Pottawattamie County, Iowa
Emergency Management & Homeland Security

Strategic Plan
2020-2023

Emergency Management &
Homeland Security

RESOLUTION 2020-01
POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND HOMELAND SECURITY 2020-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN

WHEREAS, the Pottawattamie County Emergency Management Commission recognizes that strategic planning is an essential tool for good, responsible governance by establishing a vision for the emergency management program which then guides planning, programs, policies and services, and;

WHEREAS, with the drafting and recommendation from the Director of Emergency Management, such has been provided to the Commission for consideration and approval, and;

WHEREAS, said plan has been developed through analysis of lessons learned, identified needs, and review of national standards and best practices, and;

WHEREAS, the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan sets forth those goals, objectives and action items to guide emergency management program policy, decisions, and activities;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by this Emergency Management Commission of Pottawattamie County, Iowa, that the 2020-2023 Pottawattamie County Emergency Management and Homeland Security Strategic Plan is hereby adopted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Director of Emergency Management is hereby authorized to distribute a copy of this plan to emergency management stakeholders and initiate the implementation of the goals, objectives, and action items, therein.

ADOPTED ON THIS ___17th___ DAY OF ___December___, 20 _20_.

FOR THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION:

ATTEST:

Hon. Dennis Bardsley, Mayor
City of Underwood, Iowa
Emergency Management Commission Chair

Douglas C. Reed, Director
Emergency Management Agency

"If everyone is moving forward together then success takes care of itself."

- Henry Ford

FOREWORD

Emergency Management Stakeholders,

I am happy to present the 2020-2023 Emergency Management Agency Strategic Plan. This strategic plan is not merely an inward facing document but rather a whole community approach to enhancing the countywide emergency management program. Our agency is not an emergency management program on our own; we are stewards of the overarching collaborative effort we must all engage in as it relates to our collective abilities to *Prevent*, *Protect* from, *Mitigate* against, *Respond* to, and *Recover* from all the hazards that threaten the public safety, health, and property of the political subdivisions and residents of Pottawattamie County, Iowa.

Director Reed speaks at a briefing with levee sponsors, state/federal partners, and elected officials during the 2019 Flooding.

Whether we reminisce about the historic flooding events in 1881 creating Lake Manawa, or from 1943 when 375 Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln students were used to add dirt to the Old River Boulevard levee, the evacuation of 25,000 people in the flood of 1952 to present day incidents of hazardous material spills, significant severe weather impacts, public health emergencies, or civil unrest; our collective emergency management program and posture has matured leaps and bounds.

Just in my tenure with the agency, we have been part of three (3) federal emergency declarations and nine (9) Major Presidential Disaster Declarations. In addition, we have endured several significant incidents and pre-planned events that required multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional planning and response capabilities. These occurrences have shown us different ways we can improve our collaborative efforts to continue on a path of emergency management program inclusiveness and maturity. It is with that spirit and desire that this *living* and *evolving* document has been produced – to chart our collective path toward a stronger future by implementing those core capabilities necessary to be ready for and to answer the call when disaster strikes again.

I ask everyone reading this plan to reflect on our past and embrace our future by promoting and building a culture of emergency management and preparedness both within your sphere of influence and in partnership with other emergency management program stakeholders.

I thank you for your efforts and dedication, both past and present, and look forward to the work that is set before us in the business of protecting our residents and making our jurisdictions more resilient to the impacts of the hazards we face.

With respect and thankfulness,

Douglas C. Reed
Director

"I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving."

- Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Emergency Management Agency 2020-2023 Strategic Plan provides the framework for all parties responsible for emergency management or with an identified role within the Comprehensive Emergency Plan in supporting the execution of capabilities necessary before, during, and after emergencies and disasters.

The National Preparedness Goal (NPG) identifies five (5) mission areas that are utilized to organize the national standard core capabilities which are the distinct critical elements necessary for our success. Historical events across the nation and locally have revealed these core capabilities are not relegated to any single jurisdiction or organization; they must be a collective effort of the whole community in order to be achieved. The NPG identifies thirty-two (32) Core Capabilities that facilitate the prevention of, protection against, mitigation from, response to, and recovery from all hazards and threats our communities may face.

