



# SECURE & PREPARED

Jan. 28, 2011

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### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Region 3 PIO Workshop</i>	2
<i>Volunteer Training Opportunity</i>	2
<i>Cherokee Mitigation Success Story</i>	3
<i>IowaGrants.Gov</i>	4
<i>Grant Reimbursement Rules</i>	5

## Training Opportunity

Dealing with the Media: A Short Course for Rural Responders  
This course is designed to provide rural responders with the skills and knowledge to adopt the role of public information officer and to communicate with the public through the media. No fee to participate.

**Date:** Feb. 19

**Time:** 9 am. - 3:30 p.m.

**Location:** Iowa Valley Continuing Education, Room 610, 3702 S. Center St., Marshalltown

**Registration:** mmanion@story-county.com, 515.382.7229

## HSEMD Welcomes New Administrator

With two weeks under his belt as administrator of the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (HSEMD), Brig. Gen. J. Derek Hill says HSEMD's top-notch reputation is well-deserved.

"HSEMD has a good reputation nationally, and after receiving initial briefings from the staff I can understand why," says Hill. "Our goal is to continue to deliver exceptional services to the State of Iowa."

Hill was appointed HSEMD administrator by Governor Terry Branstad. The governor also appointed Hill to serve as Iowa's Homeland Security Advisor.

"Brigadier General Hill's service to Iowa and our country is to be commended," said Branstad in a news release announcing the appointment. "His leadership of the Iowa National Guard's Joint Staff during the floods and tornadoes of 2008 was exceptional, and I am confident this leadership and management will continue in Brig. Gen. Hill's new endeavor."

As the governor's homeland security advisor, Hill will advise the governor on the state's efforts to prepare for, mitigate against, respond to and recover from all hazards, not just terrorism.



**HSEMD Administrator  
Brig. Gen. Derek Hill**

"We want to make sure Iowa is prepared to respond to any emergency, whatever the cause," Hill says.

Hill will also be assisting Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds with the transition of the duties of the Rebuild Iowa Office as it works toward its June 30 closure.

Hill brings to HSEMD a wealth of finance, legal and military expertise. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance from the University of South Alabama and earned a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from Cumberland School of Law in Birmingham, Ala. He attended the

*Continued on Page 2...*

## HSEMD Welcomes New Administrator

*...Continued from Page 1*

University of South Florida Graduate Tax School and is a graduate of U.S. Air Force Squadron Officer School, Air War College, and Joint and Combined Warfighting School.

In 1985 Hill's military career began when he received a direct appointment as an officer in the United States Air Force. After completing the Judge Advocate Staff Officer Course, where he obtained his foundation in military law, he served in various legal positions, including Deputy Staff Judge Advocate while assigned to Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark. In 1988, he was assigned to serve as a Circuit Trial Counsel at Lowry Air Force Base in Colorado, where he was one of 21 hand-picked attorneys worldwide. In the course of that assignment he trained more than 200 Air Force attorneys in litigation skills while achieving a 95 percent success rate as lead counsel in the prosecution of complex litigation.

In 1990, Hill joined the Air Force Reserve and was one of only five reservists chosen as Circuit Trial Counsel until relocating to St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands in

1995, where he served as Judge Advocate General for U.S. Special Operations Command. In 1997 he was appointed Staff Judge Advocate, (lead lawyer) for the U.S. Virgin Islands National Guard.

In 2003, Hill transferred to the Iowa Air National Guard as Special Projects Officer for The Adjutant General. He was selected as the Director of Staff in 2005 and has served in various positions on the Iowa National Guard Joint Staff, most recently as the Chief of the Joint Staff, which coordinates the Guard's response to disasters and emergencies. He was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General on Nov. 5, 2010. He currently serves the Iowa National Guard in drill status.

As a civilian, he has served as corporate in-house counsel and vice president in a real estate development firm, and has had a private law practice. He has also worked in the field of law enforcement and as a city manager.

Hill currently serves on the board of directors for the Iowa Health Foundation and is active in Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity, International. Ω

## Volunteer Training Opportunity

**IS-244 Developing and Managing Volunteers**, will be offered Feb. 15-16, 2011, at The Security Institute, Western Iowa Tech Community College, in Sioux City. This course offers training in identifying and recruiting volunteer resources, coordinating with volunteer and

community-based organizations, and addresses issues such as stress management for volunteers and legal issues.

The training is free of charge.

Register at <http://homelandsecurity.iowa.gov/training/>. Ω

## Region 3 Holds Public Information Officer Workshop

The fifth in a series of regional public information officer (PIO) workshops took place Jan. 18-19 in Region 3.

