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GEORGIA

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OFFICE OF
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
ANNUAL REPORT

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Letter from the Director



I am pleased to share with you a year-end summary of accomplishments and activities of the Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management. You might say 2014 was a rebuilding year in our office. Excluding myself, 100 percent of our employees are in new positions via the hiring process, internal transfer, or promotion. We have assembled an excellent, experienced team who work year-round to prepare for and respond to emergencies and disasters.

The Emergency Operations Center is the hub for multi-jurisdiction and multi-agency response coordination. Experiences from this year remind us that disasters can and do happen in Gwinnett County. In 2014, we were busy monitoring incidents, supporting on-scene responders, and facilitating executive policy and decision making.

We have enjoyed many successes due to strong partnerships and active collaboration throughout the community. In our complex, multi-jurisdictional, and diverse environment, whole community engagement is critical. Public and individual preparedness is vital to Gwinnett's resilience. Our staff worked diligently this year to improve Gwinnett County's ability to respond and recover from natural and manmade disasters and I encourage all Gwinnett County residents to improve their individual and family readiness.

It is my pleasure and honor to serve as the Director of Emergency Management for Gwinnett County. The successes noted in this annual report are due to the dedicated, highly professional staff of emergency managers we have in Gwinnett County.

Sincerely,

Greg Swanson, Director of Emergency Management



Mission & Vision



Mission

To administer a community wide comprehensive emergency management program in partnership with all departments, agencies, operating units, administration, and neighboring jurisdictions to save lives, protect property, and safeguard the environment.

Vision

The Vision of the Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management is to encourage and foster a disaster resistant community.



History



The Gwinnett County Office of Homeland Security was established in December 2005 and Emergency Management was transferred from Gwinnett Fire and Emergency Services to the Police Department in 2006. The Office of Homeland Security was removed from the Office of Emergency Management and assigned to the Special Investigations Section of the Police Department in October 2009.

The Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management represents the governing officials of the county and the cities within the county on matters pertaining to emergency management, helping to identify local hazards and outline plans and efforts to reduce the impact of disasters. The director is appointed by the Board of Commissioners, with concurrence of the governing officials of the cities.

2005




Gwinnett County Office of Homeland Security established. Emergency Management was under Gwinnett Fire and Emergency Services

2006



Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management moves to the Police Department

2007



Declared disaster drought

2009



Declared disaster flood

2010



Tornado in Buford

2010



OEM moves into its new facility

2013



Citizen Corps Council established

2014



Winter storm

Administration & Finance



Significant effort was directed this year toward recruiting, selecting, and hiring staff to fill vacancies. The Office of Emergency Management has increased its authorized number of employees to five for the first time since 2010.

Greg Swanson

Director

In 2014, Greg graduated from FEMA's National Emergency Management Executive Academy, a program designed for senior executives with coursework from Harvard University, the Naval Postgraduate School, and other prominent higher education institutions.

James Thaxton

Emergency Management Specialist

James transferred to the Office of Emergency Management in March 2014 from Gwinnett Fire and Emergency Services. Since 2012, he was assigned as a liaison to Emergency Management. In 2014, he earned the Certified Emergency Manager designation from the International Association of Emergency Managers, a nationally and internationally recognized professional certification.

Nancy Coltrin

Emergency Management Specialist

Nancy was promoted to the position of Emergency Management Specialist in June 2014. She came to the department from the private sector, holds a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice/Emergency and Disaster Management, and is a Certified Emergency Manager through the state of Georgia.

Ronald Brown

Emergency Management Specialist

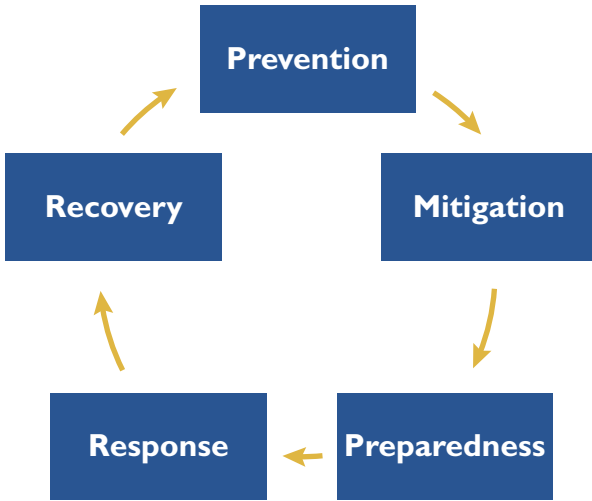
Ronald was hired in December 2014 after recently retiring from a 26-year career with the New Jersey State Police. In 2013, he was promoted to the rank of captain and served in the Emergency Management Section, Homeland Security Branch as the bureau chief. In addition to his vast experience in public safety and emergency management, Ronald has a bachelor's degree in Public Administration.

