



LACKAWANNA COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY



Robert M. Flanagan
EMA Coordinator

Kevin J. Howard
Operations & Training

Sandra M. Powell
Administrative Assistant

Michael J. Washo
Corey D. O'Brien
A. J. Munchak
Commissioners

ROBERT M. FLANGAN
TESTMONY NOTES FOR SUB-COMMITTEE HEARING ON
ADDING FLOODING GRANT PROVISION TO TITLE 35
March 6, 2008

- Creation of a grant program to deal with the planning, response and recovery of flooding issues in the Commonwealth is long overdue.
- County EMA Coordinators have been telling PEMA for years that such a grant program is one of the necessary items missing from the Emergency Management Program in the Commonwealth.
- Act 165 established a grant program for counties to deal with hazardous materials.
- Act 147 established a grant program for counties to deal with radiological hazards.
- I started my position as County EMA Coordinator almost 12 years ago. I noticed that one major issue I had was a lack of any funding to deal with the planning, response and recovery of not only flooding but any natural disaster.
- Right now flooding is the number one hazard that I deal with in the county followed closely by other natural disasters such as winter storms and other adverse weather conditions.
- Act 165 grant funding the county and municipalities to deal with hazardous materials issues.
- Act 147 grant funding allows us to do the same when dealing with radiological incidents.
- Unfortunately I have no funding program to deal with the number one hazard that affects the county.
- If a flood or other natural disaster causes sufficient damage to enable the President of the United States to issue a disaster declaration the FEMA can respond and hopefully be able to assist individuals, businesses, and municipalities with the recovery.
- The issue I deal with is two fold. 1. Disasters don't always rise to the level that enable a Presidential disaster declaration and a response from FEMA. 2. Even if a disaster does reach that threshold there is frequently a significant time lag from the start of the event until a declaration is issued and FEMA can respond with assistance for the victims and the local government.
- When flooding or other natural disasters occur there is an immediate need for equipment to deal with Evacuation, rescue, debris removal, cleanup of homes and businesses, restoration of utilities, repair of Roads and bridges and immediate food and shelter for the victims.
- The most recent example is the flooding which occurred on November 17, 2006. The Presidential Disaster Declaration was not issued until February 23, 2007. The declaration only covered Public Assistance. Homeowners and businesses, most without flood insurance, were left without any assistance to help them recover from the flood damage.
- Flooding which does not rise to the level of a Presidential Declaration occurs far more often than the major disasters which bring in the FEMA assistance. This is where the grant funding is needed.