

ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCY SERVICES, INC
CHEMUNG, STEUBEN & SCHUYLER COUNTIES
2012 ANNUAL REPORT



1972 Agnes Flood, Walnut Street Bridge, Elmira, NY

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Mission Statement Environmental Emergency Services (EES)

To advise and inform the populace of Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben Counties in an effort to reduce the adverse effects of severe flooding, drought and hazardous material incidents which contribute to environmental emergencies.

EES Responsibilities

1. Provide local emergency response agencies with early warning information.
 2. Maintain communication and coordination among agencies, through its Board of Directors, who share concern for environmental issues.
 3. During emergencies maintain communication with local, state and federal partners.
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Mission Statement Flood Warning Service (FWS)

To collect pertinent rainfall, climate and river data and to use this information to assist Emergency Management Offices (EMO) in determining areas of concern for potential high water or drought problems in Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben Counties.

FWS Responsibilities

1. Provide the EMO in each county with accurate and updated severe weather information during flooding emergencies, whenever possible.
 2. Develop fail-safe communication links with the EMO in each county, with the National Weather Service, US Army Corps of Engineers and with the Region 8 NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.
 3. Organize, train and maintain a volunteer corps of rain gauge readers and a volunteer operational staff for the Gustina Emergency Operation Center.
 4. Maintain and service those sensors for rainfall, climate and river levels, which are under Flood Warning Service control.
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Mission Statement Chemical Hazard Information Team (CHIT)

To provide chemical and safety information and guidance to local emergency responders in the event of hazardous material incidents.

CHIT Responsibilities

1. Maintain a cadre of local specialists in related disciplines to assist emergency responders.
2. Provide funding and training opportunities for CHIT members and local emergency responders.
3. Supply specialized materials such as: software, equipment and a reference library.

April 1, 2010

Message from the President

To Our Friends and Associates

How can we discuss 2012 without talking about the 800 pound gorilla in the room? I'm referring specifically to Hurricane Sandy. Yes, this storm did not create many problems here locally, but it should be the wake up call to everyone on the east coast. The storm is a continuation of a series of bigger, more aggressive storms that have come up the east coast. No one could ignore Sandy as she came up the coast. The sheer size of the storm meant that anyone could get hit and being such a late year storm, coming in the very last of October, the unpredictability of what the storm would deliver was anybody's guess. There was the wind component, the rainfall and in the case of western Pennsylvania, snow and lots of it. This trend for bigger and more powerful storms coming up the east coast is a serious one. Data and history are confirming that we are in for a period of years where the storms will be venturing further north. This should be our warning bell!

We have been fortunate in the Chemung basin over the last 8 years that most of the basin has missed any significant flooding. We have had all that time to prepare for the next flood, which we all know is coming. So what have we accomplished with that time? I can tell you we at EES have updated our data collection software and flood detection capabilities. The software was upgraded during 2012 and training for the group was done over the summer months. We will be upgrading our flood forecasting capabilities in the next year as well. The key to these upgrades is to be able to have the computers do some of the multi-tasking that we have been asking the volunteers to do. This will free up the volunteers to be able to monitor conditions better and speed up the data reconciliation process. The goal is to give the emergency management offices the best, most up to date information available for them to use in key decision making.

I wish I could say other partners have been moving ahead as well. Unfortunately on the federal level, we are stuck in the continuous cycle of begging for dollars to support the USGS gauging system. This problem has been chronic every year for as long as I can remember. The system continues to dwindle ever so slightly, as USGS threatens to turn off gauges, only to be saved at the last minute by some funding allocation discovered or reallocated from other programs. And then there is the issue of levee recertification. The key flood structures are maintained with such care by the NYSDEC and taken for granted as part of the flood preparedness system for many of our larger communities. Are they there or are they not there? Should the residents get credit for them being there or not? FEMA appears stuck in a quandary as to how to address them. If as much effort could be put into developing good inundation mapping, as is going into avoiding a logical decision on the efficacy of our levees, then real progress could be made in flood planning and preparedness to the benefit of all our residents.