Giles Roberts

Administrative Support Associate II

Giles was hired in December 2014 to begin his career in emergency management. He was a captain with 1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery (British Army), serving in Iraq and Afghanistan from 2007 to 2010. He graduated from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 2006, and from the University of Reading in 2005 with a Bachelor of Science in Biology.

Operational Planning



Emergency Operations Plan

Emergency management planning is a complex but critical field that encompasses the five basic phases of emergency management: prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The Emergency Operations Plan and its associated support and incident annexes are the cornerstone for disaster management across all the phases. The plan touches all segments of the county – 160 users representing 49 organizations are all part of the input, review, and adoption process for the EOP.

The plan is reviewed annually, and in 2014, Gwinnett OEM expanded the plan to include a new annex, the Closed Points of Distribution Annex. Other annexes were expanded or strengthened as well. The Standard Operating Guidelines Annex underwent a significant update to reflect changes in the structure of the Emergency Operations Center. The Dams Incident Annex was expanded to include all of the dams in the county – it was previously restricted to the county-operated dams. In addition, groundwork was laid for a Communication and Warning Annex to be included in the 2015 update.

Interagency Cooperation

One of the best ways to ensure that Gwinnett County stays prepared for disasters is to encourage organizations to work together. Regular interaction among organizations in planning, training, and exercises fosters an environment that encourages inter-agency cooperation. Understanding how all of the pieces of the emergency management puzzle fit together helps us avoid duplication of work and foster synergies in relevant fields. Staff from Gwinnett OEM will continue to work with multiple agencies across the county and the region to provide planning expertise or exercise those skills that are needed during times of disaster.

Hazard Mitigation Planning

The purpose of mitigation planning is to identify policies and actions that can be implemented both immediately and in the long term to reduce risk and future losses. Gwinnett County's Hazard Mitigation Plan forms the foundation for our long-term strategy to reduce disaster losses and break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage. An updated Hazard Mitigation Plan must be submitted to the Federal Emergency Management Agency every five years, and the current plan expires in 2015. The year-long update project isn't done in a vacuum – representatives from 29 county organizations and jurisdictions were part of the Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee overseeing and provided input to the update; in addition, three public meetings were held to gain input from county residents.

The updated plan was submitted to the Georgia Emergency Management Agency in December. Once approved by GEMA, it will be sent to FEMA for final approval.

Incident Management & Facilities



Road/Location	Status	Details	Department/Agency	Published Number
Bennett Road	Intermittent Lane Closures	from Hatchee Valley Trace to SR 84 / Grayson Parkway will require intermittent lane closures through December for roadway improvements, weather permitting	Gwinnett DOT	770-822-7400
Bramlett Shoals Road	Closed	From Martins Chapel Road to New Hope Road will close on August 3 through early-November for drainage improvements. The detour route will be New Hope Road to Sugarloaf Parkway to Martins Chapel Road and the reverse.	Water Resources	678-376-7069
Brannan Road	Closed	Brannan Road is closed due to flooding. The detour route will be Branman Road to Leach Road to SR 264 / Bethany Church Road to Branman Road and the reverse.	Gwinnett DOT	770-822-7400
Crooked Creek Road	Intermittent Lane Closures	From Klutton Drive to Jay Bird Alley will require intermittent lane closures through December for sidewalk installation, weather permitting. Any such closures will be between the hours of 9:00am and 4:00pm.	Gwinnett DOT	770-822-7400
Decula Road	Intermittent Lane Closures	at Broad Street will require intermittent lane closures through December for intersection improvements, weather permitting	Gwinnett DOT	