Emergency Management will focus on two (2) strategic goals and their supporting objectives to address the enhancement and execution of applicable core capabilities.

STRATEGIC GOAL #1

BUILD A MORE COLLABORATIVE SYSTEM OF COUNTYWIDE PREPAREDNESS

Relationships are one of the most critical elements of an effective emergency management program. It is often said that trading business cards during a disaster is entirely too late. Equally, the time of emergency and disaster is not the time to expose, or educate, stakeholders and partners to applicable elements of the comprehensive emergency plan. Although there have been strides over the past decade in collaborative efforts regarding preparedness and response throughout the county, there is always room for improvement.

Strategic Goal 1 seeks to increase the collaborative environment in which preparedness activities take place, thus increasing the collaborative and inclusive nature for response and recovery. Supporting objectives will focus on creating multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional involvement in all aspects of preparedness that will drive response and recovery activities through a shared vision of planning, training, and exercise.

STRATEGIC GOAL #2

CREATE AN ENHANCED EMERGENCY MANGAEMENT OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Preparedness is nothing without execution. Supporting emergency management stakeholders in the implementation of preparedness plans and strategies with appropriate operating platforms will be required for success. Historical events such as incidents of countywide impact or non-specific site events (e.g., public health emergencies, significant flooding, etc.) have shown the need for flexible and hybrid operating modes compared to traditional methods. Whether specified sites, mobile platforms, or by virtual means; partners must have access to critical operational support elements to implement preparedness goals.

Strategic Goal 2 builds upon the preparedness performance measures of Strategic Goal 1 to provide mechanisms to implement the strategies of a collaborative planning, training, and exercise program through clear operating methodologies, facilities, and technology systems that will enhance the implementation of critical core capabilities.

Table of Contents

"Plans are nothing: planning is everything."

- Dwight D. Eisenhower

INTRODUCTION

PCEMA Mission

Emergency management protects communities 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 disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters.

Personnel from Fire, EMS, HazMat, Private Industry, EMA, Law Enforcement, and USAF collaborate to respond and recover from an ethanol explosion in October of 2016.

PCEMA Vision

Emergency management seeks to promote safer, less vulnerable communities with the capacity to cope with hazards and disasters.

PCEMA Principles

We are a mission-driven agency that strives to be comprehensive, progressive, risk-driven, integrated, coordinated, flexible, and professional. A successful emergency management program helps save lives, prevent injuries, protects property, mitigates risks and protects the environment.

EMA facilitates a regional mass care, evacuation, & sheltering exercise with regional partners from public health, hospitals, emergency management, environmental health, and non-governmental organizations representing (4) counties.

FOUNDATION FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN

In the last decade, Pottawattamie County has experienced two catastrophic flood events (2011 and 2019) that lasted five or more months each. In addition to this, responses have been made to significant events such as: H1N1 (2009-2010), a mass casualty transportation incident (2011), twice the host of RAGBRAI (2013 and 2019), Avian influenza (2015), a few small aircraft crashes, multiple visits from the President, Vice President or campaign visits, hazardous chemical releases, several severe/extreme weather events, multiple pre-planned large gathering/public events, the Covid-19 pandemic (2020), and other incidents requiring significant planning and/or a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional collaboration.

It is through these events and responses that relationships and processes have grown. Lessons learned from recent events of 2019 and 2020, which continue to this day in a response or recovery mode, as well as other events across Iowa, indicate a continual need to enhance collaborative partnerships and emergency management programs to meet the ever-expanding challenges related to the hazards we face.

CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

A Shared Responsibility

Iowa Administrative Code 605 Chapter 7 identifies that the Emergency Management Commission, through its Agency, must establish and maintain the capability to effectively direct, control, and coordinate emergency and disaster response and recovery efforts.[1]

This requirement doesn't call for a direct agency command authority of a particular incident but rather provides the delegated authority from the chief elected officials throughout the county as the lead entity with primary responsibility to collaborate with jurisdictional authorities to develop, maintain, and facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive program for the management of incidents when they occur.

