



OKEM



Oklahoma Emergency Management Association

November, 2006

Quarterly Newsletter

Ashwood Named President of National Emergency Management Association



OEM Director Albert Ashwood, right, receives the National Emergency Management Association presidential gavel from outgoing NEMA president Bruce Baughman, Alabama Emergency Management Agency director. Ashwood became NEMA president on Sept. 22.

Oklahoma's top emergency manager, Albert Ashwood, was elected president of the National Emergency Management Association today during the group's annual meeting in Alabama. NEMA is an association of professionals dedicated to enhancing public safety by improving the nation's ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from all emergencies, disasters and threats to the country's security.

Gov. Henry congratulated Ashwood on the honor with the statement, "Albert Ashwood is a dedicated and tireless public servant, and his election as president of NEMA reflects on the professionalism of Oklahoma's Department of Emergency Management," he said.

Ashwood has served as director of the state Department of Emergency Management since August 1997. Prior to his appointment, he served as the agency's deputy director from June 1995 through August of 1997.

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They trust

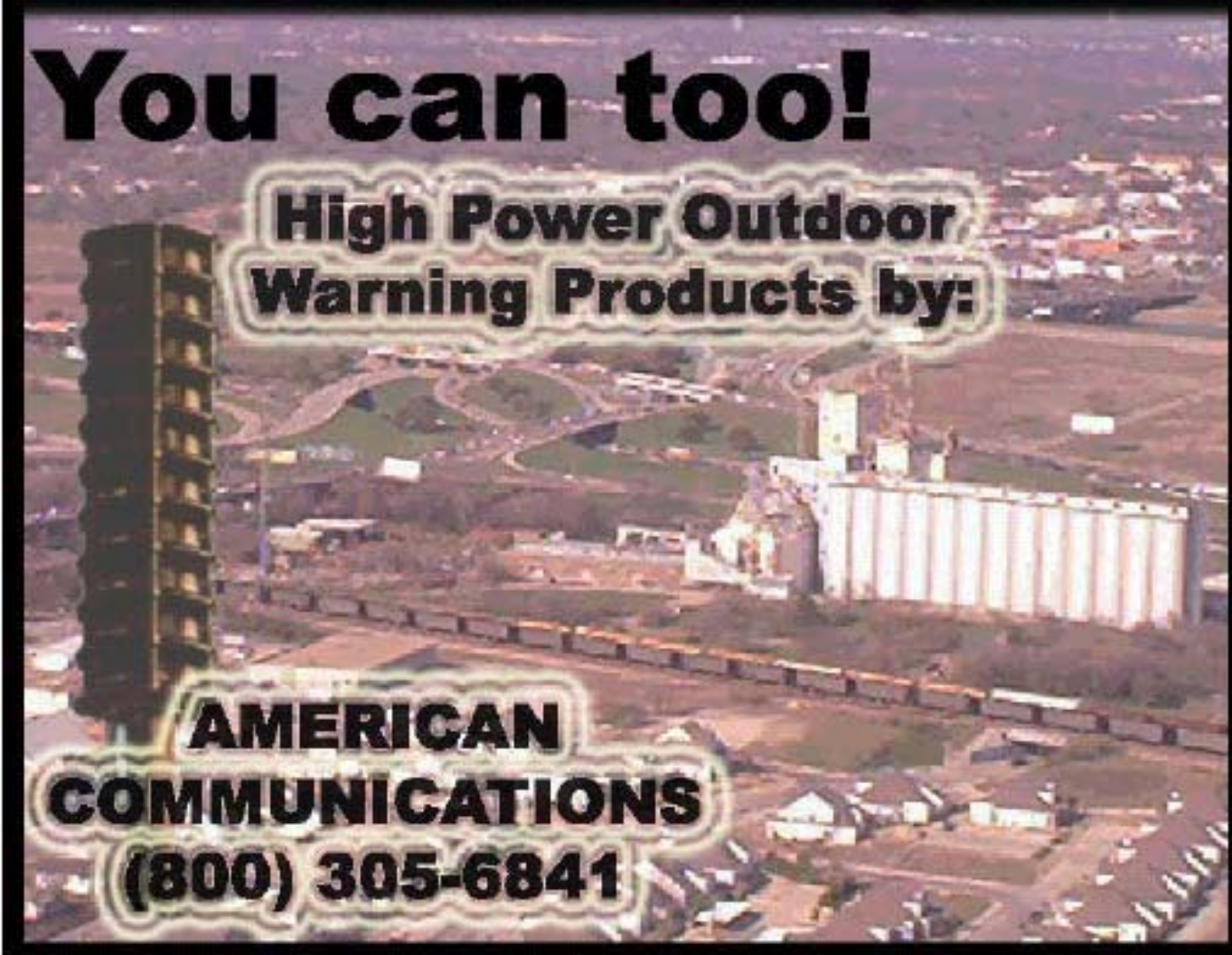
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Law Requires Evacuation Plans

