

Creating a Strategic Plan

Robert J. Leahy, Jr.

Instructor: Dr. Bettyjo Bouchey

LEAD6143 Strategic Operations Planning and Innovation

American College of Education

March 15, 2017

Creating a Strategic Plan

This paper is in response to the Module 10 assignment found in LEAD6143 Strategic Operations Planning and Innovation. The assignment is to refine the previously developed draft strategic plan for an organization. The scenario for this strategic plan and the organization is that it is being developed in late 2015 for the 2016 – 2018 periods.

Palatine Emergency Management Agency Background

The Palatine Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) is a department within the Village of Palatine government. The members include one part-time paid employee, the PEMA Volunteer Coordinator, an unpaid intern from a local university in an Emergency Management program, and approximately 100 specially trained volunteers (Village of Palatine, 2015). The PEMA Volunteer Coordinator reports to the Deputy Chief of Operations to the Palatine Fire Department. The volunteer members of PEMA are subdivided into the following teams:

- Palatine Emergency Response Team (PERT)
- Fire Rehab Team (FRT)
- Palatine Medical Reserve Corps (PMRC)
- Disaster Animal Response Team (DART)
- Amateur Radio (ARES/RACES)

PEMA emphasizes the need for a coordinated effort involving local, state, and federal agencies as well as volunteer organizations and private businesses in the community, working together towards the common goal of making the Village of Palatine as prepared as possible to respond to the effects of natural, manmade or technological emergencies or disasters.

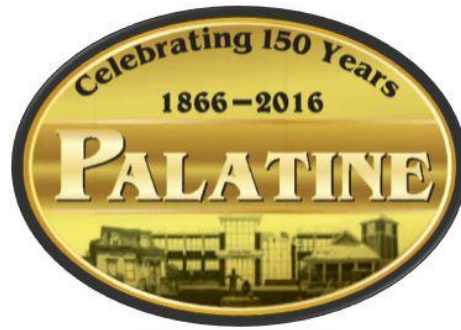


Figure 1. Village of Palatine 150 years logo

The Village of Palatine has a long history with emergency management and volunteers dating back to the 1960s when it formally established its first Civil Defense program. In 1986, this all-volunteer program was renamed as the Emergency Services and Disaster Agency (ESDA). ESDA primarily consisted of amateur radio operators but still maintained a civil defense focus. As this group of volunteers grew and gained momentum, the program was again renamed and evolved into what it is today. Originally the PEMA group of volunteers was managed by several Palatine Police and Fire Department administrative staff members. As the organization continued to grow, a full-time Emergency Management Coordinator was hired and took over all day-to-day operations and other PEMA related functions previously managed by the police and fire department staff (Village of Palatine, 2015). This Emergency Management Coordinator completed programs at the state and federal level to have PEMA receive state and federal certification and recognition.

In 2014, the village's first and only Emergency Management Coordinator retired (Graham, 2014). The village management/government decided to go in a different direction with hiring a part-time PEMA Volunteer Coordinator and is looking into joining a consortium of seven local suburban villages sharing an Emergency Management Coordinator between them. In the interim, the PEMA Volunteer Coordinator and the volunteer leadership have taken upon the

duties previously held by the Emergency Management Coordinator. A negative result of this retirement and assumption of duties by volunteers, along with other reasons, was the resignation of several key leadership volunteers and a large number of rank-and-file volunteers. PEMA is currently looking to replenish and increase the volunteer workforce.

In 2015, PEMA formed a partnership with William Rainey Harper College and is now offering the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) 20.5 hour course as part of its Continuing Education program (Harper College, 2017). This is the same course previously taught at the Palatine Village Hall by CERT certified volunteer instructors and will continue to use those instructors at Harper College. A new logo was developed by the PEMA Volunteer Coordinator in 2015 to replace the one used for the previous ten years.



Figure 2. Old and new PEMA logos

Mission Statement

PEMA's old mission statement needed updating. After consideration and deliberation between the staff and leadership of PEMA, the following new mission statement was developed:

The Palatine Emergency Management Agency protects its community by coordinating and integrating all activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the capability to

mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from threatened or actual natural or man-made disasters.

Vision Statement

An existing vision statement for PEMA cannot be found. The current staff and leadership of PEMA are unaware of one or if one ever existed. A vision statement has now been created for PEMA:

The Palatine Emergency Management Agency seeks to promote a safer, less vulnerable community with the capacity to cope with hazards and disasters.

Core Values

Core values are traits or qualities that you consider not just worthwhile, they represent an individual's or organization's highest priorities, deeply held beliefs, and core, fundamental driving forces (Heathfield, 2016). PEMA's core values guide behavior and provide the basis for what PEMA does and for how PEMA personnel operate and interrelate with others. PEMA, just like the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA, 2016), is committed to the core values of compassion, fairness, integrity, and respect and extends these values to all programs and services.

