meetings
 - Regional Training and Exercise Committee
 - Serve as a Committee Member
 - Regional Emergency Management Exercise Planning Workgroup
 - Serve as a Workgroup Member planning the February exercise
 - Regional Technology Committee
 - Serve as an Affiliate member
 - Solely creating a new WebEOC platform for the entire CAPCOG region
 - The new platform will be presented to the State for implementation across TDEM
- Capital Area Emergency Communications District
 - Serve as a Subject Matter Expert of the Special Projects Committee (WebEOC, Regional Notification Systems, etc)
- Capital Area Trauma Regional Advisory Council
 - Capital Area Public Health & Medical Preparedness Coalition (CAPHMPC)
 - Serve as a voting Board Member
 - Hospital Preparedness Subcommittee
 - Serve as a voting Committee Member