A law that took effect November 1 requires all Oklahoma communities to address the need for possible evacuations within their Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). Senate Bill 1709, by Sen. Kenneth Corn and Rep. Glenn Smithson, requires cities, towns and counties to have an evacuation plan in place and to inform citizens how they will be notified in the event an evacuation is required.

Because of the continually changing nature of contact names, numbers and resources, it's imperative to regularly update EOPs. An EOP describes who will do what, as well as when, with what resources, and by what authority - before, during and immediately after an emergency or disaster.

OEM updates the State EOP annually and recommends the same for local plans and requires it of all State-Local Assistance (SLA) program participating jurisdictions. OEM maintains a current copy of all 77 county EOPs and numerous municipal EOPs. For more information regarding EOPs, contact Dale Magnin, manager, OEM Planning, Training and Exercise Division at dale.magnin@oem.ok.gov.

Red Cross Launches web site "Well & Safe!"

In July, the American Red Cross launched this Safe and Well Web site to provide families with a tool to exchange welfare information with loved ones and friends in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

The site allows a disaster victim to select and post standard messages for friends and family that indicate the victim is safe and well and will make contact when they are able. <https://disastersafe.redcross.org/>

COAST GUARD OFFERS FREE HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RESOURCE TO FIRST RESPONDERS

WASHINGTON -- The United States Coast Guard has published a free resource CD-ROM that brings comprehensive chemical information to the fingertips of fire and safety service personnel responding to a hazardous materials incident. Users can search the database by a substance's color, odor, and physical appearance and use the data to plan for a safe and effective response.

Chemicals are rated according to health risk, flammability, and reactivity, among other factors, using data from several sources.

The CD-ROM, known as CHRIS+, contains several databases of chemical, physical, thermodynamic, toxicological, and fire properties. It includes:

- Chemical Hazards Response Information System (CHRIS), the Coast Guard's database of over 1,300 chemicals and mixtures;
- The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Pocket

- Guide, a database of physical and health data for a wide range of chemicals;
- Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG), the Department of Transportation's guide to response to releases of hazardous materials [ERG2004];
- Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) First Responder's Guide, the Coast Guard's advice for responders to WMD incidents.

The CD-ROM also includes incident response advice, guidelines, and forms, including the National Response Plan.

Free copies of the CD-ROM are available by contacting Alan Schneider, U. S. Coast Guard by e-mail at alan.l.schneider@uscg.mil



Three more counties and communities have been certified as StormReady by the National Weather Service in Tulsa. Sebastian County was recognized as Arkansas' newest StormReady County at a news conference on September 9. Sebastian County joins six other counties and three cities in Arkansas with that designation. Cherokee County was recognized as Oklahoma's newest StormReady county on September 11.