Compassion

The support PEMA provides is delivered with patience, understanding, and consideration to all members of a community, co-workers, response partners, and non-disaster customers.

Fairness

PEMA personnel work hard to provide equal access to resources and to communicate clear and consistent information and treats all it interacts with fairly and with respect.

Integrity

PEMA personnel recognize that integrity is their most valuable attribute and feel obliged to comply with a range of ethics-based principles and standards of conduct and believe earning the trust of citizens, co-workers, and partners is essential.

Respect

PEMA members are committed to treating those whom they serve and those with whom they work with fairness, dignity, respect, and compassion and are committed to understanding the specific sensitivities of diverse groups and members of the community.

Stakeholders

BusinessDictionary (2017) defines stakeholder as “A person, group or organization that has interest or concern in an organization. Stakeholders can affect or be affected by the organization's actions, objectives and policies.” PEMA is part of the local government of the Village of Palatine whose majority of members are unpaid volunteers that are citizens of the communities and businesses in and around Palatine. PEMA has internal (local) and external (state and federal) stakeholders. The various stakeholders are found in Table 1.

Table 1

PEMA Stakeholders

<i>Local</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Federal</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEMA Volunteer Coordinator (paid part-time) • PEMA Intern (unpaid) • PEMA volunteers • Mayor, Village of Palatine • Village Council • Village Manager • Palatine Fire Department • Palatine Police Department • Palatine Public Works • Citizens and businesses within the Village of Palatine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illinois Emergency Management Agency • Cook County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) • Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

SWOT Analysis

According to Morrison (2016), “A SWOT analysis is a planning tool used to understand the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project or in a business. It involves specifying the objective of the business or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are supportive or unfavorable to achieving that objective.” A SWOT analysis was conducted on PEMA and can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

PEMA SWOT Analysis

INTERNAL FACTORS	
STRENGTHS (+)	WEAKNESSES (-)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently a fully accredited organization • 100 affiliated volunteers total with a core group of 60 actively engaged • 10 dedicated volunteers make up staff and leadership • The volunteer training program is positively recognized and used as an example by IEMA • PEMA volunteers used as state instructors • Addition of paid part-time Volunteer Coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time EMA Coordinator retirement • Village possibly eliminating the full-time position to save the village money • No full-time leadership to coordinate or direct volunteers • Mission ready capabilities are diminished • Morale of volunteers adversely affected • Village government's appearance of not taking the situation seriously

EXTERNAL FACTORS	
OPPORTUNITIES (+)	THREATS (-)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary full-time leadership may be performed by the Fire Chief/Deputy Fire Chief • Replacement for EMA Coordinator may exist within ranks of volunteers • Replacement for EMA Coordinator may exist within neighboring emergency management agencies • Additional responsibilities and authority given to volunteers may bridge the gap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of state accreditation and funding • Requiring too much of volunteers' time • Temporary leadership unable or unwilling to perform all duties of EMA Coordinator • Diminished participation of volunteers • Resignation of volunteers

Strategic Goals and Objectives

A goal is a specific target, an end result or something to be desired. It is a major step in achieving the vision of the organization. Objectives are a measure of change in order to bring about the achievement of the goal. The overall main goal of PEMA for 2016 – 2018 is to recruit, train, and retain a talented and diverse volunteer workforce. Table 3 briefly shows the three

goals, six objectives and the anticipated outcomes. Following the table are expanded explanations of each goal and objective.

Table 3

PEMA Strategic Goals, Objectives and Outcomes

<i>Goal</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Recruit and train new volunteers	Update recruiting tools. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update websites and social media Advertisements in local papers, newsletters and flyer 	Update PEMA webpage on the village website (January 2016). Reestablish external PEMA specific website @ http://palatine-ema.org/ (March 2016). Place articles in various newspapers, newsletters, and flyers (on going).
	Increase CERT training offerings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Harper College to add Summer session Recruit new instructors from active volunteers 	CERT offered at Harper College during the Fall, Spring and Summer (2016). 30% increase in new volunteers over the next two years.
	Develop and continually improve a professional workforce of motivated volunteers who are empowered and equipped to act.	Implement a standardized education and training system for volunteers that complement PEMA's existing training and qualification system (March 2016 and ongoing).
Member Engagement	Supply up-to-date accurate information, support, and resources.	Update and enhance internal PEMA website @ http://www.pemaonline.com (January 2016).
	Find and implement new projects and exercises	Increase opportunity for members to practice skills and retain interest (Ongoing).
	Seek membership feedback	Increase of volunteer satisfaction of their involvement with PEMA (ongoing).