The success of an organization is wholly dependant on those people that work behind the scenes to keep it going. EES is no different. We are blessed with a group of volunteers that continue to give of their time and talents. I need to recognize the members of our flood warning group that meet monthly in order to keep up to speed on flood operations and the changes in technology that we continue to throw at them. Also, our CHIT volunteers, that participate in training and work at exercises to keep their expertise at the ready in case of a hazardous materials incident. Hats off to the maintenance team that keep the gauges and the computers running to the high levels of performance we have come to expect. And last, but surely not least, my management team, Joy Brewer, Penny Arnold and Jim Lynch, 3 people that keep this organization running on an everyday basis. Genuine thanks to all.

Michael Sprague, President

Message from the Vice President

It was a pleasure to serve my first year as EES vice president. The vice president position has previously been held by distinguished and highly qualified individuals, namely Alan Buddle, Scott Foti, and Scott Rodabaugh. All of whom remain as members of EES and continue to support EES as an important asset to the communities in which EES serves. During my tenure I intend to build upon the good works of my predecessors, and to assist in maintaining the readiness of EES to serve communities.

Much gratitude is extended to the municipalities that fund EES, and to the trained volunteers that expend personal time and energy to improve and maintain emergency readiness. It is important to mention that during these continued difficult fiscal times, municipalities have been generous and diligent in supporting EES as they must see value in an organization that is prepared and ready to take action as the need arises. I would also like to extend our gratitude to Corning Incorporated for their continued support of EES.

June 2012 marked the 40th anniversary of the Hurricane Agnes flood that in 1972 resulted in local loss of life and significant damage. It appears that as the Agnes flooding anniversaries increase, the number of people that recall the devastation from flooding decreases. This is why the 40th anniversary, combined with the documented major flooding frequency in our service area, should be a stark reminder that flooding will occur again. I believe EES will make a difference in preventing loss of life and property in future flooding events.

With continued support from municipalities and volunteers, EES will stay poised and ready to assist Emergency Management Offices with early warning information in an effort to reduce the adverse effects of flooding and hazardous material incidents.

James A. Lynch
EES Vice President

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In 2012, The Public Information and Education (PIE) Committee remained busy with our on-going efforts to help our communities prepare and respond to environmental hazards.

PIE assisted many communities and agencies in 2012 with education and media campaigns. Our National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and Water Recreation brochures, created in 2008 and 2009 respectively, have continued to be distributed to many communities, as well as the new brochure for our Chemical Hazard Information Team (CHIT) that was developed and printed in late 2011. The NFIP brochure has been very important to communities that participate in the Community Rating System, which gives residents of the community a discount on National Flood Insurance premiums. EES has also been active in writing our Congressman and Senators regarding issues surrounding flooding, including funding for stream and river gauges and mapping of the special flood hazard areas in our communities. EES will continue to be a public voice on these issues.

Our NFIP and CHIT brochures are also used as marketing and recruitment tools as new volunteers for both the Flood Warning Service (FWS) and CHIT are always needed and welcomed. If you or your group has an interest in being involved, please ask for information on volunteer opportunities. You can devote as little or as much time as you want, and you'll be helping your community to be a safer and environmentally friendlier place!

PIE again developed a press release in 2012 warning ATV and dirt bike riders to stay off our local dams and levees, after inspectors found damage on one of our local dams. Damage from these types of recreational vehicles can weaken dams and levees, causing them to fail when needed in high water conditions. PIE also assisted with several media requests over the year on issues related to flooding and the environment.

EES and PIE have many requests annually to make presentations to local government councils and boards, senior citizen groups, school aged groups, and community organizations, regarding who we are and what we do. PIE made a special presentation at a local village board meeting, informing the board members about the group, and clearing up some misunderstandings regarding Emergency Planning.

Several years ago, PIE purchased a portable, tabletop flood simulation model that can be taken to any location, and we continued to make good use of it in 2012. New cars, homes, trees, and even putty to make dams and levees, were purchased in 2012 to replace ones that have become lost or damaged. These items can be placed in the natural setting of the simulator. Water can then be released into the model, at a variety of speeds, allowing the spectators to see how water can flow through the model safely, or cause flooding. This is especially fun for school aged children, and our annual trip to the Soil and Water Conservation Field Days at Park Station gives several classes the opportunity to test out the model each spring. The kids have loved placing homes and other items in the model, competing to see who has built safely, and who has put their home in harm's way.