The recognition ceremony took place at a news conference in Tahlequah. Attendees included Tahlequah Mayor Ken Purdy, County Commissioner Doug Hubbard, and Steve Palladino of the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management, Muskogee Emergency Management Director Jimmy Moore, Ron Flanagan of RD Flanagan and Associates, and a number of volunteers who assist Emergency Management Directors Gary Dotson and Mike Underwood.

Finally, the City of Muskogee also became StormReady on September 11. (con't on page 5)

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FROM CLEAN-UP TO RECONSTRUCTION

StormReady . . . (cont'd from page 3)



Pictured below:

Fort Sill, OK, October 2006, from left, Karrie Lovins, Contingency Plans Officer, Force Protection Branch, Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security; WCM Rick Smith, NWS Norman, OK; COL John Uberti, Garrison Commander; David Fritz, Force Protection/Anti-Terrorism Officer, Chief, Force Protection Branch, Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization, and Security.



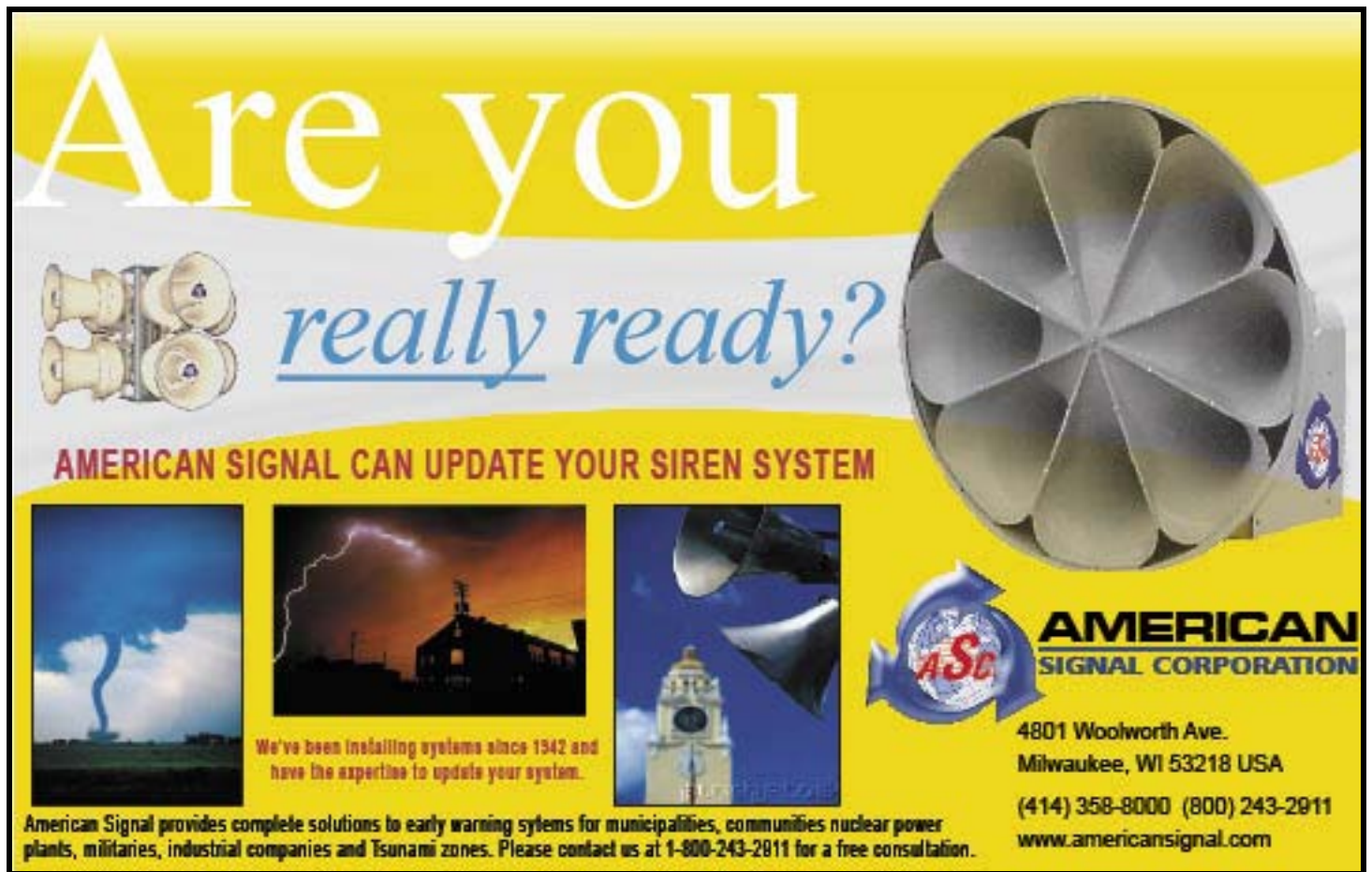
The recognition ceremony took place at the City Council meeting in Muskogee and was attended by several representatives from neighboring Cherokee County Emergency Management, Steve Palladino the Northeast Regional Coordinator for the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management, Ron Flanagan of RD Flanagan and Associates, and a number of volunteers who assist Emergency Management Director Jimmy Moore.