Recent Incident Observations

Over the past couple of years, significant incidents have been an ever-present reality in Pottawattamie County. Response and recovery to these events have largely shown the significant collaborative approach from the whole community but has also shown areas for improvement. These challenges have often come as a result of minimal to no exposure to existing plans, procedures, and processes for the direction, control, and coordination of the emergency or disaster presenting itself. This reality has the potential to lead to confusion and frustration regarding roles, responsibilities, and communications pathways that allow for the development of a solid common operating picture and complete situational awareness for appropriate decision-making and support services.

---

[1] IAC [605] Chapter 7.3(4)(e)(2)

Emergency Management Culture

The culture and posture of emergency management has been continuously evolving since the attacks of September 11, 2001, and even more so since the adoption of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA).

There were essentially five significant changes at the federal level within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which guides state and local emergency management programs. They include:

▲ **Recognition that appointees to lead efforts need to have emergency management experience and qualifications.** In Hurricane Katrina, FEMA was led by an appointee with no background in emergency management or any type of emergency response background. The country witnessed a president praising his FEMA Administrator on the response and the same administrator resigning under scrutiny ten days after.

This concept is equally important and true at the state and local levels. Appointees or those leading efforts for the overall emergency and disaster coordination that have no credentials or only that of a single response discipline, often lack the skillset, vision, and experience to coordinate partners through the broader strategic requirements that need addressed in multi-agency and multi-disciplinary events. Clear delineation must be made at the local level between the concepts of on-site Incident Command duties (tactical actions) and Emergency Management/Operations duties (strategic actions).

▲ **A new moniker of "whole community approach" was developed.** This approach is intended to be the rallying cry to place higher value on including the private sector and citizens into a new era of preparedness; one that extends beyond public safety and government planning.

▲ **Recognition of the usefulness and need to incorporate social media into preparedness and response activities.** Disasters now have a "bottom-up" response with impact area information initially being reported by citizens through various social media platforms and SMS/text technology. Harnessing the usefulness of social media is now recognized as a must-have operation and the near-instant data that can be discovered can help save lives.

▲ **Resilience replaced sustainability.** The newer concepts of resilience place more focus on investment to reduce impacts and risks instead of just hardening existing facilities and rebuilding after impacts. This focus requires significant investments in mitigation. Mitigation funding, however, has not increased commensurate with the concepts and push to create more "resilient communities". Mitigation initiatives such as investments in levees, wetlands, building code requirements, and zoning adjustments are all examples of methods to become resilient by reducing or removing risk as opposed to simply planning to rebuild after every event. Although any real difference between the concepts of resilience and sustainability can be academically argued, resilience has emerged as the new buzz-word in preparing communities.

▲ **The waiting game is declared over.** The most significant change was a forward-leaning emergency management posture. Historically, from the federal to the local emergency management program level, it was a wait-and-see game related to action. Generally speaking, until a formal request from a local government was made to the county emergency manager; nothing could be initiated. The same was true from that level to the state level, and from the state to the federal level.

PKEMRA provided FEMA more authorities to respond ahead of, or at the onset of, an incident in order to reduce support to disasters from days to hours. This concept has been one that also guides action and planning at the state and local levels. Many examples from the 2019 Missouri River flooding, the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, and even the recent 2020 derecho event show this new emergency management response posture as a much more forward-leaning, self-initiating resource. The State of Iowa General Assembly, in recent years, has even re-defined the local emergency management agency as a "public safety agency," from its former recognition as a public agency.

Strategic Focus

Why does the cultural significance matter and how does it tie into our strategy? It is actually some of the unintended consequences of the cultural paradigm shift in emergency management that can be attributed to trending improvement areas, such as: operational coordination, communications, situational awareness, and other core capabilities identified in the National Preparedness Goal. As observed in recent incidents, both in Pottawattamie County and elsewhere throughout the state, a trend of unfamiliarity with existing or new emergency management processes, concepts, and doctrine appears at the root of challenges related to response and recovery.

