



# Emergency Preparedness Newsletter

NCTCOG

August 2013



## North Texas Public Information Officer Training Exercise

Members of the North Texas Public Information Officer (NTXPIO) group participated in a large training scenario on July 24, 2013 with other Public Information Officers (PIO) from the Houston/Gulf area. Both groups were able to practice coordinating and distributing information from multiple Joint Information Centers (JICs) to provide accurate, consistent, and timely information during a major hurricane or other emergency affecting our region.

The scenario involved a simulated category 4 hurricane (Polly) that made landfall near Freeport, Texas around 10:00 p.m. on July 23, 2013. Prior to landfall, more than 2,000,000 residents evacuated the Houston region, including 20,000 evacuees who planned to shelter in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

During the exercise, six JICs, sponsored by the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the Houston/Galveston Regional PIO Network, and the Central Texas Coastal Area Committee (CTCAC), were operational:

- CTCAC JIC led by U.S. Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston
- Fort Bend County JIC led by Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management
- Harris County Regional JIC led by Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
- Houston Downtown JIC led by the Houston Downtown Management District
- Huntsman JIC led by Huntsman Corporation Communications
- North Texas JIC led by the North Texas Area PIO Group

The Public Information Emergency Response (PIER) System was used which enabled our members the opportunity for some hands-on training. PIER provides a secure, web-based platform for exercise players at all six JICs to write and vet information products, manage inquiries, and post documents and photos to their JIC websites and simulated social media. A total of 97 public information professionals from 51 government agencies, private sector companies, and non-governmental organizations participated in this training.

The North Texas PIO Group operated out of the Garland Emergency Operation Center in Garland, TX. Joe Harn, Garland Police PIO and Heather Bowden, Plano Police PIO Coordinator were the lead and assistant PIOs in this training exercise. Also participating in this exercise were group members from various agencies across the North Texas area. This training event was very successful in that not only were we able to give our members some hands-on training in using the PIER System, but it also allowed us to coordinate with other JICs so that we can confidently work in concert with one another during an actual event and within ICS and emergency management structure.

For more information about this, please contact Tye Bell, President of the North Texas PIO Group at [admin@northtxpio.com](mailto:admin@northtxpio.com) or 817-371-4227.

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## 2012 ERG's

Navarro County and Eric Meyers have been gracious enough to store the excess ERG's for the region since they were picked up July 2012. However, there is still a large number of boxes available and I would like to get these out among the region for easy access.

If you need some or if you are willing to store some boxes for those around you, please notify Candice Forsyth at [cforsyth@nctcog.org](mailto:cforsyth@nctcog.org) or 817-704-5615.

### Upcoming Events

- [MGT-315 Enhanced Threat and Risk Assessment, August 20-21, Dallas, TX](#)
- [MGT-310 Threat and Risk Assessment, October 8-9, Irving, TX](#)
- [North Central Texas Urban Shield, November 9-10, NCT Region](#)
- [GovSec West and CPM West 2013 Conference, November 18-20, Grapevine, TX](#)



## Metro Safe Room Rebate Program

The Metro Safe Room Rebate Program is underway! The program provides qualified homeowners with a rebate that covers half the cost of construction for an individual safe room, up to \$3000. With approximately \$1.4 million awarded to NCTCOG by the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM), we will be able to provide at least 440 individuals in Collin, Dallas, Denton and Tarrant counties with rebates. NCTCOG will request additional funding from TDEM for all 16 of our member counties can benefit from the program. We should know about additional funding in 3 to 18 months. Once we receive information about funding, we will contact those on the wait list and provide qualified applicants with rebates. As of August 6, there were 7,348 people on the program wait list. We are glad to be able to assist homeowners with installing shelters and staying safe during severe weather, and we look forward to assisting more North Texans in the future.

If you have any questions about the program visit [www.nctsaferoom.com](http://www.nctsaferoom.com), email [NCTSaferoom@nctcog.org](mailto:NCTSaferoom@nctcog.org), or follow us on Twitter at @nctsaferoom.