(Left to right: Wayne Johnson: Sebastian Co. Department of Emergency Management (SCDEM); Dave White is: SCDEM Communications and Warning Officer; Steve Piltz: WFO Tulsa MIC Jerry Roberts: SCDEM Director; Tonya Roberts: SCDEM Deputy Coordinator; Ed Calienes: WFO Tulsa WCM; David Hudson: Sebastian County Judge. (photo by Tim Gehring: Northwest Area Coordinator - Arkansas Department of Emergency Management



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Severe weather radios to be provided to public schools

Exerts taken from original story that was POSTED: 9:21 p.m. EDT, September 25, 2006 on CNN.com

WASHINGTON (AP) -- When the squeal from an automated warning radio brought news a severe storm was approaching, school principal William Tomic acted quickly. He alerted teachers to bring children indoors and to a secure interior hallway for shelter.

Hoping for more such success stories, the government announced that it would supply hazard-warning radios to all 97,000 public schools in the United States.

The Homeland Security Department now has decided to provide \$5 million to make sure these radios are in every public school, according to NOAA Administrator Conrad Lautenbacher.

Originally conceived as a means to deliver weather warnings, the system now covers all hazards, for example, terrorism, abducted children and derailed trains carrying toxic materials.

Of course, it takes more than just having the warning radio. School authorities have to know what to do when an alarm sounds.

Lautenbacher said weather experts from local Weather Service offices would be available to assist school officials in determining how best to use the radios.

Six states -- Washington, Tennessee, North Carolina, Maryland, Florida and Mississippi -- already mandate use of the radios in schools. NOAA said those schools will also be included in the new program to make sure they have the most recent models. Also included will be tribal schools and public schools in U.S. territories.

Lautenbacher said the distribution is expected to begin in October and should take a few months. He said the NOAA radio system covers about 97 percent of the country with the few gaps in some sparsely populated mountain areas.

H5N1 Influenza — Continuing Evolution and Spread

Robert G. Webster, Ph.D., and Elena A. Govorkova, M.D., Ph.D. New England Journal of Medicine November, 2006

There is no question that there will be another influenza pandemic someday. We simply don't know when it will occur or whether it will be caused by the H5N1 avian influenza virus. But given the number of cases of H5N1 influenza that have occurred in humans to date (251 as of late September 2006) and the rate of death of more than 50%, it would be prudent to develop robust plans for dealing with such a pandemic.