With such a larger focus toward a renewed forward-leaning response posture and the rising frequency of emergencies and disaster of all sizes, preparedness has seen an unintended decline in priority. Although not absent within programs it has become less of a focal point when considering the "whole community" and the entirety of the emergency management mission areas and their implementing core capabilities.

In the end; planning, training, and exercise will drive the preparedness requisite to achieve the level of whole-community response and recovery activities that is forward-leaning, efficient, and effective. We must strike a more realistic balance between preparedness and response that will facilitate the successful response to, and recovery from, the impacts of emergencies and disasters, regardless of the hazard.

This is the focus of our strategic objectives moving forward. Although ambitious and bold, these goals and their supporting objectives are attainable. A renewed focus on the fundamental principles of emergency management and the inclusiveness it requires will blaze the trail forward in developing a stronger emergency management community and program.

2020-2023

STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

Pottawattamie County Emergency Management & Homeland Security

PCEMA Mission: Protect communities by coordinating & 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 disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters.

STRATEGIC GOALS

#1

BUILD A MORE COLLABORATIVE SYSTEM OF COUNTYWIDE PREPAREDNESS

#2

CREATE AN ENHANCED EMERGENCY MANGAEMENT OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

OBJECTIVES

1.1 Create a coalition of executive level personnel to formulate & monitor preparedness plans, strategies & initiatives that are consistent with national standards.

1.2 Formalize a strategy to enhance existing relationships & build new stakeholder program involvement.

1.3 Formalize a strategy for community engagement regarding risk awareness & all-hazards preparedness.

2.1 Facilitate the formal adoption of NIMS within the political jurisdictions of the county.

2.2 Create & implement a training & exercise program that supports implementation of the Comprehensive Emergency Plan & NIMS Doctrine.

2.3 Enhance the operational support mechanisms within the EOC & virtual platforms to facilitate the implementation of the Comprehensive Emergency Plan.

PCEMA Vision:

Safer, less vulnerable communities with the capacity to cope with hazards and disasters.

STRATEGIC GOAL #1:

BUILD A MORE COLLABORATIVE SYSTEM OF COUNTYWIDE PREPAREDNESS

Relationships are one of the most critical elements of an effective emergency management program. It is often said that trading business cards during a disaster is entirely too late. Equally, the time of emergency and disaster is not the time to expose or educate stakeholders and partners to applicable elements of the comprehensive emergency plan. Although there have been strides over the past decade in collaborative efforts regarding preparedness and response throughout the county, there is always room for improvement.

Strategic Goal 1 seeks to increase the collaborative environment in which preparedness activities take place, thus increasing the collaborative and inclusive nature for response and recovery. Supporting objectives will focus creating multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional involvement in all aspects of preparedness that will drive response and recovery activities through a shared vision of planning, training, and exercise.

Flood impacted residents, state and federal legislators, local elected leaders from three counties, levee sponsors, and emergency managers meet to develop collective strategies regarding response and recovery issues from the 2019 flooding.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

1.1   Create a coalition of executive level personnel to formulate & monitor preparedness plans, strategies & initiatives that are consistent with national standards.

1.2   Formalize a strategy to enhance existing relationships & build new stakeholder program involvement.

1.3   Formalize a strategy for community engagement regarding risk awareness & all-hazards preparedness.

OBJECTIVE 1.1

Create a coalition of executive level personnel to formulate & monitor preparedness plans, strategies & initiatives that are consistent with national standards.

As mentioned previously, emergency management is a shared responsibility. Elected leaders of the political jurisdictions are the primary responsible offices for the public safety, health, and welfare of their residents. Public safety agencies, service organizations and other departments within each jurisdiction carry out their primary functions related to public health, safety, and welfare through delegated authorities in law or policy.

Executive and strategic level partners attend the National Response & Recovery Training Center's (Texas A&M) "Senior Officials Workshop for All-Hazards Preparedness" course. Attendees represented hospitals, law enforcement, schools, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and emergency managers.

