

Environmental Emergency Services, Inc.

Chemung, Schuyler & Steuben Counties, NY



Full scale hazardous material exercise hosted by Surface Finish Technologies. The EES Chemical Hazard Information Team (CHIT) provided technical support for the Chemung County Hazardous Material Team.

2006 Annual Report

ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCY SERVICES, INC.

2006 ANNUAL REPORT

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MISSION STATEMENT

Mission Statement – Environmental Emergency Services (EES)

To advise and inform the populace of Chemung 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 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.

November 12, 2002

TO OUR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

2006 was one of the wettest years on record for our region. But it will be remembered, or perhaps not remembered, as a quiet year with respect to significant weather events in our area. **However, it should be remembered as the year of the near miss.** We in the Chemung River Basin missed “The Big One” by just a few miles. 2006 was the year for the North Branch of the Susquehanna, June 2006. One only had to travel a few miles into Tioga County, NY to find significant flooding, and it got worse as you moved toward the Binghamton area. Those of us on the National Weather Service conference calls leading up to this event will vividly remember the forecasts given for Waverly, Vestal and Binghamton. Those forecasts, in which predicted levels were double the flood stage, brought gasps of disbelief and requests for repeated numbers. The people responsible for managing flood response in that area were looking down the barrel of a loaded gun, knowing it was about to go off. A conveyor belt of moisture was streaming north on the radar screens. Flooding was a given, the real question was how bad. As we all know now, it was some of the worst flooding that area has seen in recorded history. Floodwaters were photographed lapping over floodwalls in the City of Binghamton. Areas upstream and downstream of the City were devastated. Those of us in this area who were on that call, thanked our lucky stars for our good fortune and sent as much assistance to the flood area as possible. We knew what we had missed and the misery they would be facing once the waters receded. We also were thankful that we didn’t have to rally all of our cities, towns and villages to: evacuate people; rescue the unlucky or the foolhardy; pump flood waters; set sandbags; set up shelters and temporary housing; deal with the flood mud and the inevitable choking dust; manage the long term displacement of many residents; and engage in the long, grinding effort to rebuild flooded communities. **This was our wakeup call. But did we hear it?**

2006 should also be remembered as one of those times when the right person was in the right place at the right time. This person was at the pinnacle of his career, at the top of his game, using all of the expertise garnered over a dedicated career. John Chiaromonte, the hydrologist at the National Weather Service Office in Binghamton, brought a career’s worth of knowledge and experience to an excellent staff at this office. During the event described previously, his knowledge and steady hand helped the Binghamton Office perform admirably during a “watershed” event. Their forecasts were clear, on time and well delivered. John retired at the end of 2006. By the time you read this report, John and his wife will be taking some well-deserved rest and recreation. John, we all will miss you, but also will remember the man who was in the right place at the right moment. Good luck and a long retirement, my friend!

Special thanks need to go out to the backbone of our organization, the volunteers. Without them there would have been no Flood Warning Service and no EES. Thanks to the Operations Group, which continues to adapt and prepare for the inevitable flooding situation. Thanks to the Maintenance Group of Tom Shugars and Sue McLaughlin, who continue to keep the system operating at 99% capacity. Thanks to the Chemical Hazard Information Team, (CHIT) which keeps us prepared for the large Haz Mat incident. I also want to extend my thanks to the Board of Directors, both present and past, for their leadership and time

commitment. And lastly, the officers of the organization, Vice-President Scott Rodabaugh, Secretary Janet Thigpen, and Treasurer Joy Brewer. These are the individuals who really keep this operation running on an every day basis.

Michael A. Sprague
President – EES

TO OUR FRIENDS AND PARTNERS

The "Great Flood of 2006." The "Flood of Record." The "500-Year Flood." By whatever name chosen, communities throughout the Mid-Atlantic States, including our neighboring upstate New York counties to the east, experienced flooding unlike any other on record. Following a year of record flooding (April 2005), areas throughout the Delaware and Upper Susquehanna River Basins were once again devastated by unprecedented river levels.

When will we endure our next "Great Flood?" Or "Flood of Record?" Will the next flood result from a mixture of snowmelt and heavy rains? Or the combination of a Bermuda high and a tropical low? Ice jams? Hurricanes/tropical storms? Simply put, no one can say when or how our next flooding event will happen. History does, however, tell us (if we're listening) that it will happen again and we owe it to ourselves to be ready.

To that end it is heartening to witness the continued and growing support of our communities, local industry, and government leaders in recognizing the need for Environmental Emergency Services (EES) and its organizations (Flood Warning Service, Chemical Hazard Information Team). With added involvement from Schuylers County and several communities (Village of Millport, Town of Urbana, Town of Woodhull, Village of South Corning), EES enjoys the necessary support and stability to not only meet its mission goals, but also to enhance its services, including:

- Expansion, monitoring and maintenance of a network of climate stations and gauges,
- Training and support of volunteers and associated organizations, and
- Improved communications and coordination with outside emergency management agencies.