Goal 1: Recruit and train new volunteers

In 2014 and 2015, due to a myriad of reasons, the number of affiliated active and inactive volunteers with PEMA fell from a high of almost 200 to the current level of approximately 100 active volunteers only. Previously inactive volunteer members were contacted to become reengaged with PEMA, and those that declined were dropped-from-rolls. PEMA wants a net increase of the number of active volunteers to 130, a 30% increase over the next two years.

Objective 1.1: Update recruiting tools

- An update to the various recruiting tools to attract new volunteers needs to be conducted. These tools include updating the Village of Palatine's website (PEMA page) by the end of January 2016 and reestablishing the former public-viewable PEMA website (<http://palatine-ema.org/>) by the end of March 2016.
- PEMA will continue to place timely articles with the local newspapers, the Palatine Park District flyers, High School District 211 Continuing Education flyers and Village of Palatine newsletters.

Objective 1.2: Increase CERT training offerings

- Continue our partnership with Harper College and increase the offering of Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training to three times per year to include a Summer session and continue to attempt to recruit new volunteers from the classes.

Goal 2: Volunteer professional development

Objective 2.1: Develop and continually improve a professional workforce of motivated volunteers who are empowered and equipped to act.

- Developing a program of continuing education for PEMA volunteers that complement PEMA's existing training and qualification system starts in 2017 and will be ongoing. This includes periodic updates or retraining in existing subjects, new requirements from our partners (e.g., FEMA), and other topics or subjects considered relevant and applicable to the PEMA mission.

Goal 3: Increase volunteer engagement

PEMA volunteers are specially trained, and CERT is only a part of this training. FEMA describes what CERT training and volunteers are about. This definition applies to PEMA volunteers as well:

CERT educates individuals about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Using training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT volunteers can assist others in their community following a disaster when professional responders are not immediately available to help. CERT volunteers are also encouraged to support emergency response agencies by taking an active role in emergency preparedness projects. (FEMA, 2017)

As natural and manmade disasters are unpredictable and may have extremely long periods between events, PEMA volunteers must keep in a state of readiness. PEMA volunteers do take an active role in emergency preparedness projects. However, more needs to be done to keep the volunteers engaged and informed so that their skills and interests do not diminish.

Objective 3.1: Supply up-to-date accurate information, support, and resources

- By end of March 2016, update and enhance the PEMA website @ <http://www.pemaonline.com> for use by PEMA volunteers. This secure website is used to pass information and assignments to PEMA volunteers.

Objective 3.2: Find and implement new projects and exercises

- An ongoing effort is to work with our various partners and find appropriate projects and disaster-related or emergency management-related exercises that will help keep and increase our volunteers' skills, interest and involvement with PEMA.

Objective 3.3: Seek membership feedback

- By the end of February 2016, create a *suggestion box* style system that members can use throughout the year to give proposals, ask questions, or make observations. By the end of November 2016, create a system in which PEMA members can formally, but anonymously, give feedback annually to gauge their satisfaction of their involvement with PEMA

Conclusion

This strategic plan expresses the Palatine Emergency Management Agency's continued commitment to making the Village of Palatine as prepared as possible through its specially trained affiliated volunteers and programs offered. We are proud to present this plan, however it is only a plan. It will not achieve success unless we widely communicate these strategic goals and objectives and incorporate them into our day-to-day operations. The challenge will be to keep the momentum going to ensure continuous improvement and engagement. PEMA planners need to continue the dialogue with stakeholders in order to ensure that their needs and concerns

are being addressed. We will monitor this strategic plan on a regular basis and update it as needed.

References

- BusinessDictionary. (2017). What is a stakeholder? Retrieved from <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/stakeholder.html>
- Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2016, April). The Federal Emergency Management Agency publication 1. Retrieved from https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1462196227387-c10c40e585223d22e2595001e50f1e5c/Pub1_04-07.pdf
- Federal Emergency Management Agency, (2017). *Community emergency response teams*. Retrieved from <https://www.fema.gov/community-emergency-response-teams>
- Graham, D. T. (2014, March 11). Palatine honors emergency management leader, volunteers. . Retrieved from <http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20140311/news/140319552/>
- Harper College. (2017, March 6). CERT Training. *Harper College Non-Credit Continuing Education*. Retrieved from http://goforward.harpercollege.edu/ce/career_development/cert-training.php
- Heathfield, S. M. (2016, August 29). Core values are what you believe. *The Balance*. Retrieved from <https://www.thebalance.com/core-values-are-what-you-believe-1918079>
- Morrison, M. (2016, April 20). SWOT analysis (TOWS matrix) made simple. *RapidBi*. Retrieved from <https://rapidbi.com/SWOTanalysis/#Background>
- Village of Palatine. (2015, June 30). Palatine emergency management agency. *Village of Palatine Newsletter, Summer Issue 2015*. Retrieved from http://www.palatine.il.us/assets/1/documents/Summer_Newsletter.pdf