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## FEDERAL DISASTER RECOVERY COORDINATOR'S CORNER

By: Kevin Snyder, Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator, FEMA Region III

Spring has arrived in FEMA Region III and with it comes the chance to enjoy the blooms of bulbs planted in years past. Regularly I am presented with the evidence of work and partnerships that took root well before I arrived. Sometimes the evidence is monumental, such as the adopted state, commonwealth and district pre-disaster recovery plans or FEMA's first Regional Recovery All Hazards Plan (Recovery-AHP). Sometimes the evidence is less visible but still an important part of our cooperative efforts, such as the creation of the FEMA Region III Recovery Support Function Leadership Group, which we will formalize in May.

This quarter's "Recovery Forward" highlights some of the more impressive recent disaster recovery preparedness efforts. They include the Environmental Protection Agency Region III's precedent setting *Disaster Recovery Support Plan*, (see "EPA Region III Publishes Recovery Support Plan" on Page 3) which highlights the many ways in which EPA supports disaster recovery. At the local level Muncy, Pennsylvania has embarked upon its own recovery and resiliency planning efforts with the support of the Commonwealth Disaster Recovery Coordinator (see "Muncy, Pennsylvania Hosts Resiliency Workshop" on Page 7).

These efforts – and many others – speak to the hard work that has been put in across the region at the federal, state and local levels to prepare our communities for the disaster recovery process. As I look ahead my principal challenge will be how to maintain the momentum and enhance the work that has been accomplished. This begins by working with you – our partners – to identify where we have the greatest recovery needs and how we can best collectively address those needs. Over the coming months we will be meeting with each of the Region's states, commonwealths and the District of Columbia to review the state-specific content from our regional Recovery-AHP. These meetings should help us identify where we can focus our efforts over the coming years. But more than just a single meeting, it will be our ongoing conversations and shared efforts that push us ahead and keep us focused on the work that needs to be done, and I look forward to that.

## NOAA REGIONAL COASTAL RESILIENCE GRANTS PROGRAM ANNOUNCES AWARDS

In early February, NOAA's Office for Coastal Management, National Ocean Service, announced approximately \$4.5 million in grants designed to make our coasts and communities more resilient. This is part of a planned \$9 million in awards this year. The focus of the Regional Coastal Resilience Grants program is on comprehensive regional projects that rely on science-based solutions and collaborative partnerships.

The Office for Coastal Management received overwhelming interest in the Regional Coastal Resilience Grant program following NOAA's FY15 federal funding opportunity announcement. The agency received 132 proposals requesting a total of \$105 million, and committing \$60 million of in-kind support. Six regional projects were selected with FY 2015 funds; there will be more during FY 2016. The impact will be felt in over 100 coastal communities. These projects will address evolving economic, environmental, and social pressures on our oceans and coasts using NOAA's approach to building resilience through sustainable land and ocean use, disaster preparedness, environmental restoration, and hazard mitigation. Each region will benefit from the risk assessments, demonstration projects, and coastal resilience plans and strategies associated with the selected grant proposals.

The grants process is well underway for projects recommended for FY 2016 funding. Final approval is subject to clearance and award by the Grants Officer, NOAA Grants Management Division. *More information about the program can be found at [www.coast.noaa.gov/resilience-grant](http://www.coast.noaa.gov/resilience-grant).*



### RESILIENCE MEANS **BOUNCING BACK**





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**BRIDGING THE GAP IN WEST VIRGINIA - WV VOAD SUPPORTS BRIDGE PROJECTS**

Southern West Virginia residents experienced three separate flooding events from storms on March 3, April 8 and July 10 of 2015. Many residences were damaged and over 300 private water crossings were reported as damaged or completely destroyed due to powerful floodwaters and heavy floating debris. Without aid, many of these families may never have the ability to safely access their house.