It is critical that elected officials and executive level personnel understand their roles and responsibilities in response to emergencies and disaster. Thus, it is incumbent on such individuals to be part of the preparedness process that identifies and authorizes the mechanisms by which we will collectively respond to the impacts of emergencies and disasters. Preparedness plans and policies established by those with the legal responsibility for public safety, health, and welfare extend further delegations of authority and direction for how their subordinate agencies and departments will respond when faced with significant emergencies and disasters that typically require multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional efforts.

This objective will establish an *Emergency Management Program Advisory Council (EMPAC)*. EMPAC membership will be selected by the Emergency Management Agency and consist of sample representation of elected officials, agency administrators, and key personnel for identified specialty functions. The primary functions of EMPAC will include, but not be limited to:

- ▲ Review and help formulate revisions to the Emergency Response Framework (formerly referred to as the Basic Plan – Part A Emergency Operations).
- ▲ Review and help formulate revisions to the Disaster Recovery Framework.
- ▲ Provide input and recommendations to the Emergency Management Director regarding program initiatives and capabilities.
- ▲ Provide input and recommendations to the Emergency Management Director in the development and sustainment of a formalized Training, Exercise, and Planning program.
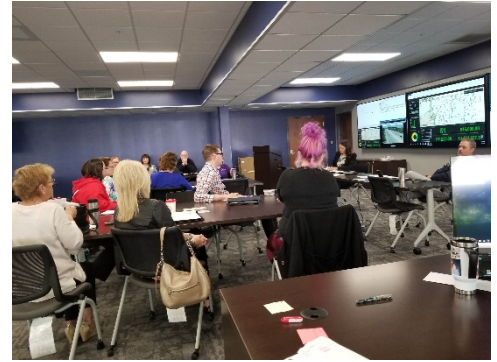
	Objective 1.1 Performance Measures	Core Capabilities	Mission Areas
1.1.1	Create a framework from which the advisory council will operate.	Planning Operational Coordination	All
1.1.2	Select EMPAC membership based on program strategies, planning needs, experience, authority, and unity of effort considerations.	Planning Operational Coordination	All
1.1.3	Initiate work on plan reviews and revisions, starting with the response plan. Facilitate the formal adoption of plans by the Commission and each jurisdictional member.	Planning	All
1.1.4	Identify and assign agency-level personnel to work with EMA as lead or supporting agency representatives for the emergency support function annexes, support annexes, and incident specific annexes.	Planning	All
1.1.5	Develop a comprehensive planning, training, and exercise program.	Planning	All

OBJECTIVE 1.2

Formalize a strategy to enhance existing relationships & build new stakeholder program involvement.

The Emergency Management Agency interfaces with numerous organizations and entities on a routine basis and then on an ad-hoc basis when required. Recent emergencies have expanded the reach of whole-community partners that have capabilities and services available during emergencies and disasters.

This objective will seek, through a combination of collaborative planning updates or memorandums of agreement, to formalize those relationships and integrate partners into a comprehensive planning, training, and exercise program.

Disaster Committee Members of the Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC), EMA, and FEMA meet to discuss identified needs and services for 2019 flood victims.

Objective 1.2 Performance Measures		Core Capabilities	Mission Areas
1.2.1	Assign agency staff primary liaison duties with affiliated partner organizations, prioritizing work schedules to accommodate partner meetings, events, and activities.	Planning	All
1.2.2	Incorporate representatives from education, private sector, and non-governmental organizations into planning teams, trainings, and activities.	Planning Operational Coordination Operational Communications	All Response
1.2.3	Develop a monthly "lunch and learn" program to provide consistent emergency management program updates and education to all partners; both government and non-government affiliated.[2]	Planning	All

EMA participating in the 2019 Council Bluffs National Night Out; providing preparedness materials, raffling preparedness items & registering families for alerts & notifications.

OBJECTIVE 1.3

Formalize a strategy for community engagement <u>regarding risk awareness & all-hazards preparedness</u>.

The concept of "whole community" engagement includes citizens. A community is more resilient when they have an informed public regarding emergency and disaster preparedness. The emergency management program must continually work toward communicating risk awareness, provide access to preparedness resources, and ensure mechanisms are in place to provide emergency communication and warnings when the populous is threatened.