If your group or organization would like to know more about EES, FWS or CHIT, or would like to learn more about flooding issues with our new simulator, please contact us! Watch for a new public education campaign from EES in 2013, as we strive to make our communities and residents better prepared to face environmental hazards in the future. Visit our website at www.highwater.org often to see the changes and find useful preparedness information.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kristin A. Card-Griffin
PIE Chairwoman

FLOOD WARNING SERVICE (FWS)

The Year 2012 brought us stories of a “Super Storm.” “Super Storm Sandy,” was much of the talk during late October and into the New Year. A storm that will be discussed for decades to come based upon the destruction she left on the East Coast. This “Super Storm” had its eyes on the Southern Tier and once again we dodged a major bullet. Sandy proved to us again that we must remain vigilant and must continue to maintain our local flood warning service to preserve and enhance our situational awareness.

For the overall operations of the Flood Warning Service in 2012, we continued to make progress in trying to streamline our operations with a limited number of volunteers. We continued to fine tune a series of spreadsheets that we use for our weekly system maintenance checks. Although this process is still evolving it appears that most of the volunteers are getting a good handle on the overall operation of the system and data entry of these spreadsheets. With the ever increasing amount of data that is available from the Internet, our spreadsheets are trying to consolidate and correlate the data that is available to us. The development and modification of the three weekly checklists has allowed us to look at different data sets of a three week period and provide us with a good view of all available or worthwhile data over that timeframe. This process has been refined over the course of this year. The next step that we have been working on is trying to “auto fill” these spreadsheets with the required data so that our volunteers will not have to spend exhausting hours trying to collect this data from the various different sources. Don Kinney, one of our dedicated volunteers, has spent many hours working on this process and working with Don Colton, the Datawise Software Developer. They have managed to get this process to a point where “auto fill” will become a reality in 2013.

Over this past year we have refined our operations on the three different workstations and new software package. Don Colton from DEC Datawise was on hand to provide our volunteers with some great training. We followed up our regional exercise with installation of a new computer display on the wall just inside the door of the GEOC. This display has helped us to allow better visual monitoring of our training programs for our volunteers.

As we move into 2013 we have planned additional training with Don Colton. We continue to provide presentations to agencies to try to drum up some more volunteers. The issue with volunteers does not seem to correct itself. EES, like many Non-for-Profits, has found that citizens are not volunteering for opportunities like they once were. There are just not enough volunteers to go around for all the volunteer opportunities out there. As I stated in last year’s report, “our volunteers are dedicated, experienced and proficient. I give them a lot of credit for what they do. If you are aware of anyone who would be interested in becoming a Flood Warning Service Volunteer please feel free to contact me. We need to continue a diligent process to recruit volunteers and keep the GEOC fully staffed for future events.”

Here is to a Happy, Healthy, and Safe 2013....

Sincerely,



Timothy D. Marshall,
Operations Director

2012 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Funding:

Cash on Hand January 1, 2012	\$ 28,790
Chemung, Steuben & Schuyler Counties	19,800
Local Government	13,700
Interest Income	<u>19</u>
Sub-Total	\$ 62,309
Flood Exercise Grant Balance	5,588
Corning, Inc. (Canisteo Gage/Maintenance/Training)	<u>1,000</u>
TOTAL	\$ 68,897

Expenditures:

Operating Expenses	
Communications	4,771
Accounting Services, Tax Reporting	860
Bank Charges, Printing and Miscellaneous	635
Technical Services	6,180
Flood Warning Service Equipment Maintenance & Repair	10,929
Equipment	1,400
Equipment Rental	6,039
Flood Warning Service Education and Meetings	4,185
CHIT Training and Reference Materials	0
Public Information & Education (PIE)	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	\$ 34,999

CASH ON HAND JANUARY 1, 2013 **\$ 33,898**

2012 CONTRIBUTORS

The Board of Directors is grateful to the following local governments for their financial contributions to operating expenses of EES:

Chemung County

Steuben County

Schuyler County

Ashland (T)

Bath (T)

Big Flats (T)

Campbell (T)

Corning (T)

Erwin (T)

Elmira (T)

Elmira (C)

Horseheads (T)

Horseheads (V)

Lindley (T)

N. Hornell (V)

Savona (V)

South Corning (V)

Southport (T)

Tuscarora (T)

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