Please take a moment to read the reports of our Flood Warning Service (FWS), Chemical Hazard Information Team (CHIT), and Public Information and Education (PIE) representatives. A lot of planning and coordination has been undertaken by the respective authors of the reports, in addition to countless hours by our volunteers and others to perform the critical roles and functions of the entire EES organization.

Thanks are owed to all for their efforts in helping EES fulfill its obligations. We cannot predict when the next disaster will occur. We can be ready. With the continued support of our communities as well as the dedicated volunteers of our organization, we will be.

Scott Rodabaugh
Vice President - EES

FLOOD WARNING SERVICE (FWS)

Once again 2006 has been a very busy and successful year for the Flood Warning Service. With the lack of flooding events we had the opportunity to focus on training and recruitment of volunteers, as well as enhancing our capabilities. During this past year, we have continued to make progress toward updating and enhancing our system. Tom Shugars and Sue McLaughlin again this year have worked feverishly to make sure our system is providing accurate and up-to-date data. Tom has been instrumental in making updates to the system with the installation of numerous new gauges.

This year, we continued the installation of additional climate stations and precipitation stations. In February, we installed our third database, "Aardvark." This new version has proven to be the most efficient and accurate data collection system we have. New precipitation gauges were installed in Thurston, Hornby and East Campbell. New climate stations were installed at the Bath Landfill and Grove Springs (overlooking beautiful Keuka Lake). The Perkinsville climate station was moved and brought back on-line as well. All of this has kept Tom and Sue busy with programming and preparing the system to receive new data. A big shout needs to go out to these two for their fine work.

Over this past year, we have added new volunteers to the active list of those who would be available to help during an event. I would like to welcome Dirk Sears, John Meyer, Bob Ohl, George Brasted, Dave Colvin, and Pete Wilson to the group. I hope that we can keep these folks interested in our cause – we sure need their help. I would also like to thank all of our other current volunteers for standing by our side and being available if Mother Nature calls. Keep up the good work. I would also like to thank the rain gauge readers for calling in reports. Although you may think it is a very simple thing, this helps us to substantiate our gauge readings and enhance our decision-making.

Because of these new volunteers, we have focused on training. In the spring, we did some in-service training with hydrologists from the Middle Atlantic River Forecast Center (MARFC). During the fall, we were able to coordinate an unusual meeting of both the MARFC and the Northeast Regional River Forecast Center along with the local Binghamton Service Office. It is not often that these folks can be in the same room together and discuss local issues. Because of EES, we were able to tap off the wonderful knowledge of these folks and discuss some lake modeling. The fall meeting was also the time to bid farewell to John Chiamonte, who has retired as our Service Office Hydrologist. We will greatly miss John and look forward to seeing him in the future; he promised to keep in touch.

In closing, 2007 will bring additional changes to FWS. We are currently in the process of discussing computer upgrades, which we hope will bring better correlation between the systems. We also hope that there will be more volunteers to use these new machines and crunch the data for us. I will continue to focus on basic training over the next several months, getting the new volunteers up to speed on operations. We intend to continue our joint training with the National Weather Service and the Mid-Atlantic River Forecast Center.

Again, it is great to see these two organizations identify us as a viable partner. Keep up the good work! Here is to a successful but uneventful 2007 for all!

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy D. Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'T'.

Timothy D. Marshall
FWS Coordinator

CHEMICAL HAZARD INFORMATION TEAM (CHIT)

This year the CHIT program regained some momentum after a couple years with minimal activity. A new chairman was “elected” and several activities were conducted.

The team’s bylaws, procedures and member listings were reviewed and updated in May. The CHIT members met for a dinner and viewed a PowerPoint presentation describing the duties, responsibilities and activation of CHIT. This training provided an opportunity for all the attendees to receive the same consistent information.

CHIT members were invited to a training exercise in May on explosives and personal protective equipment associated with response. The local FBI provided the training and showed actual examples homemade explosives.

In June, Ed Fletcher from the NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control gave an informational presentation about an incident that occurred in a nearby community. He provided a narrative of the scene and CHIT members commented on how they would have addressed the situation along with information concerning the types of equipment that he had access to. We compared our recommendations to what actually evolved during the event.

Several members of CHIT attended a Central New York Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team Consortium meeting at the Ithaca Fire Department. The Consortium demonstrated how their new chemical analyzer is used to identify unknown materials.