Objective 1.3 Performance Measures		Core Capabilities	Mission Areas
1.3.1	Develop a community engagement strategy that outlines annual activities as well as adaptability for just-in-time outreach for identified specific needs.	Planning Public Information & Warning Community Resilience	All Mitigation
1.3.2	Produce publicly accessible versions of response and mitigation plans to communicate the overall strategy, roles and responsibilities of partners, and provide community risk awareness.	Public Information & Warning Community Resilience	All Mitigation
1.3.3	Maintain and enhance the program's digital footprint through the agency website and social media platforms, including the potential development of a county-based app.	Public Information & Warning	All
1.3.4	Provide, in partnership with stakeholders and community organizers, preparedness outreach activities at scheduled community functions and events.	Public Information & Warning Community Resilience	All Mitigation

---

[2] Also, Strategic Goal #2, Objective 2.2 Performance Measure

STRATEGIC GOAL #2:

CREATE AN ENHANCED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Preparedness is nothing without execution. Supporting emergency management stakeholders in the implementation of preparedness plans and strategies with appropriate operating platforms will be required for success. Historical events such as incidents of countywide impact or non-specific site events (e.g., public health emergencies, significant flooding, etc.) have shown the need for flexible and hybrid operating modes compared to traditional methods. Whether specified sites, mobile platforms, or by virtual means; partners must have access to critical operational support elements to implement preparedness goals.

Strategic Goal 2 builds upon the preparedness performance measures of Strategic Goal 1 to provide mechanisms to implement the strategies of a collaborative planning, training, and exercise program through clear operating and response methodologies, supporting facilities, and technology systems that will enhance the implementation of critical core capabilities.

Regional law enforcement and local fire-rescue personnel attend an operational period briefing at a pre-planned public event in Pottawattamie County. Operations implemented production of an incident action plan (IAP), use of a site mobile command post vehicle & staging area, technology support for resource management & personnel accountability and interoperable communications. Operational management was conducted based on the foundational principles within the National Incident Management System & portions of the Comprehensive Emergency Plan (CEP).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

2.1   Facilitate the formal adoption of NIMS within the political jurisdictions and key stakeholders within the county.

2.2   Create and implement a training & exercise program that supports implementation of the Comprehensive Emergency Plan (CEP) and NIMS Doctrine.

2.3   Enhance the operational support mechanisms within the EOC and virtual platforms to facilitate the implementation of the Comprehensive Emergency Plan (CEP).

OBJECTIVE 2.1

Facilitate the formal adoption of NIMS within the political jurisdictions and key stakeholders within the county.

In order to successfully implement the Comprehensive Emergency Plan (CEP) during times of emergency and disaster, jurisdictions must approach implementation from a foundation of commonality. The National Incident Management System (NIMS) guides all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, and private sector partners to work together across the whole community to successfully deliver the capabilities described in the National Preparedness Goal.

Simply put, NIMS defines operational systems that guide how personnel and organizations work together during incidents.

Pursuant to the National Security Act of 2002 and the issuance Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 (Feb.2003), NIMS was developed to provide the doctrine by which the nation would manage domestic incidents. HSPD-5 required local adoption of NIMS in 2005 as a requirement for federal assistance in the form of grants, contracts, and other activities.

Elected officials & senior personnel from administrative, non-government, emergency management, law enforcement, education & healthcare attend the 'Senior Officials Workshop for All-hazard Preparedness' course that emphasizes the implementation of NIMS doctrine to forge the collaboration necessary to implment response capabilities.
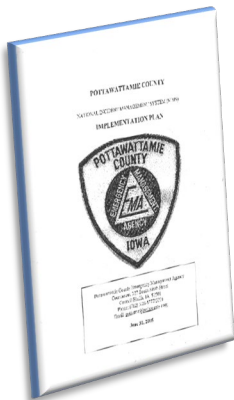
The original implementation plan was authorized throughout the county in 2005 and was followed by a very ambitious training program and planning update. Over time, with employee attrition and less focus on sustained NIMS application training, the criticality of maintaining a countywide foundation on these nationally identified and required best practices has dulled.

