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**Lessons Learned
Information Sharing**

INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

Louisiana Uses Grants to Establish Private Sector EOC

September 15, 2014

SUMMARY

Louisiana developed the Louisiana Business Emergency Operations Center (LA BEOC) to enable the business community to actively participate in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. The LA BEOC supports community resilience by applying private sector resources during response and recovery efforts and aiding the swift return of normal business operations.



DESCRIPTION

The Louisiana business community is vital to the state's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. Organizing public and private sectors into a coordinated network enhances Louisiana's ability to build and sustain resilient communities.

Hurricane Gustav highlighted Louisiana's need for better collaboration with private-sector partners. As a result, Louisiana developed the LA BEOC to bring businesses, trade organizations, NGOs, and academic institutions together to exchange information, operating statuses, and damage assessments. Since its formation in 2010, over 1,800 businesses have self-registered with the LA BEOC, providing information on their services and 24-hour points of contact that emergency responders can reach out to during incidents.

The LA BEOC provides state and local officials a two-way conduit to communicate with private-sector partners. Local business can provide situational awareness information to the state and the state can provide reliable industry-specific situational awareness information directly to businesses. The information provided by business partners also helps local and state officials assess the damage and economic impact of events on individual businesses and the local economy as a whole. Additionally, the collaboration between partners allows emergency managers to request support directly from participating organizations to maximize the use of private sector resources.

The 2011 Mississippi River flooding was the first active use of the LA BEOC in a real world incident. The LA BEOC benefited the public and private sectors by providing current situational awareness obtained from private business and industry. The LA BEOC also provided support in the delivery of donated goods during the Mississippi River flood by locating available transportation assets.

In 2012, Louisiana activated the LA BEOC for Hurricane Isaac. During the storm, state officials used the LA BEOC to request donations of vital supplies to help transport sand bags that were needed to prevent flooding in low-lying areas in Lafourche Parish. The LA BEOC

network was able to tap private sector resources to deliver required supplies faster and more cost-effectively than traditional channels.

The LA BEOC also supports community resilience by promoting business continuity of operations with the goal of returning the business environment to normal operations as quickly as possible. LA BEOC developed a "Get a Business Plan" campaign to encourage businesses to have a plan in place in the event of a disaster, as part of Louisiana's "Get a Game Plan" strategic communications outreach. Businesses can also use the LA BEOC as a base of operations if their main offices are damaged or destroyed.

INVESTMENT INFORMATION

Louisiana used \$262,000 in State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) funds to establish the Louisiana Business Emergency Operations Center as a partnership between the business community, the state, and local universities. The LA BEOC opened on the campus of Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge on June 2, 2010

REFERENCES

[Louisiana Business Emergency Operations Center – About Us](#)

[FEMA State Partnership – Louisiana Business Emergency Operations Center](#)

ABOUT THE LESSONS LEARNED INFORMATION SHARING PROGRAM

The LLIS program develops and disseminates lessons learned, trend analyses, case studies, and innovative ideas to improve preparedness for the emergency management and homeland security communities. These documents, produced through research and analysis by the LLIS team, support whole community learning and continuous improvement.

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