



# SECURE & PREPARED

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## Special points of interest:

- On December 29, 2005, the final transmitter in the NOAA Weather Radio project was installed. See article on page 2.
- DHS recently launched its *Ready Kids* campaign. Find out more on page 2.
- Solving communications interoperability has been designated as a national priority. See how Region 5 is moving ahead on page 3.

## Iowa Hosts Pandemic Flu Summit

Are we ready to respond to a Pandemic Flu event? The short answer from a number of officials was not fully, but we are improving our preparedness efforts each day.

Hundreds of responders from public and private health, emergency management and the first responder community gathered in Des Moines on Friday, February 3, for a Pandemic Flu Summit.

The summits are being held in each state under direction from the federal Department of Health and Human Services. As part of a special federal appropriation, Iowa's Department of Public Health, which sponsored the summit, received \$1.2 million geared towards improving preparation for a pandemic flu disaster.

"Protecting our citizens is our primary responsibility," stressed Governor Tom Vilsack. "The job of preparing will never be done, but our readiness has improved," he said.

Mike Leavitt, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, stressed that preparation will be ongoing. "Are we prepared?" he asked. "No one is prepared but we will improve day-by-day," the Secretary explained.

HLSEM Administrator David Miller stressed the importance of local emergency management in his closing comments. He asked attending county coordinators to stand and explained, "these are the people that will be the key resource to coordinate activities," during a flu disaster.

The official federal Web site for information on pandemic and avian influenza is [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov).



Governor Vilsack speaks during the Pandemic flu summit. Also pictured, from left are the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Julie Gerberding, and Secretary of Health and Human Services Mike Leavitt. At far right is Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Administrator David Miller. *Photo courtesy of Kevin Teale, Iowa Department of Public Health.*

## NOAA Weather Radio Project Complete

On December 29, 2005, the final transmitter in the NOAA Weather Radio project was installed. Completion of the statewide expansion provides Iowa residents the capability to receive National Weather Service broadcasts via NOAA Weather Radio.

NOAA Weather Radio is a nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting continuous weather information directly from a nearby National Weather Service office. NOAA Weather Radios broadcast weather warnings, watches, forecasts, and other hazard information 24 hours a day.

Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management, in collaboration with public and private partners, began installation of 23 NOAA Weather Radio transmitters in 1997. The NOAA Weather Radio has become a tremendous asset in providing multi-hazard warnings to include weather information, 911 outages, terrorism and Amber Alert messages that may assist in locating missing children. In SFY 2005, 73,646 NOAA Weather Radio receivers were distributed throughout Iowa through a hazard mitigation grant administered by HLSEM.

Thank you to all the partners who made statewide expansion of NOAA Weather Radio possible and to project lead Joyce Winningham of Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management for her persistence and hard work. As a result of the great teamwork on this project, Iowans will benefit from this important service.

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## More Wireless 911 Funds for Local PSAPs

Recently the State 911 Program was able to retire \$3,000,000 of outstanding debt after 18 months of payments. With no further payments to be made, these funds will now be directed to the local Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) to support their on-going 911 equipment needs.

While payments were made on the debt, a pool of \$159,000 was forwarded to the PSAPs each quarter. This January, after the final payment was made, the remaining funds were combined with the \$159,000 to create a pool \$397,000 that was forwarded to the PSAP. In the next quarter, this pool of funds will be based on 24 percent of the collected wireless E911 surcharge. If remitted surcharge funds maintain their present levels, this will create a pool of \$700,000 that will be forwarded to the local PSAPs in Iowa each quarter.

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## DHS Launches Ready Kids



On February 2, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security launched its newest extension to the Ready Campaign, Ready Kids. The campaign is designed to help parents and teachers educate children, ages 8-12, about emergencies and how they can help their families prepare.

The Web site, found at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov), features a mountain lion explorer named Rex and his family. The site focuses on preparing for emergencies and has links to creating a kit, making a plan, knowing the facts about different emergencies, as well as fun and games. The site also offers a section for parents and teachers that includes downloadable educational materials developed by Scholastic Inc.

## Region V Pilots Communications InterOp

Solving communications interoperability has been designated as a national priority and is a chief concern of all responders. The 17 counties that make up Region V in southeast Iowa have been moving ahead with a pilot solution that provides command-to-command interoperability and involves the Iowa Communications Network (ICN). Here's a quick recap of their project.

The concept behind command-to-command involves ensuring voice, data and video from the scene of an event can be shared with the local, state and regional Emergency Operation Centers (EOCs). There are devices, like the ACU-1000, that can help on-scene responders with their tactical communication issues. They provide a band-aid short-term answer. The long-term answer at the responder level is going to take some time and big dollars to solve across the state and the country. The Region wanted to make an impact now and that's why it started with the command-to-command idea.

### So how does it work and what are they doing?

The Region is using its '05 federal homeland security dollars and started by ordering video teleconferencing (VTC) units for each county. These are compatible with units already purchased for public health and hospitals. Picture a television with a camera mounted on top. These units can use the common Internet for video conference calls. Although the connections and picture are not broadcast quality, full motion video, they are very good. These transmissions have encryption and security associated with the calls.

The next stage involved installing gateways and wireless Motorola Canopy equipment at two pilot locations – Mt. Pleasant and Sigourney. The wireless Canopy gear sends out a signal, picture a communications net, which links the VTCs and other communications equipment at the EOC locations to the closest ICN point-of-presence. These wireless Canopies have close to 180-degree coverage, are expandable to 360-degrees and are being positioned to cover as much of the towns as possible.