The epicenters of both the Asian influenza pandemic of 1957 and the Hong Kong influenza pandemic of 1968 were in Southeast Asia, and it is in this region that multiple clades of H5N1 influenza virus have already emerged. The Asian H5N1 virus was first detected in Guangdong Province, China, in 1996, when it killed some geese, but it received little attention until it spread through live-poultry markets in Hong Kong to humans in May 1997, killing 6 of 18 infected persons. The culling of all poultry in Hong Kong ended the first wave of H5N1, but the virus continued to circulate among apparently healthy ducks in the coastal provinces of China

The H5N1 viruses can be divided into clade 1 and clade 2; the latter can be further subdivided into three subclades. The bad news is that these clades and subclades probably differ sufficiently in their antigenic structure to warrant the preparation of different vaccines. Studies in ferrets suggest that vaccine against one clade will not protect against infection with another clade, though it will protect against influenza-associated death.

Another key question is whether these clades and subclades vary in sensitivity to available anti-influenza drugs.

The continuing evolution of H5N1 viruses and the clusters of human

infections in Indonesia and Turkey raise important questions. First, can the source of H5N1 be eliminated? And second, is the increasing number of clusters of human infection an indicator of evolution toward consistent human-to-human transmission?

Controlling H5N1 influenza by eradicating it at the source in domestic poultry has worked for some wealthy countries: in 2003, Japan and South Korea eradicated H5N1 through a strategy of quarantine and culling of poultry and implementation of improved **biosecurity** measures for poultry facilities. In Thailand, however, the same strategy resulted in only a temporary respite; after nearly a year with no H5N1 activity, new cases in humans in July 2006 heralded the resurgence of H5N1 in domestic poultry.

Meanwhile, the number of infections in humans continues to increase. By mid-August, 97 humans had been infected in 2006 — the same number as in all of 2005. Perhaps the most surprising thing about highly pathogenic H5N1 is that although more than 230 million domestic birds have died or been killed, only 251 humans have become ill from H5N1 infection, and there has been little or no evidence of sub clinical infection in humans. The current H5N1 virus is apparently not well “fitted” to replication in humans, although the genetic makeup of a small proportion of humans supports attachment and replication of the virus, if not its transmission. The specific receptor for the current avian influenza virus is found deep in the respiratory tract of humans, but it seems likely that only a minority of people have receptors for avian influenza viruses in their upper respiratory tracts. Moreover, receptor specificity is only one of the requirements for human infection; the

virus must also find compatible enzyme systems in the infected human cells if the viral polymerase complex is to function. Currently, these conditions are apparently met in only a few persons. But the virus is always changing, and mutations that make it more compatible with human transmission may occur at any time.

The seasonality of H5N1 influenza seems similar to that of human influenza: the virus has apparently been more transmissible among chickens, and consequently to humans, during the cooler months. The cases in humans in Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt occurred during the cooler months and coincided with explosive outbreaks of the disease in wild and domestic poultry. In the tropical areas of Asia, there have been two resurgences of H5N1 during the warmer months of the year — a pattern that resembles that followed by human influenza in the tropics, with its multiple peaks of activity. With winter approaching in the northern hemisphere, H5N1 may spread further.

Will it cross from Eurasia to the Americas? Will wild migratory birds carry it from their breeding sites in northern Europe and Siberia to commercial poultry in Europe, Africa, and America? If it is endemic in wild migratory birds that are not rapidly killed by it, then spread to domestic backyard poultry is inevitable. The intermittent spread to humans will continue, and the virus will continue to evolve.

Clearly, we must prepare for the possibility of an influenza pandemic. If H5N1 influenza achieves pandemic status in humans — and we have no way to know whether it will — the results could be catastrophic.



OKEM

November, 2006

Oklahoma Emergency
Management Association
Attn: John Utech, Editor
901 S. 3rd
Blackwell, OK 74631-4226
580-716-2194
twister1@kskc.net

Useful web sites:

Oklahoma Emergency Management Association:
www.oema.us

Oklahoma Dept. of Emergency Management:
<http://www.ok.gov/OEM/>

National Weather Service Office, Norman:
www.srh.noaa.gov/oun/

Oklahoma Floodplain Managers Association:
www.okflood.org

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