Keeping the County Moving

Maintaining access to critical facilities such as fire stations, police precincts, fuel stations, water treatment sites, and hospitals is extremely important. After experiencing a few challenges during winter storms, Gwinnett OEM teamed up with several County agencies to improve the coordinated plan and acquire necessary resources to keep critical county buildings accessible during bad weather. The plan identifies geographic clusters of facilities where work crews can quickly and easily be assigned to improve our efficiency by coordinating efforts. Additional rock salt was also procured and stored in five strategic locations. Several organizations were instrumental in making this a success:

- Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation
- Gwinnett County Department of Water Resources
- Gwinnett County Fleet Management
- Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management

Traffic information is always on everyone's mind, and knowing about problems ahead of time can make travel just a little bit easier. That's why Gwinnett OEM and the Gwinnett Department of Transportation teamed up to enhance road closure information on the Gwinnett County website. This real-time listing gives information about both planned closures and current events.

EOC Operations

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is a centralized location for multiagency response coordination to major emergencies or disasters. Several enhancements were made throughout 2014 to improve EOC operations.

EOC Team

A recognized need for more personnel trained to manage the EOC during extended or complex events led to the designation of an EOC Team in 2013. This concept carried forward in 2014, with the new team completing several training courses to prepare them for managing EOC operations. These courses include:

- ICS 300 – Intermediate Incident Command System for Expanding Incidents
- ICS 400 – Advanced Incident Command System for Command and General Staff
- IS 775 – EOC Operations and Management
- Gwinnett County Logistics Section Course



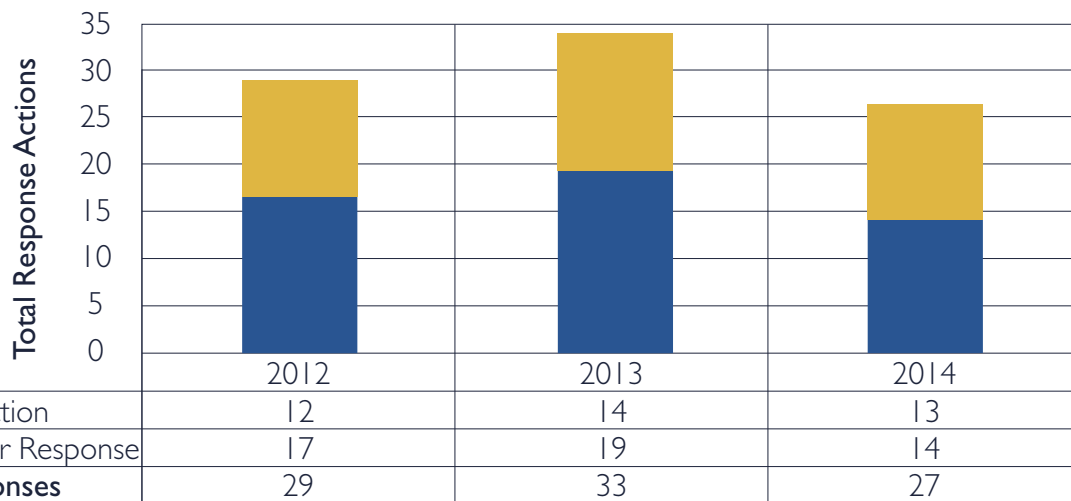
EOC Call Center

During major events, Gwinnett County can maintain a call center at the EOC where residents can get information or report non-emergency situations. This frees up the 911 center and provides Gwinnett County residents a means to gain real-time information. In 2014, a team of trained call takers were identified from the Gwinnett County Solid Waste Division to assist in this effort. A database for tracking inquiries was developed and EOC training provided to all of the call takers.

The EOC was fully activated during the winter storms in January and February. Support agencies from across the county and cities were represented 24/7 for several days, coordinating response actions and assisting residents affected by these powerful storms.

An Emergency Management duty officer is available at all times to support an incident or report to the Emergency Operations Center to prepare it for activation. The Emergency Operations Center will normally be activated incrementally at a level appropriate to the incident. Since January 2012, the on-call OEM duty officer has responded to 50 requests for assistance that did not require EOC activation. These requests normally come from city or county departments that require support in response to a large or complex incident. The EOC was activated for 39 days during the same period to manage more significant events. Each type of response can last from several hours to several days. On average, OEM responds to 2.5 events per month.