WV VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) is collaborating with disaster response agencies, state and local officials, federal agencies and businesses to efficiently coordinate volunteers, equipment and building materials to help families who are currently risking their safety to cross dangerous waterways in order to reach their homes. The intent behind the WV VOAD Bridge project is to provide families who were affected by 2015 flooding and lack the resources to recover on their own with safe bridges that will be as resilient as possible to future storms. The project ensures that bridges will be built to a standard that exceeds state and federal standards. This project is a whole community effort, and is not just about building bridges — its about connecting children to education, elderly to medical facilities, and the neighbors to the community.

Two bridges, designed by Johann Zimmerman with JZ Engineering, were completed in December 2015 by Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) volunteers led by MDS Project Manager, Peter Thiessen. They were funded by MDS and State Farm. Construction for three more bridges began on Monday, January 11. MDS funded the construction of these bridges along with donations and discounts from local partners. The WV VOAD Bridge Project is the first of its kind nationally. Other states are now looking to WV for guidance on how they themselves can take on private bridge repair after disaster. To learn more about the WV VOAD Bridge Project and to make a donation, please visit: [www.wvvoad.org](http://www.wvvoad.org) or <https://www.gofundme.com/wvvoadbridges>.

**RESILIENTLY  
BRIDGING  
THE GAP IN WEST VIRGINIA**



**MITIGATION CORNER -  
PENNSYLVANIA ROLLS OUT NEW HAZARD MITIGATION INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

**By: Alison Kearns, Mitigation Division, FEMA Region III**

Resiliency is the ability of a State or Commonwealth, its communities, organizations, and citizens to prepare for and rebound from shocks and stresses, recover quickly, and be able to sustain and enhance our strength. Hazard mitigation and disaster recovery planning are essential components of resiliency.

A hazard mitigation plan is a community-driven, living document that communities use to reduce their vulnerability to hazards. Counties and communities develop hazard mitigation plans to assess their risk to hazards, develop a prioritized action plan to mitigate impacts of identified hazards, and create a strategy to implement those actions. Having an approved hazard mitigation plan also makes communities eligible for certain FEMA programs.

Each county must update its hazard mitigation plan every five years. This can be a very comprehensive process, and often, they do not have the capability (skill) or capacity (time) to update them on their own.

In March 2016, The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) held a webinar with universities to discuss the potential for

academic institutions and students to assist counties with hazard mitigation and disaster recovery planning through an internship program. PEMA also conducted surveys to gauge university interest in the program. The webinar provided an overview of hazard mitigation planning and outlined how student interns could potentially support counties with their hazard mitigation and disaster recovery planning needs, such as through research, writing, GIS mapping, data analysis, and outreach.

This program provides a multitude of benefits: it assists counties with their hazard mitigation planning needs and enhances their relationships with universities, it helps universities develop relationships with counties and enhance career development opportunities for students, and it provides students with networking, career development, and learning opportunities.

To find out more about Hazard Mitigation Planning in Pennsylvania, check out <http://www.pemahmp.com/> For more information on this program, please reach out to Ernie Szabo, Pennsylvania Hazard Mitigation Planner, at [erszabo@pa.gov](mailto:erszabo@pa.gov).



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**EPA REGION III PUBLISHES FIRST RECOVERY SUPPORT STRATEGY**

**By: Bill Steuteville, EPA Region III Homeland Security Coordinator**

In January 2016, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region III (EPA III) issued the EPA III Recovery Support Plan (EPA R3 Plan). The EPA R3 Plan is the product of a cross-program work group tasked to define EPA III’s role in disaster Recovery pursuant to the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency Region III (FEMA III) Recovery All Hazards Plan. It identifies EPA resources, expertise, guidance, programs and grants that may be available to support disaster Recovery in Region III. It aligns EPA Recovery goals with EPA’s national priorities including Sustainable Communities, Climate Change Adaptation and ecosystem restoration and protection (watersheds, wetlands, floodplains). The Plan provides a management structure to ensure EPA resources and EPA Recovery support efforts are coordinated with the overall Federal Response and Recovery effort and the six Recovery Support Functions. It identifies contacts for EPA programs.