The Elmira Fire Department provided a mock drill at Surface Finishing Technologies in Elmira in mid October. This drill included a practice event for the HAZMAT firemen and CHIT members. Several CHIT members were called to Station #3 and information was passed between the CHIT and HAZMAT team. CHIT members noted several problems with communications, Internet access and not actually seeing the HAZMAT situation.

In November, the Central New York Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team Consortium met at the Elmira Fire Department for their monthly meeting. CHIT members were invited to answer the many questions posed by the Consortium concerning our group. They expressed interest in either utilizing our group or starting their own.

During 2007 we intend to continue building the group’s involvement and become more efficient with our response efforts. Efforts and goals will include updating computer programs, organizing resources at the CHIT response centers, increasing member activity from Steuben County and potential affiliations with other counties.

I extend my thanks to everyone who has helped throughout 2006 and I look forward to the continued member support in 2007.

Respectfully submitted,
Howard Phillips, PE
CHIT Chairman

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION (PIE)

The Public Information and Education (PIE) committee of EES had a busy year in 2006.

During the first part of the year, we wrapped up the distribution of NOAA Weather Radios to non-profit organizations throughout the area. The radios were purchased with a grant from former State Senator and current Congressman, Randy Kuhl, and Assemblyman James Bacalles.

Two important needs were expressed from the communities we serve. The first request was for a new informational brochure that would assist communities in achieving Community Rating System points to lower residential costs for the National Flood Insurance Program. The PIE committee began work on the brochure mid-way through 2006, and will finish up the project in 2007. The color brochure can be distributed by communities, and will have space for local officials to insert their contact information.

The second request was for a public education campaign to provide residents with information about responding to emergencies. Concerns stemming from the Hurricane Katrina response, worries about a Pandemic Flu, and the devastation closer to home from flooding to the east of us prompted requests for a media campaign to help educate residents on what they can do to stay safe and be self sufficient in an emergency. A media campaign has been created and PIE is currently seeking media outlets to participate in this much-needed program.

An ongoing PIE activity involves making educational presentations to senior citizen groups and community organizations about who we are and what we do. In 2006, several presentations were made about EES and the Flood Warning Service operations and on flood preparedness. If your group or organization would like to know more about EES, flooding issues, or chemical hazards, please contact us! PIE also continues to help the Flood Warning Service recruit new volunteers for its operations center. If you are interested in getting involved, please ask for information about volunteer opportunities as well!

Respectfully Submitted,
Kristin A. Card
PIE Chairperson

2006 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FUNDING: Cash on Hand January 1, 2006	\$74,021
Chemung & Steuben Counties	15,400
Local Government	13,000
Interest Income	<u>2,424</u>
Sub-Total	\$104,845
PSCIM	473
NOAA/IFLOWS Grant	<u>55,995</u>
TOTAL	\$161,313

EXPENDITURES:

Operating Expenses	
Communications	\$ 2,832
Accounting Fees & Tax Reporting	900
Bank Charges, Contingencies and Miscellaneous	434
Flood Warning Service Equipment Maintenance, Repair, and Rental	10,585
Flood Warning Service Education and Meetings	5,413
Equipment	5,300
CHIT Training and Reference Materials	360
Public Information & Education (PIE)	<u>918</u>
Sub-Total	\$26,742
PSCIM	0
NOAA/IFLOWS Grant	<u>67,458</u>
TOTAL	\$94,200

CASH ON HAND JANUARY 1, 2007 **\$67,113**

2006 FINANCIAL SUMMARY (continued)

FORECAST 2007

ESTIMATED FUNDING:

Cash on Hand January 1, 2007	\$66,102
Chemung & Steuben Counties	18,400
Municipalities for Flood Warning	13,000
Interest Income	<u>1,600</u>
Sub-Total	\$ 99,102
PSCIM	473
NOAA/IFLOWS Grant	<u>537</u>
TOTAL	\$ 100,112

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES:

Operating Costs for FWS	\$ 32,500
Equipment Reserve Fund	42,000
Training Fund	
FWS -	4,000
CHIT -	10,000
Public Information/Education (PIE)	<u>10,000</u>
Sub-Total	\$ 98,500
PSCIM Expenses	473
NOAA/IFLOWS Grant	<u>537</u>
TOTAL	\$ 99,510

FORECASTED SURPLUS: \$ 602

Joy Brewer
Treasurer

2006 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

(T) Ashland

(V) Bath

(T) Big Flats

(T) Corning

(C) Elmira

(T) Elmira

(T) Erwin

(T) Horseheads

(T) Lindley

(V) Millport

(V) South Corning

(T) Southport

(T) Urbana

(T) West Union

(T) Woodhull

**ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCY SERVICES, INC.
CHEMUNG & STEUBEN COUNTIES**

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(2006)**

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