The workshop was held at The Security Institute building at Western Iowa Tech Community College in Sioux City. Local and state participants came together for the training and exercise activities funded by the 2008 Homeland Security Grant Program through HSEMD.

The goal of the workshops is to develop and coordinate emergency management and partner PIOs at all levels of government. Topics included the Joint Information System, joint information centers, information management, and utilizing social media. The sessions demonstrate the importance of identifying PIOs at the local level and the need for PIOs at every level to communicate with colleagues.

Participants in the workshop represented a variety of agencies, including public health, emergency management and local government.

Chris Kramer and Frank Cowan, experts in emergency public information and the Joint Information System and joint information centers, conducted the training.

The final workshop will be held in Region 5 in March. Ω

# Cherokee's Hazard Mitigation Measures Pay Off

For generations, families living alongside the Little Sioux River in Cherokee, Iowa have known that heavy rainfall would cause the river to swell its bounds and force some measure of floodwaters into their homes. The landscape in the area changed forever as a result of the Midwest Floods of 1993 that engulfed the area with record floodwaters. With a mission to enhance the safety of citizens and reduce the impact of future property damage, local, state and federal officials embarked on one of the largest property buyout and relocation programs in the state of Iowa.

The year 1993 brought one storm after the other: a snowy winter and then a wet spring, followed by the severe storms in late June and early July. This caused devastating flooding throughout Iowa and the Midwest region.

As heavy rainfall pushed the Little Sioux River over its banks, homes in a nearby low-lying area were flooded with up to 6 feet of water, more than many could recall from earlier storms.

"Since the flood-prone houses were situated along the bend of the river and were located at the lowest point in town, the 1993 flood severely damaged or pretty much wiped out everything down there," said buyout participant James D. Agnitsch, the Street Department Superintendent for the city of Cherokee.

During major storms, the Street Department is tasked with closing roads, floodwater rescues, erecting safety devices, providing a physical presence, etc. Whenever the area would flood, Agnitsch had the added responsibility of protecting



***Green space along the Little Sioux River after 187 flood-prone properties were cleared from the area. FEMA photo.***

his own home, as he lived near the Little Sioux River, too.

"My family and I fought 24 hours to keep the floodwaters down inside our house with the help of sump pumps. After the flood, I noticed the doors in the house became difficult to open, and cracks began to appear on the walls. I knew that a flood of this magnitude would happen again," said Agnitsch.

Funding became available as a result of a presidential disaster declaration to help remove people and their homes from the repetitive flood hazard area. Buyouts, sometimes called "acquisitions," are voluntary. Homeowners agree to participate in the program and are paid pre-flood market value for their properties.

"I was never skeptical of the buyout option," said Agnitsch. "I lived in the area even after seeing, as a child, my parents experience the wrath of the river. I was tired of fighting the river. I had to do it at work and at home. It became a big problem."

The city of Cherokee's total acquisition cost was about \$7.2 million. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), through their Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), funded 75 percent of the project. The remaining 25 percent of the project cost was shared between the city of Cherokee and the state of Iowa. The Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division administered the funds.

"All but a handful of homeowners agreed to participate in the buyout program. Those remaining in the flood hazard area were mostly the elderly who found it the hardest to let go and move out, even though their property had major flood damage," said Debra Taylor, the city clerk and treasurer.

"We are happy about the home we moved into. City officials treated us fantastic. We received a fair price for our home that would have been considerably less if we tried to sell

*Continued on Page 4...*



## HSEMD Using Iowa's Electronic Grant Management System

HSEMD is now using the State of Iowa's electronic grant management system, [www.IowaGrants.Gov](http://www.IowaGrants.Gov), in three of its non-disaster grant programs.

**FFY 2011 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)**  
Applications must be submitted through IowaGrants.Gov by Feb. 28, 2011.

**FFY 2011 Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP)**

Grant expenditure claims must be submitted through IowaGrants.Gov.

**FFY 2009 Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP)**

Grant expenditure claims must be submitted through IowaGrants.Gov.

Local recipients or applicants for EMPG, HMEP, and HSGP must be registered to use IowaGrants.Gov.

For registration instructions:

EMPG--**Tricia Boggs** at [tricia.boggs@iowa.gov](mailto:tricia.boggs@iowa.gov)

HMEP--**Lisa Sexton** at [lisa.sexton@iowa.gov](mailto:lisa.sexton@iowa.gov)

HSGP--**Doug Rossell** at [douglas.rossell@iowa.gov](mailto:douglas.rossell@iowa.gov). Ω

## Cherokee Hazard Mitigation Efforts

...Continued from Page 3

the flood-prone home on our own. It could not have worked out any better," said Agnitsch. "We are now high and dry."

