



Silver Jackets: Bringing Agencies Together for the Benefit of Communities

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

State-wide, Ohio



The State of Ohio - Many natural disasters of recent times have highlighted the need for government agencies to work together not only in the response and recovery phase of the disaster cycle, but also in the pre-disaster mitigation phase. The Silver Jackets Program aims to accomplish that through providing a more formal and consistent strategy for implementing an interagency approach to planning and applying measures to reduce the risks associated with natural hazards.

Essentially, this program proposes establishing an interagency team for each state, comprised of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the State National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) coordinator, and the State Hazard Mitigation Officer (SHMO) as standing members and lead facilitators. This increased collaboration between federal and state level agencies intends to find more ways to leverage resources between agencies, improve public outreach in risk management, and create a mechanism to collectively solve issues through familiarity with other agencies' procedures and better interagency communication.

FEMA's Region V Mitigation Division expressed initial interest in the Silver Jackets concept and recommended the State of Ohio for the initial test run of the program. With the cooperation of the Ohio SHMO and NFIP Coordinator initial discussions were initiated to identify other possible state and federal agencies partners. Each agency was contacted separately and the response was unanimous – "When do we get started?" The Ohio Silver Jackets team was comprised of members from the Economic Development Administration (EDA), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service (NOAA/NWS), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OPEA), US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the US Geological Survey (USGS). At the initial team meeting the city of Marietta was identified as a possible pilot community. Marietta had recently experienced two devastating flood events and community officials were searching for answers. Working with the Silver Jackets team provided Marietta community officials the opportunity to develop a comprehensive flood mitigation strategy. With the help of the Silver Jackets Program, the city of Marietta will be able to identify their flood hazards, assess what areas are vulnerable, prioritize measures, and pursue funding sources to accomplish their goal of reduced flood risk and more sustainable development. The team has also worked with the city to consolidate existing GIS mapping and hydraulic and hydrology data; identify possible measures; and brainstorm various funding sources.

Now that it has been active for over a year in the State of Ohio, the Silver Jackets Team has enjoyed some positive results. Though initially hesitant, the State of Ohio now fully endorses the team which has received praise from elected officials. Another important outcome of the project was the discovery of the amount of data available. Several agencies contributed mapping and GIS information, resulting in new sources of information and opportunities becoming available. Finally, the improved communication between agencies has resulted in a better understanding of each agency's programs and resource constraints.

While the Silver Jackets Program will evolve over time, its initial test run in Marietta has proven successful in achieving the goals it set forth of increasing communication between government agencies for the benefit of states and communities.

Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **State-wide**

FEMA Region: **Region V**

State: **Ohio**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**
Hazard Type: **Flooding**
Activity/Project Type: **Training**
Activity/Project Start Date: **10/2006**
Activity/Project End Date: **Ongoing**
Funding Source: **Other FEMA funds/ US Department of Homeland Security**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **Amount Not Available**
Non FEMA Cost: **0**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **Unknown**
Value Tested By Disaster? **Unknown**
Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

Reference URLs

No URLs were submitted

Main Points

- Many natural disasters of recent times have highlighted the need for government agencies to work together
- The Silver Jackets Program aims to accomplish that through providing a more formal and consistent strategy for implementing an interagency approach to planning and applying measures to reduce the risks associated with natural hazards.
- This program proposes establishing an interagency team for each state, comprised of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the State National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) coordinator, and the State Hazard Mitigation Officer (SHMO) as standing members and lead facilitators.
- The State of Ohio fully endorses the team which has received praise from elected officials