The EPA R3 Plan emphasizes EPA’s role in protecting the public and supporting communities. EPA is a primary or support agency under all six Recovery Support Functions. The types of assistance EPA can offer may include:

- **Technical Support and guidance:** Many EPA programs offer technical support, guidance and information—wetlands and watersheds protection, Energy Star, Healthy Schools/Healthy Children, indoor air, to name a few.
- **Scientific Expertise:** EPA has scientific expertise in toxicology, ecology, biology, hydrology and other areas to advise Recovery planners.
- **Compliance Assistance:** EPA enforcement offices can work with states and tribes to provide compliance assistance to impacted businesses.
- **EJ/Communications/Outreach:** EPA Environmental Justice (EJ), Community Involvement, and Public Affairs officials can contribute communication and outreach skills particularly for engaging disadvantaged communities.

- **Funding/Grants:** EPA is not a major source of Recovery funding but EPA has some funding resources that potentially could be used for eligible Recovery projects, such as Brownfields and State Drinking Water and Waste Water Revolving Funds.
- **Coordinated Project Review and Permitting:** EPA will coordinate its environmental review of Recovery projects with Federal and state partners to help expedite project review and approval pursuant to the Unified Federal Review (UFR).

The EPA R3 Plan also emphasizes environmental restoration. Healthy watersheds, wetlands and floodplains are critical to long-term public health and resilient communities. Following a disaster environmental damage isn’t always the first priority for impacted communities. The R3 Plan emphasizes the importance of environmental damage assessment, mitigation and restoration. Environmental Recovery begins with timely, coordinated environmental damage assessment starting in the Response phase. EPA will work with and support the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Agriculture, states, and private environmental and natural resource stakeholders to support environmental damage assessment and promote long-term environmental restoration and mitigation.

EPA’s other recovery mission and, perhaps, EPA’s most important Recovery mission is to support sustainable, resilient Recovery planning. The words “Sustainable, Resilient, Greener, (and) Better” are prominent on the cover of the EPA R3 Plan and in EPA Recovery support. EPA III is working with FEMA III to provide a “Sustainability Advisor” to the FEMA Recovery Coordination Team to work with Federal, state and local partners to adopt sustainable, resilient, green practices in disaster Recovery planning in the event of a disaster in Region III. Although EPA is prepared staff this position today if called upon, EPA III is the process of identifying and training a cadre of qualified EPA III staff to fill this role in Region III to support our Federal partners and Region III states and communities.

If you have questions or want to see a copy of the EPA R3 Plan contact Bill Steuteville, EPA Region III Homeland Security Coordinator at (215) 814 3264 or email [steuteville.william@epa.gov](mailto:steuteville.william@epa.gov).

**FEMA REGION III PUBLISHES ITS FIRST RESILIENCE REPORT!**

Interested in learning about resilience projects, resources, and events in Region III? Check out the new “Resilience Report”, a digital newsletter from the Mitigation Division’s Risk Analysis Branch at FEMA Region III. To be added to the distribution list, please send an email to [Jane.Meconi@mbakerintl.com](mailto:Jane.Meconi@mbakerintl.com).



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## REGION III OPENS ITS DOORS TO CONGRESSIONAL STAFF ON ST. PATRICK'S DAY

**By: Melissa Wiehenstroer, Public Affairs Specialist, FEMA Region III**

On March 17<sup>th</sup>, FEMA Region III celebrated St. Patrick's Day with congressional staff from around the Region, during the highly successful inaugural Congressional Open House. Regional Administrator MaryAnn Tierney kicked the day off by welcoming the staff to the office and introducing *NFIP 101: Fundamentals of the National Flood Insurance Program*. As most of FEMA's congressional inquiries are in regards to flood insurance and other flooding-related concerns, instructors from the Mitigation Division's Floodplain Management and Insurance Branch created this 3-hour introductory course to provide an overview of the program and to address common issues, such as how to find Base Flood Elevation on a Flood Insurance Rate Map, updating the floodplain map, ways to reduce flood insurance costs, and how National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) reform affects property owners.