## FY2013 SHSP Grant

The State Administrative Agency (SAA) has allocated \$1,290,946 to the NCTCOG region for the FY2013 State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) grant. This funding will go toward regional priorities set by the Emergency Preparedness Planning Council (EPPC) which include the findings in the communications GAP analysis (funded in FY2012), findings of the regional full scale exercise (funded in FY2012), and other important regional projects.

NCTCOG staff intends to apply for additional grant opportunities including funding to improve mass fatality planning, training, and exercising. Once projects are finalized, the SHSP website ([www.nctcog.org/ep/SHSP](http://www.nctcog.org/ep/SHSP)) will be updated which will give additional information on the projects and funding amounts. Please continue to check this website throughout the next couple of months.

For more information about this, please contact Justin Cox at [jcox@nctcog.org](mailto:jcox@nctcog.org) or 817-608-2318.



## North Central Texas Urban Shield

The North Central Texas Urban Shield Exercise Planning Team and regional working groups continue to plan the exercise on November 9-10, 2013. In addition to the activities taking place on Saturday and Sunday, the EOC Management Working Group will exercise more than 25 local, state and federal EOCs on Friday November 8, 2013. NCTCOG posts monthly updates, meeting announcements, and a list of participating teams on the North Central Texas Urban Shield website at <http://www.nctcog.org/ep/UrbanShield/>.

For more information about this, please contact Brandi Lara at [blara@nctcog.org](mailto:blara@nctcog.org) or 817-704-5651.

## Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Grant Program

The FY13 PDM program opened July 19, 2013. The deadline for submitting a PDM application to the State is September 18, 2013. PDM applications must be prepared in accordance with both the State's and FEMA's guidance documents, which should be followed in the preparation of your application. Any application that does not follow programmatic guidance will be removed from funding consideration. The current FEMA *Hazard Mitigation Assistance Unified Guidance* is available at: <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=7851>.

For more information about this, please contact Nicholas LaGrassa at [nlagrassa@nctcog.org](mailto:nlagrassa@nctcog.org) or 817-608-2323.



## New Emergency Preparedness Interns



### Jessica Mason

E-mail: [jmason@nctcog.org](mailto:jmason@nctcog.org)

Phone: 817-608-2352

EP Duties: Tornado Shelter Support, Agency COOP, Social Media in Emergency Management (#SMEM), NCTCOG HazMAP Plan

Hometown: Carrollton, TX

School/ Degree/ Graduation Date: Bachelor of Science in Sociology, University of North Texas, Master of Public Administration, University of North Texas, graduating December 2013.

Career Goals: To be an Emergency Management Coordinator in a major city, a CEO of a nonprofit, and a college professor.

Interests: Going to the dog park, The Dallas Mavericks, musicals, and autocross and drag racing.



### Domingo Rodriguez

E-mail: [drodriguez@nctcog.org](mailto:droduiguez@nctcog.org)

Phone: 817-704-5682

EP Duties: North Central Texas Urban Shield Support, RATT Support, REPAC, SHSP, and Training and Exercise Support.

Hometown: Dallas, TX

School/ Degree/ Graduation Date: UNT/EADP/Dec 2013 and Coastline Community College/Electronics Technology/2011

Career Goals: Emergency Management Coordinator

Interests: Hiking, Team Rubicon, Habitat for Humanity



### Andrea Wilson

E-mail: [alwilson@nctcog.org](mailto:alwilson@nctcog.org)

Phone: 817-695-9291

EP Duties: Public Works Emergency Response Team (PWERT) Support, Digital Billboards, Citizen Corps Program Support, Mitigation Support.

Hometown: Austin, TX

School/ Degree/ Graduation Date: UNT-MPA (In progress). Undergrad at U. of Utah, B.S. in Geography, minor in Anthropology

Career Goals: Emergency Management, leaning towards PIO or Mitigation planning

Interests: The great outdoors, BOOKS!!!, road trips, and adventures



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**Enhancing lasting partnerships and proactive Emergency Preparedness initiatives through advocacy, communication, and collaboration.**