This objective will seek to reclaim the attention of emergency management partners throughout the county as it relates to ensuring those with emergency and disaster roles and responsibilities are compliant with the provisions of NIMS and ensuring those principles and the core capabilities of the National Preparedness Goal are the foundation of how partners will prepare for, and respond to, emergencies and disasters throughout the county.

Objective 2.1 Performance Measures		Core Capabilities	Mission Areas
2.1.1	Update the NIMS Implementation Plan to ensure consistency with the latest updates & releases of the program; inclusive of identifying training standards consistent with federal guidance.	Planning Operational Coordination	All
2.1.2	Facilitate the formal adoption, by resolution, of NIMS and accompanying Implementation Plan among the jurisdictions and key stakeholders.		
2.1.3	Ensure that the latest NIMS standards are incorporated into all components and supporting documents to the Comprehensive Emergency Plan (CEP).	Planning	All
2.1.4	Encourage and support inclusion of the key components of NIMS into local agency protocols, policies, and procedures.		

OBJECTIVE 2.2

Create and implement a training & exercise program that supports implementation of the Comprehensive Emergency Plan (CEP) and NIMS Doctrine.

As stated by President Eisenhower, "Plans are nothing: planning is everything." As accurate as this is in recognizing the relationships and collaboration of planning efforts, which will be addressed as part of Strategic Goal 1, this alone does not prepare our county.

Plans unrecognized or unacknowledged do nothing to enhance capability. What this situation does create is uncoordinated, duplicative, and conflicting actions and information.

Regional Mass Care Tabletop Exercise conducted in August of 2018. Participants included: JEMH, Mercy, Missouri Valley & Montgomery County Hospitals; Public Health from Audubon, Harrison, & Page Counties; Pottawattamie, Ringgold, Mills Emergency Management; Bethany Lutheran Home; and Fire-Rescue representatives.

Jurisdictions and stakeholders that do not or will not operate from a common baseline strategy and management structure will never be able to create and maintain situational awareness or the common operating picture required for success.

Doug Reed, Director
Emergency Management Agency
Pottawattamie County, Iowa

Regardless of any isolated effectiveness realized within a divergent response, the public or executive observation or perception of mixed messages and ill-coordinated operations can quickly destroy any good that comes from those efforts. It can take years to build confidence and trust, and only one short moment to lose it all.

The above is the reason and recognition that a more consistent platform of training and exercise surrounding the CEP is critical to future success in implementing the core capabilities of the National Preparedness Goal.

This objective seeks to establish the mechanisms and support structures to facilitate an understanding of the baseline national standards for emergency and disaster response, and the framework by which the whole community will collaborate to respond to all-hazards threats and incidents.

Objective 2.2 Performance Measures		Core Capabilities	Mission Areas
2.2.1	Develop and implement a training program for elected officials responsible for the health, safety, and welfare of their residents.	Planning Operational Coordination	All
2.2.2	Develop a multi-year planning, training, exercise plan that will: establish timelines for exercise activities, identify priority planning updates consistent with the Iowa Strategy, and identify target trainings to support implementation of this strategy and core capability delivery.		
2.2.3	Develop a standing "lunch and learn" modeled program that will provide a consistent and ongoing platform to provide ongoing education of emergency plan components, processes, structures, and coordination.[3]		

---

[3] Also, Strategic Goal #1, Objective 1.2 Performance Measure

OBJECTIVE 2.3

Enhance the operational support mechanism within the EOC & virtual platforms to facilitate the implementation of the Comprehensive Emergency Plan.

[4]Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) are locations where staff from multiple agencies and/or jurisdictions come together to address imminent threats and hazards and to provide coordinated support to incident command, on-scene personnel, and/or other EOCs.

EOC staff may share the load with on-scene incident personnel by managing certain operations, such as emergency shelters or points of distribution. When on-scene incident command is not established, staff in EOCs may direct tactical operations. Finally, EOC staff may coordinate the efforts of several geographically disparate incidents or activities. In some instances, the incident command or Area Command may be conducted in the EOC.