Congressional staff were then welcomed to join Tierney for a brown bag lunch, followed by a tour of the Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) and the Regional Watch Center (RWC). Later in the afternoon, FEMA staff from every division, including Disability Integration Services, Environmental and Historic Preservation, FEMA Corps, Grants, Individual Assistance, Individual and Community Preparedness, Mitigation, National Preparedness, the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF), Public Assistance, Radiological Emergency Preparedness, and Response were represented during the break-out sessions, in which staff were welcomed to learn more and ask questions of FEMA staff about each of the programs.

Kevin Snyder, Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator, along with David Marable and Brandon Porinchak, from HUD Region III, were on hand at the NDRF table to discuss the Region III Recovery All-Hazards Plan and ways in which congressional offices can promote CPCB initiatives. The day was a resounding success and while we may not have the opportunity to celebrate on a holiday next year, Region III is already looking forward to hosting staff for 2017's Congressional Open House.

## COASTAL RESILIENCE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE RELEASES "ROLE OF STATES IN DISASTER RECOVERY" VIDEO PROJECT AND TRAINING GUIDE

"[The Role of States in Disaster Recovery](#)," a video project produced by the [Coastal Resilience Center of Excellence](#) (CRC), highlights the roles played by state agency officials, leaders of state recovery organizations, and governors in disaster recovery following extreme events. The video is part of a larger, multi-year project that includes a training guide, journal articles, and a future book on the same subject. The project explains the role of the state in disaster recovery, including the key roles assumed by executive and mid-level managers, namely governors, their cabinet, and state agency officials tasked with disaster recovery duties. The guide and video are intended to:

- Supplement existing and emerging guidance provided by FEMA, professional associations, and universities.
- Enhance understanding of disaster recovery among practitioners, university faculty, and students.
- Enhance state capacity and commitment to address recovery issues and challenges.
- Foster innovative thinking among state officials.
- Improve recovery outcomes.
- Enhance disaster resilience at the community level.

Participants in the video represent the States of North Carolina and Mississippi following Hurricanes Floyd (1999) and Katrina (2005), the two worst disasters in each state's respective history. The purpose of the video is to share the lessons of these two states with others. The 30-minute video is broken into short segments covering the following themes:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| - Addressing short-term recovery issues   | - Procuring Federal and State funding           |
| - Establishing a State Recovery Committee | - Incorporating Hazard Mitigation into Recovery |
| - Coordinating the timing of assistance   | - Planning for Recovery                         |
| - Leading disaster recovery efforts       |   |

This approach allows viewers to focus on specific elements of recovery from a state perspective or view the video in its entirety. Additional information about the video, including how it can be used as part of a training or educational program, can be found in the accompanying "[Role of States in Disaster Recovery Video Training Guide](#)" found at the Coastal Resilience Center of Excellence website.

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# COMMUNITY PLANNING & CAPACITY BUILDING FEATURETTE



The Community Planning and Capacity Building (CPCB) Recovery Support Function supports and builds the community planning resources and recovery capacities of Tribal, State and local governments needed to effectively plan for, manage, and implement disaster recovery activities in large, unique, or catastrophic incidents.

## COMMUNITY PLANNING & CAPACITY BUILDING COORDINATOR'S CORNER

By: Michelle Diamond, Regional CPCB Coordinator, FEMA Region III

Happy Spring to our partners in recovery planning! The warm weather seems to be in full swing (fingers crossed that it stays), and so too is activity in Region III. It's been a very busy few months, as evident in some of the articles featured in this issue of our newsletter. While post-disaster CPCB operations continue to support local recovery around the nation (see articles on Page 5 and Page 6 from my counterparts in Regions IV and X) many new pre-disaster efforts are being kicked off here in Region III (see some of the exciting activities taking place in Pennsylvania on Pages 2 and 7).