Office of Emergency Management Response Actions: 2012 – 2014



Training & Exercises



Metro-Atlanta Regional Planning and Exercises

In 2014, Gwinnett OEM participated in several regional exercises to test inter-agency cooperation and communications. Multiple planning meetings were held throughout the year to work on regional emergency management interaction. A mass casualty drill was held in April with representatives from Atlanta-Fulton, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, and Gwinnett counties, and an exercise to test water purification equipment from the metro-Atlanta counties was held in September. Additional exercises were attended by members of Gwinnett Fire and Emergency Services, Gwinnett Police Department's SWAT Unit and the Hazardous Devices Unit, including participation in a full-scale exercise in October.

Georgia Gwinnett College Hazardous Material Exercise

Staff from OEM assisted Georgia Gwinnett College with a hazardous materials release exercise in July. These types of drills are critical for identifying response and coordination issues before an actual incident occurs. This exercise was a tremendous success and provided an opportunity for Georgia Gwinnett College and Gwinnett Fire and Emergency Services to be familiar with each other's response capabilities.



Community Resiliency (Public Education)



Gwinnett OEM fully supports our partners around the region. The ReadyCDC Program was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as an initiative to increase personal preparedness among employees as part of their workforce culture. Gwinnett OEM assists with this effort, along with representatives from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency and the American Red Cross, teaching personal preparedness workshops on various campuses of the CDC.

The Gwinnett County Citizen Corps Council continued to make positive impacts during 2014. The partner organizations were able to take advantage of federal grant funding to help maintain the programs that support the citizens of Gwinnett County.

Citizen Fire Academy

The **Citizen Fire Academy** is a 12-week program that allows citizens to experience fire and emergency medical services first-hand. Not only do citizens learn about the organization and the services it provides, but they also learn valuable fire and life safety information. After graduation, participants are eligible to continue in the CFA Alumni Association. This 501(c)(3) organization assists fire stations with smoke alarm installations in high-risk communities, provides Ambassadors to individual stations, and maintains the Youth Fire Safety Training program. By 2014, they had assisted in a total of 16 community smoke alarm blitzes – that program has installed more than 3,000 smoke alarms in more than 1,000 homes in high-risk communities of Gwinnett County.



Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

The **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. In 2014, 75 students completed the CERT training offered by Gwinnett OEM.

C.O.P.S. (Community Oriented Police Service)

Our nation is built on the strength of our citizens. Every day, we encounter situations calling upon us to be the eyes and ears of law enforcement. The Neighborhood Watch Program draws upon the compassion of average citizens, asking them to lend their neighbors a hand. Gwinnett County's Neighborhood Watch program is called **C.O.P.S. (Community Oriented Police Service)**.





Amateur Radio Emergency Service

A primary responsibility of the **Amateur Radio Emergency Service**, as established by Part 97 of the Federal Communications Commission's regulations, is the performance of public service communications for the general public, particularly in times of emergency when normal communications are not available. Gwinnett ARES supports the emergency communication needs of the citizens of Gwinnett County.

Citizens Police Academy

The **Citizens Police Academy** is designed to educate citizens of Gwinnett County about their police department and how officers enforce local and state laws. The goal of the CPA is to create and develop a growing nucleus of responsible, well informed citizens who have the potential to influence public opinion concerning police practices and the delivery of services. After their graduation, participants are eligible to continue in the CPA Alumni Association. In 2014, 42 students graduated from this program.



Gwinnett Faith Network For Disaster Preparedness

The **Gwinnett Faith Network For Disaster Preparedness** is comprised of multi-faith, multicultural organizations in Gwinnett County. Education and training is an integral part of the network, along with Red Cross and other Citizen Corps teams. Quarterly meetings incorporate trainings and demonstrations and are free events. In 2014, the Faith Network helped sponsor the 72-hour summit for faith-based leaders in Gwinnett County.

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

The **Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)** is a national network of volunteers, organized locally to improve the health and safety of their communities. MRC volunteers include medical and public health professionals, as well as other community members without healthcare backgrounds. MRC GEM is the Georgia East Metro Health District Medical Reserve Corps Inc. They are a nonprofit corporation serving the health and emergency preparedness needs of Georgia's Gwinnett, Newton, and Rockdale counties. Members include nearly 380 citizens from all walks of life who meet monthly to train and prepare for disasters.





Please consider the environment before printing this report.

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