A jurisdiction or organization may also activate EOC staff to support prevention and protection activities and to find resources to backfill those resources the jurisdiction or organization has already deployed.

Primary functions of staff in EOCs, whether virtual or physical, include:

▲ Collecting, analyzing, managing, and sharing information;
▲ Supporting resource needs and requests, including allocation and tracking;
▲ Coordinating plans and determining current and future needs; and
▲ Providing coordination and policy direction.

The former EOC that operated from 1993 until 2019 in the Courthouse basement provided space for 4 staff & a conference table for 8 with a total of approximately 740 square feet.

The new EOC, opened during the Floods of 2019 in the basement level of Council Bluffs Fire HQ triples the operational capacity of emergency management with adequate space for agency personnel, a separate executive planning room, and immediate seating for up to 60 EOC staff.

---

[4] This section directly from NIMS, p.35 (2017)

To achieve the level of coordination and synthesize the amount of data required to accomplish its primary functions, the EOC must be able to leverage best practices from across the nation to enhance the ability for all partners to communicate and share information in a timely, accurate, and consistent manner. This means utilizing NIMS Doctrine to establish the basic frameworks for information and intelligence gathering, establishing common operational tools, and maintaining an EOC environment that promotes and facilitates operational coordination and operational communications. Some of these frameworks include, but are not limited to:

- ▲ Establishing essential elements of information to be reported;
- ▲ Common reporting tools and forms;
- ▲ Technology based operational systems; and
- ▲ EOC video, communications, and monitoring systems.

Objective 2.3 Performance Measures		Core Capabilities	Mission Areas
2.3.1	Acquire and operationalize Incident Action Plan (IAP) and Situational Awareness web-based program that will facilitate multi-user operations in developing operational plans, allows real-time field reports to populate situational awareness monitoring displays, and produce situational awareness reports accessible to designated officials.	Operational Coordination Operational Communications Situational Assessment	All Response
2.3.2	Expand and enhance the EOC video and audio technology and capacity to better facilitate and conduct live, virtual, and combination meetings, briefings, trainings, and coordination events from the EOC to enhance operational coordination and communications.		
2.3.3	Maintain a mobile capacity to provide data, voice and video communications to remote locations during events and incidents that will allow dedicated on-scene coordination and communication with direction, control, and coordination personnel located at the EOC and/or other key control facilities.		

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The 2020 - 2023 Strategic Plan contains goals and objectives intended to create a more inclusive and collaborative emergency management program over the next two and a half years. The key to taking our countywide program to the next level of preparedness and response capability will require all jurisdictions and their subordinate agencies, organizations as well as community stakeholders to take appropriate and meaningful action related to their roles in emergency and disaster response and recovery.

This effort will be led by the Emergency Management Agency upon plan approval of the Pottawattamie County Emergency Management Commission. EMA will work with a wide range of organizations and teams to implement the identified strategic goals and objectives identified in the plan.

An important and critical acknowledgment is the fact that the agency and our collaborative partners must remain flexible and adaptable in achieving our goals. As 2020 has shown us, the ever-changing emergency management landscape driven by incidents and events can significantly alter timelines away from best intentions. Whether ongoing or emerging, incidents and events may alter priorities and needs as it relates to the systemic improvements needed to enhance the overall emergency management program of Pottawattamie County.

CONCLUSION

This Strategic Plan is a strategy to collectively increase our capability to build and sustain more resilient communities, save lives, and protect property and the environment. When realized, the implementation of these goals will improve the collective capabilities before, during, and after emergencies and disaster.

Components of this strategy have already been initiated. EMA is excited about implementing the goals and objectives of this strategy in partnership with the organizations and stakeholders we interface with. The identified goals will produce stronger partnerships and relationships that will translate into a stronger emergency management program and the overall capability within the county to assist those impacted by emergencies and disaster.

Pottawattamie County
Emergency Management & Homeland Security
205 South Main Street, Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503
(712) 328-5777 | ema@pcema-ia.org |pcema-ia.org

Member