Recently, I hosted my first federal CPCB Partner's Meeting with EPA Region III and NOAA, and plan to meet with HUD Region III in early May. The purpose of these meetings has been to coordinate with [CPCB](#) primary and supporting agencies in an effort to better align and synchronize disaster recovery resources and opportunities. Concurrent to hosting meetings with our federal family, I am also undertaking efforts to coordinate with State CPCB— liaisons, as well as our CPCB partners in the academic, non-governmental, and private sector. As we build and nurture our relationships with partner agencies in recovery, we uncover a robust network of resources waiting to be tapped.

In addition to our many efforts currently underway, there are lots of exciting projects on the horizon, including the establishment of the Region III Recovery Support Function Leadership Group, of which CPCB will co-chair; the Partnership for Public Services "Delivering Outcomes for Communities" training in early June; and coordination with our Regional External Affairs and Mitigation Divisions on academic outreach efforts. Stay tuned to our July issue of the CPCB Featurtte for updates!

## UPDATES FROM THE FIELD: LOCAL RECOVERY IN WASHINGTON STATE

In the summer of 2014 communities of Okanogan County, WA were struck by wildfires of historic proportions that burned over 280,000 acres, affecting over 350 homes, and devastating both large and small businesses, many of which were tied to the destroyed agricultural, grazing and timber resources. Covering a geographical area of 53,047 sq. mi. with a population of 41,516, Okanogan County represents communities of diverse character, economic conditions, and community profiles. The affected communities each had common goals and the need to share resources, yet they also had diverse and sometimes conflicting priorities.

In response, community leaders came together to form Long Term Recovery Organizations (LTROs) to provide both a unified voice and a platform for sharing information and resources. Consisting of civic and local government leaders, representatives of various NGOs as well as private citizens, their mission has been to collaborate and provide coordination and recovery services to those individuals, families, and businesses. Each recovery group operates with a formal organizational structure including Boards of Directors and By-Laws. The individual LTROs in turn operated under the guidance of a broader county-wide non-profit organization known as the Carlton Complex Long Term Recovery Group (CCLTRG).

Each community LTRO was also encouraged by the CCLTRG to form sub-committees to address needs specific to their areas. Both short- and long-term recovery topics such as mental health and case management, emergency response, safety, schools, infrastructure and land use became their focus. With this common structure the affected communities are able to come together and form a unified voice in both recovery coordination and advocacy.

When the county was again impacted by wildfires in 2015, more communities in Okanogan as well as several neighboring counties were impacted, which spurred the need for additional LTROs. With this expanded need from additional recovery organizations, as well as the deepening of recovery needs from the communities that experienced historic losses two years in a row, the leadership of the original CCLTRO stepped up to assist in an even greater capacity. It was the CCLTRG's preparedness mission that led them to offer to serve as collaborators, mentors, and advisors to additional communities that were impacted. This unity of effort led to the creation of the Okanogan County Long-Term Recovery Group (OCLTRG).

This Group is responsible for more proficient sharing of resources and activities, as well as coordination of common objectives, principle of which is the coordination sharing of resources to address the unmet family needs and coordination of construction or repair of replacement housing lost in the fires. Aided by assistance from the WA State department of Emergency management as well as FEMA VAL and CPCB representatives, for such guidance in family and unmet needs, as well as long term recovery issues. The OCLTRG continues to address broader needs at the county wide level, while coordinating the sharing of activities including fund raising, volunteer recruitment and scheduling, survivor case management, construction coordination, and administrative functions.

