Earthquakes are Not Just a California Problem

WAKEFIELD, MA - Although the highest rate of seismicity in the continental US is along the west coast, the potential for damaging earthquakes is nationwide. FEMA’s map of Forecasted Frequency of Earthquake Shaking shows where earthquake ground shaking would be strong enough to knock over furniture, crack walls and windows and cause damage to weak structures. All of New England, and most of New York and New Jersey, are rated at ‘Medium’ frequency of damaging shaking. Upstate New York is in the ‘High’ category. Parts of New Madrid region in the Central U.S. and the Charleston,

NOAA Issues Updated Hurricane Season Outlook

WASHINGTON, DC - On August 9, NOAA issued its scheduled update for the 2017 hurricane season outlook. Forecasters are now predicting a higher likelihood of an above-normal season, and they increased the predicted number of named storms and major hurricanes. The season has the potential to be extremely active, and could be the most active since 2010.

Forecasters now say there is a 60-percent chance of an above-normal season (up from the May prediction of 45 percent chance), with 14-19 named storms and 5-9 hurricanes, of which 2-5 could be major hurricanes.

“We’re now entering the peak of the season when the bulk of the storms usually form,” said Gerry Bell, Ph.D., lead seasonal hurricane forecaster at NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center. He noted factors that point to an above-normal season include warmer waters across the tropical Atlantic than models previously predicted and higher predicted activity from available models.

In just the first nine weeks of this season there have been six named storms, which is half the number of storms during an average six-month season and double the number of (Continued on Page 3)
New Policy Recommendations for the Identification and Mitigation of Unreinforced Masonry Structures

SACRAMENTO, CA - The Western States Seismic Policy Council (WSSPC) has released Policy Recommendation 17-4 for national identification and mitigation of Unreinforced Masonry (URM) structures. URM structures represent one of the greatest life-safety threats and economic burdens to the public during damaging earthquakes. WSSPC recommends that each state, province, or territory adopt a program to identify the extent of risk that unreinforced masonry structures represent in their communities and develop recommendations that will effectively address the reduction of this risk.

During earthquakes, unreinforced masonry (URM) structures are vulnerable to catastrophic collapse and represent a significant life safety threat, as occurred in the 2008 Wells, Nevada earthquake. Unreinforced masonry structures are made from brick, hollow clay tile, stone, concrete block, or adobe materials that are not strengthened by the addition of steel or other reinforcement. Common building examples include older industrial complexes, schools, mercantile establishments, and private residences.

Also of concern are components of these structures such as walls, unsupported parapets, and fireplace chimneys, which can fall on sidewalk pedestrians or people trying to exit a building. The masonry usually is held together with weak mortar and is unable to resist lateral forces. Wall and roof anchorage tends to be inadequate, allowing floors and roofs to separate from the walls and collapse. Historically, this type of building damage has been a major contributing factor to loss of life in earthquakes throughout the world.

RIEMA and BNET Launch Statewide Corporate Emergency Access System (CEAS)

CRANSTON, RI – The Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) has partnered with the Business Network of Emergency Resources (BNET) to implement the Corporate Emergency Access System (CEAS) in Rhode Island. CEAS is active in many cities along the east coast, including Boston, New York, Baltimore and Philadelphia. Rhode Island joins Massachusetts to adopt CEAS as a statewide program.

CEAS is an access control program that allows credentialed, essential employees of businesses and non-profits entry into areas otherwise off limits to the public due to disaster or emergency conditions. These employees maintain core systems and functions, provide critical services and restore critical infrastructure. Access is accomplished through the use of secure, recognized credentials and permitted only when deemed safe and will not interfere with emergency operations.

"By bringing CEAS to Rhode Island, we hope to help reduce the economic impacts of disasters and get the private sector back on line sooner to support community response and recovery operations," stated RIEMA Director Peter Gaynor. "There is an integral relationship between business continuity, essential public services and the speed and success of disaster recovery."

The goal of the CEAS program is to help ensure economic viability and provide continuity of critical commodities and services by allowing select private sector and non-profit employees rapid access to their facilities following a disaster and/or emergency event.

CEAS is available by annual subscription to eligible businesses and organizations across Rhode Island. To enroll, or learn more visit the CEAS website.
New Hampshire Radiological Workshop and Exercise

CONCORD, NH - The New Hampshire Radiological Emergency Preparedness (REP) Program recently held a State-level Workshop and Tabletop Exercise (TTX) focused on identifying gaps and conflicting procedures in current REP Plans and Procedures. The TTX had approximately 85 individuals representing a variety of State agencies. Participants were seated at three tables, each table focusing on a different area of response and/or recovery from a radiological incident. The scenario consisted of a fictional nuclear power plant located in Laconia. The National Weather Service from Gray, Maine provided an overview of a line of severe thunderstorms with tornado cells (also fictional) causing other all-hazard issues for the area surrounding “the plant.”

The all-day activity was well received and provided many good recommended adjustments to REP documents. An After-Action Report with an Improvement Plan was distributed to participants shortly after the event.

VT DEMHS is Now Vermont Emergency Management

WATERBURY, VT - On July 1st, the Vermont Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security was reorganized to make the Homeland Security Unit part of the Vermont State Police Field Force division. That means DEMHS will once again be known as Vermont Emergency Management (VEM). The realignment focuses the competencies of VEM and State Police, and leverages the strengths of each to enhance State of Vermont capabilities across the mission areas of prevention, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation. VEM will continue in its traditional and core role of training and exercise for emergency management and homeland security, critical infrastructure planning, and incident management.

Operational aspects of Homeland Security at its new home at the VSP includes: Operation Stonegarden, the Preventative Radiological/Nuclear Detection Program, the Vermont Intelligence Center/ the VPS FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, the Port Security Program, and administration of the State Homeland Security Program Grant.

It is important to note that while this change aligns the strengths of each DPS division, the overall goals and strategies of the Department of Public Safety regarding both Emergency Management and Homeland Security remain unchanged. There should be little to no impact on internal or external partners, The new web address is http://vem.vermont.gov

Updated 2017 Hurricane Outlook

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storms that would typically form by early August. An average Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June 1-November 30, produces 12 named storms, of which six become hurricanes, including three major hurricanes.

“Today’s updated outlook underscores the need for everyone to know their true vulnerabilities to storms and storm surge,” said FEMA Administrator Brock Long. “As we enter the height of hurricane season, it’s important for everyone to know who issues evacuation orders in their community, heed the warnings, update their insurance and have a preparedness plan.”

Earthquakes Not Just a California Problem

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South Carolina area are rated ‘Very High’. No region of the country is shown as having no risk of earthquake damage. This FEMA Map reinforces that everyone should be aware of their earthquake risk. Areas outside of California and the west can be less prepared for earthquakes, so damage from equivalent ground shaking may actually be greater. Additionally, earthquakes in the east are felt over a much larger area that equivalent size events on the west coast. A map developed by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) clearly illustrates those regional differences in felt areas. Interested in learning what to do during an earthquake? Register your family or organization for the October 19, 2017 Great Northeast ShakeOut.
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