Any Incident Command Post with a wireless laptop computer can have the capability to transmit voice, data and video that are picked up by the canopy. It is then transmitted by the wireless connection to the ICN. Now that signal, be it voice, data or video, can be securely sent down the ICN pipes to the local EOC, surrounding EOCs, the state EOC and other operation partners on the ICN.

Mt. Pleasant and Sigourney are close to being operational and ready for testing. The Region plans to install this type of equipment in each county at a cost of around \$15,000 for the wireless link and \$7,500 for the video conferencing unit per county.

For more information, contact Emergency Management Coordinators Ed Farley in Henry County or Larry Smith in Keokuk County.

## Save the Date!

The Governor's Annual Homeland Security Conference will be held July 18-20 at the Polk County Convention Center in Des Moines. The keynote speaker will be U.S. Department of Homeland Security Under Secretary for Preparedness George Foresman.

Save the date cards will be sent out in the next few weeks.

## EMAC: Providing Key Resources

As a part of the national response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Iowa provided key resources to the impacted states through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). EMAC facilitates state-to-state assistance during Governor declared disaster events.

Key resources were provided by Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division; Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa National Guard, Iowa Department of Human Services, and University Hygienic Laboratory and the City of Davenport. In response to Hurricane Katrina, EMAC resources nationwide fulfilled 2,193 missions involving 65,989 personnel, with an associated cost of \$835 million.

The following missions were performed by responding entities:

HLSEM staff deployed as A-Team members in Louisiana and Mississippi. HLSEM staff also deployed to Washington, D.C. as members of the National Coordinating Team.

Iowa Department of Public Health – Coordinated a 30-person Environmental Health team including DO, RN, EMT, Paramedic and Environmental Health members. This team deployed to Louisiana to assist in addressing environmental health concerns.

Iowa National Guard – Deployed a 200 kw generator to Louisiana, and a 197 soldier Area Support Medical Battalion to Mississippi.

Iowa Department of Human Services – Deployed 10 Human Service Workers to assist parishes with food stamp relief programs efforts.

City of Davenport – Deployed a City Public Works Team – Water System and Sewer Station Support team comprised of 14 personnel to Mississippi.

University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory – continues to provide Newborn Screening from their Ankeny lab while the State of Louisiana lab is restored.

If you have questions regarding EMAC, please contact the HLSEM Readiness/Response Bureau at 515-323-4210.

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## Hazardous Materials Transportation Workshop Coming to Ankeny April 4

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration is holding a one-day workshop April 4 at Des Moines Area Community College in Ankeny. The workshop is designed to provide an overview of how to use the Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR) and a summary of many of the requirements found in the HMR, which can affect transportation safety including: training requirements, packaging, hazard communications, and security.

Seating is limited, so register today by visiting: <http://hazmat.dot.gov/training/training.htm>.

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**HLSEM Mission**

To support, coordinate, and maintain state and local homeland security and emergency management activities in order to establish sustainable communities and assure economic opportunities for Iowa and its citizens.

**We're on the Web!**

[www.iowahomelandsecurity.org](http://www.iowahomelandsecurity.org)

## HLSEM Spotlight: Meet the Front Desk

**Mary Stephens** was a familiar face at HLSEM even before she was hired as a secretary in August 2003. Prior to being hired full-time, Mary had worked for the Division in a temporary capacity, leaving for several months to work at the Iowa General Assembly during the legislative session before returning and then moving into a full-time position. Mary is located at the Division's front desk and without missing a beat, greets visitors and takes calls while trying to keep track of the staff, which she says, is the most challenging aspect of her job.



The friendly voices of the Front Desk, from left, Susan Lomica, and Mary Stephens.

A native of Nebraska, Mary lived in Oklahoma for eight years until her husband was transferred to Iowa. Mary and husband Richard live in Osceola, where she worked at Kales Funeral Home and as the administrative secretary at the United Methodist Church. Mary then began working as a secretary for a member of the Iowa House of Representative for five legislative sessions. Husband Richard is a realtor and real estate appraiser.

Mary's daughter Heather and her husband David (who happens to be the brother of HLSEM employee Kara Berg) live in Johnston and have two sons, Connor and Harrison. She also has a son, Wade, who lives in Oklahoma with his wife Jeri, their daughter Marissa, and Jeri's three children from a previous marriage. Mary has six grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Besides being with her grandchildren, one of Mary's favorite things to do is crossword puzzles. She says she is perfectly content with a quiet room, a good cup of coffee, and a multitude of puzzles surrounding her. Her husband, on the other hand, thrives on being involved with and around other people. Opposites attract, she says, since they will be celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in December.

**Sue Lomica's** first day at HLSEM's front desk was January 27. Prior to coming to the Division, she worked as the office manager for a hearing instrument specialist in Ft. Dodge for eight years and in other medical office positions. She lived in the Ft. Dodge area most of her life and was a stay-at-home mom for 20 years. She and her husband farmed 640 acres and raised sows and feeder calves.

Sue has four sons and three granddaughters and three grandsons and recently moved to the Des Moines area to be closer to her son and four of her grandchildren. Her other sons and two remaining grandchildren live out of state.

Sue says she is happy to be at HLSEM and looks forward to getting to know everyone and meeting the upcoming challenges.