According to Carlene Anders, Executive Director of the OCLTRG and one of the key founder leaders, it was also the broad range of suggestions and offerings, beyond the traditional Public Assistance funding, from numerous FEMA staff that enabled them to pursue a broad range of Federal and non-profit program and funding options and thus to be much more effective and resourceful.

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## LESSONS IN RECOVERY: CASE STUDY ON RECOVERING THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

By: Charlie Cook, Regional CPCB Coordinator, FEMA Region VI

Following the 2014 tornado outbreak in Faulkner County, Arkansas, FEMA used the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF) to support community recovery in the cities of Vilonia and Mayflower. As CPCB Field Coordinator for the tornado disaster FEMA-DR-4174-AR, I developed a case study, **Lessons in Recovery: Case Study on Recovering Through Partnerships** to capture the activities of the two cities, and the 29 governmental and non-governmental entities taking part in the tornado recovery efforts. The study, will be featured in the 2016 National Preparedness Report, NPR, as examples of Planning and Economic recovery capabilities. The NPR outlines advances in each of the 32 core capabilities outlined in Presidential Policy Directive-8. The case study discusses the governmental and non-governmental organizations that brought unique resources to the table and that were instrumental in the recovery process. The study examines, in depth, each of the topics below:

- Local recovery steering teams created.
- Peers consulted for guidance and lessons learned.
- Economic analysis of cities indicated new opportunities.
- Local Disaster Recovery Manager hired.
- Public input gathered through a myriad of processes.
- Dynamic designs developed to help the community visualize projects.
- Zoning and codes written, enabling the designs to become a reality.
- Recovery plans completed in time for adoption at one year anniversary.

The steps outlined in the case study, that are taken by federal, state and regional agencies to address issues in the cities, build upon lessons learned in other communities. The two cities are well positioned for the future with detailed next steps, designs, zoning and codes, increased capacity and relationships with active funders. The case study was put forward as a reference for other cities and organizations that are looking for clarity within the chaos of a disaster and one example of how the National Disaster Recovery Framework has been utilized. To review the entire case study, click here:

<http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1455829901865-c233a52d60d41a9311e1584afa657947/CPCBArkansasCaseStudy.pdf>

## UPDATES FROM HQ: HEADQUARTERS HOSTS 2016 CPCB ANNUAL WORKSHOP

By: Leslie Tomic, CPCB Coordinator, FEMA HQ

The Community Planning and Capacity Building (CPCB) Recovery Support Function (RSF) leadership out of FEMA HQ held the 2016 Annual Workshop March 15th-17th in Washington, DC. The Workshop was a work-session among the National Coordinator, CPCB Regional and Field Coordinators, and key FEMA Headquarters' staff to solicit input and foster collaboration on the development of CPCB RSF policies, procedures and long-range plans; develop key policy and guidance products; and to serve as an educational and developmental forum.

The event provided an opportunity for all attendees to discuss topics such as the current mission and field operations; recent successes and lessons learned; new tools and guidance documents; approaches to implementing FEMA planning technical assistance; partnership development and outreach; and strategic planning and priorities 2016-2020. In addition, participants met with representatives from FEMA Public Assistance, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the White House Community Solutions Team, and the FEMA Unified Federal Review (UFR) National Coordinator to discuss potential coordination opportunities.

At the conclusion of the week-long workshop attendees identified some of the critical actions and next steps for building the RSF, including forming several work groups to establish pre- and post-disaster performance metrics; improve field assessment capabilities; capturing and communicating successes; expanding opportunities for professional development; updating the Community Recovery Management Toolkit; and planning guidance for tribal governments.

The Workshop provided a great opportunity to collaborate with colleagues and partners. We are excited to continue the important work of building and developing the CPCB RSF with you all throughout the next year.



Back (left to right): Tom Donnelly, Justin McBride, Charlie Cook, Sheila Doll, Thom Rounds, Tim Gelston, and Tonia Pence. Middle: Matt Campbell, Jon Halfon, Corey Nygaard, Dennis Dunnigan, Emily Meyer, Kehla West, Beth Otto, and De'An Brass. Front: Gerilee Bennett, Shannon McLachlan, Leslie Tomic, and Michelle Diamond.