In all, the city of Cherokee's acquisition program in the low-lying Little Sioux River flood area included 187 residential properties of which 156 were purchased and demolished, and 31 homes were relocated to higher ground. The total buyout area along the floodplain spanned 67 acres.

The cleared land is deed restricted to open space uses, thus reducing future federal disaster-related expenditures.

"Cherokee city officials held numerous mitigation fairs and community meetings to educate its citizens of their options and the buyout process. Even local students got involved as the National Park Service provided training on conserving open space and natural floodplains. As a result, students formulated recommendations on how to best use the remaining open space and presented their ideas to the community," said Sandra Cox, a FEMA

HMGP Grant Specialist at the time of the Cherokee buyout.

Today, the property is the home of a community horse arena that is used on weekends during the summer

*"The flood buyout program eliminated a lot of problems. It was probably one of the best things that ever happened to us."*

and is maintained by local volunteers. The bulk of the land remains green space.

"The city purchased property on higher grounds, within the Cherokee city limits, known as Colony Addition and established it specifically to provide an improved site for 22 of the 31 relocated homes. The houses were upgraded with better basements and foundations. As a result, most homeowners remained in the city, and the flood-prone, run-down properties are gone. Colony Addition looks as if the homes have always been there," Taylor said.

Major flooding in late June 2010 again walloped the city. This time, about 8 inches of rain fell within a few hours. The Little Sioux River crested at 27.3 feet, more than 10 feet above the flood stage. By some accounts, flooding was worse than in 1993. But, thanks to the property buyouts, damage was much less severe along the Little Sioux River. A few of the homes remaining in the flood hazard zone were flooded again, as were some streets and part of the city's infrastructure system still located in the area. However, most of the homes were already gone and the street crew did not have to worry about hauling enough sandbags to protect homes or rescuing numerous people from dangerous floodwaters.

"The flood buyout program eliminated a lot of problems," said Agnitsch. "It was probably one of the best things that ever happened to us."

Article submitted by FEMA. See more best practices stories at [www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/bestpractices/index.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/bestpractices/index.shtm). Ω

## Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management Division

A division of the Iowa Department of Public Defense

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### HSEMD Mission

Lead, coordinate, and support homeland security and emergency management functions in order to establish sustainable communities and ensure economic opportunities for Iowa and its citizens.

## We're on the Web!

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

# Grant Reimbursement Rules and Regulations

As I'm sure all of you know, federal grants won't pay for just anything. There are rules and regulations about what can be reimbursed. Here is a general overview of how to determine if your cost can be reimbursed.

## Allowable, Allocable, and Reasonable

The first test to see if a cost is reimbursable is to see if it is allowable, allocable, and reasonable. The rules for this can be found in 2 CFR.

**Allowability** – To be allowable, a cost must be reasonable, it must be given consistent treatment through application of generally accepted accounting principles, and it must conform to any limitations or exclusions set forth in the sponsored agreement or in 2 CFR.

**Allocability** – To be allocable, a cost has to have been incurred solely to support or advance the work of a specific award or project.

**Reasonableness** – To be reasonable, a cost must not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances. The cost must be able to withstand public scrutiny.

## Practical Applications

Here are some questions you can ask yourself to help determine if your cost is a reimbursable cost:

**Will the cost conform to the rules and regulations in 2 CFR?** For example, if you hire an employee, the employee will have to complete time and effort reporting which will have to match up to payroll journals. If you are purchasing a piece of equipment

valued at more than \$5000, you will need to request prior approval from your awarding agency.

**Will this cost be the same as a similar cost charged to a different funding source?** For example, two employees doing similar jobs for different funding sources should be paid a similar wage. Or, if one department charges another department for copy-related fees, they should use the same rate for all of their customers.

**Does the cost fit into the Scope of Work of the project?** Does the cost fit into the scope of the grant? If your project focuses on training for NIMS compliance, then you won't be purchasing a car. Even though a car is considered an eligible expense under certain grants, if your scope of work does not include a need for a car, the cost will not be reimbursed. For equipment purchases, you can check the Authorized Equipment List to see if an item is eligible under your grant.

**Does the guidance for this grant restrict this type of cost?** Each grant has different requirements, and many have maximums and minimums set for certain types of costs, such as personnel. Check with your grant guidance and awarding agency to make sure that your cost does not fall under one of these restrictions.

**Will the cost be incurred inside the grant performance period?** No costs incurred before or after the grant performance period are considered eligible. If you have questions regarding your performance period, consult your grant agreement.

For more information contact **Lynda Wessel**, 515.725.3231. Ω