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## SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA TACKLES LOCAL RECOVERY PLANNING

**By: Emily Alloy, Recovery Planning Coordinator, Philadelphia OEM**

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Task Force and the Philadelphia Office of Emergency Management hosted the Local Disaster Recovery Planning Conference. The regional event brought together over 100 emergency managers, city planners, utility partners, and private-sector representatives to discuss the programmatic challenges associated with post-disaster recovery.

Morning sessions focused on best practices for short and long-term recovery, the challenges specific to the Southeastern Pennsylvania region, and the role of local, state, and federal government agencies. Featured speakers included recovery specialists Dr. Gavin Smith of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Coastal Resilience Center of Excellence, Barry Hokanson of the National Disaster Preparedness Training Center and American Planning Association, and Michelle Diamond of FEMA Region III.

Afternoon sessions highlighted lessons learned from Superstorm Sandy, Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Ike, and other major disasters across the country. Discussions focused on considerations for individuals with access and functional needs, management of post-disaster grants and programs, and challenges to supporting long-term recovery operations. Speakers included Kari Tatro and Thelma Gutierrez of BCFS' Emergency Management Division, Melissa Umberger of New York City's Office of Emergency Management, John Grathwol of New York City's Office of Management and Budget, and Dev Jani of the New Orleans Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.

One of the major takeaways from the event was that in order to successfully execute recovery operations, planners must assess current capabilities prior to a disaster. The Southeastern Pennsylvania region has already begun to take steps to better understand local vulnerabilities, and identify feasible solutions. The success of the Local Planning Recovery Conference will guide the region toward a more resilient future.



Local, state and federal representatives from the Philadelphia-area participate in the Local Recovery Planning Conference at the Chemical Heritage Foundation in Philadelphia, Pa.

## MUNCY, PENNSYLVANIA HOSTS RESILIENCY WORKSHOP

**By: Jonathon Shnitzlein, Hazard Mitigation Planner, Lycoming County Planning Commission**

On March 30, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, the Lycoming County Planning Commission and the Borough of Muncy hosted the Muncy Resilience Workshop in Muncy, PA. The workshop, which was attended by over 50 representatives from federal, state, and local agencies as well as non-profit organizations and universities, served as the kick-off to the Muncy Resilience Project. The project is intended to utilize Muncy as a model community for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania of best practices for resiliency.

The attendees were introduced to Muncy by way of a brief history by Bill Ramsey, Muncy's Borough Manager. Planners from Lycoming County, Frances McJunkin and Josh Schnitzlein, as well as the Commonwealth's Disaster Recovery Coordinator, Jeff Allen, presented an overview of the stressors facing the Muncy community. Among those identified were flooding, brownfields, population decline, and shifts in demographics. In order to address

these challenges, the presenters outlined strategies for the Muncy Resilience Action Plan, which prescribes a multi-agency whole community approach in developing community resilience and assuring Muncy's long-term prosperity.

After lunch in a local establishment, the attendees broke out into focus groups and conducted a walking tour of Muncy, culminating in a visit to the historic Mozely Opera House, which is an over 100 year-old structure that currently sits abandoned and will serve as the capstone project. The groups then reconvened for a discussion to provide feedback regarding partnership buy-in, grant funding and technical expertise.

The Greater Muncy Resilience Action Plan is focused on implementing projects and securing additional resources to make a more resilient community. The plan hopes to help Muncy bounce forward after disaster/stressors in a way that improves daily life by becoming economically secure, sustainable, and desirable. For more information, or if you know of additional ways to support Muncy's resilience building efforts through either technical support or grant assistance, contact Josh Schnitzlein at [jschnitzlein@lyco.org](mailto:jschnitzlein@lyco.org)

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