



## KENNER OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT HOSTS ANNUAL REGIONAL RESPONSE PARTNERS' HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS MEETING

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*May 20, 2014*

*For Immediate Release*

On May 19, 2014, **Mayor Michael S. Yenni**, **Chief Steve Caraway** and **Kenner's Office of Emergency Management** held their annual **Regional Response Partners' Hurricane Season Preparedness meeting** at Kenner Police Headquarters. These meetings have been conducted since 2009. The purpose of the session is to bring together agencies and organizations that provide services to or that work collaboratively with the City of Kenner year round and that may be called upon to respond to Kenner in the event of a major storm. Participants review agency-specific emergency plans, identify capabilities and resources, discuss strategy, identify points of contacts, and address issues of common concern, such as Contraflow, mutual aid, sheltering, re-entry protocols, and relief operations. The meeting facilitates close coordination between region-wide governmental and non-government entities during and following a disaster. This year, the event was attended by over 70 representatives from various military, federal, state, parish, and local entities.

**Mayor Yenni** opened the meeting with a discussion of the importance of regional partnerships, collaboration and cooperation. He described the current state of emergency preparedness in Kenner and the importance of local initiatives to protect Kenner residents and businesses during a disaster. Mayor Yenni also discussed continued efforts by his administration to obtain grant funding to build out the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and provide adequate resources to support and protect our first responders (police, fire, EMS), incident management team and City employees who remain on duty during disaster response and recovery activities.

**Chief Administrative Officer Michael Quigley** and **Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Natalie Newton** outlined the City's unified approach to incident management and coordination of municipal services. Kenner's **Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, Doug Dodt**, provided an overview of the City's incident management capabilities and described department field activities as well as prioritized municipal operations during and following a major storm event. **Police Chief-Elect Michael Glaser** introduced himself to attendees, assuring seamless continuity of law enforcement planning and operations throughout the upcoming storm season. **Fire Chief John Hellmers** discussed his agency's response to nursing homes and independent living centers following a recent storm and emphasized the importance of pre-planning for families and care facilities to address the medical needs of those individuals with special needs.

Also participating were **Jefferson Parish Councilman Ben Zahn**, **Kenner City Councilwoman Maria DeFrancesch**, a representative of **Councilman Keith Reynaud**, as well as **Councilmen-Elect Michael Sigur**

and **Dominick Impastato**. All offered their support to continue effective information sharing between City officials, residents and business owners during and following a severe weather event. **State Senator Gary Smith** was also represented at the meeting, ensuring open lines of communication to the State Legislature on matters involving Kenner.

The office of **Jefferson Parish President John Young** was represented by **Chief Assistant for Operations Brian Fitzsimmons** along with **Charles Hudson, Director of Jefferson Parish Emergency Management**. Mr. Hudson provided information on parish-wide emergency planning, evacuation decision making, and the level of coordination amongst municipal, parish, state and federal agencies during a major event. In addition, several key preparedness initiatives undertaken by the Parish were promoted: Residents were urged to sign up for *JP Alert* community alert system. Businesses and emergency contractors should sign up or renew re-entry placards. It is important for residents with significant medical needs to register with the *Parish Special Needs Registry*. Residents should pre-register for the *Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (DSNAP)*. And with the advent of more detailed National Weather Service (NWS) surge mapping capabilities, residents are strongly urged to closely monitor and heed surge advisories in addition to hurricane storm advisories.

Commanders from **Louisiana State Police Troop B** discussed Contraflow operations as well as that agency's close working relationship with the Kenner Police Department and other area law enforcement agencies during and following a major storm event. The **Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD)** discussed highway maintenance as well as the agency's **New Orleans Traffic Management Center (TMC)** and Motorist Assistance Patrol activities during evacuation operations. The new *MY DOTD* traffic alert system, which provides timely regional and statewide road closure and evacuation information to motorists, was announced.

**Vineyard Church** provided information on its considerable volunteer and relief efforts. Officials from the **Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Public Health** discussed shelters and public health initiatives. **The Jefferson Parish Employees Federal Credit Union** provided information on emergency preparation and services for members during a disaster.

The **Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services** addressed regional assisted evacuation operations as well as statewide mass care / sheltering operations. The **Jefferson Parish Public School System** provided information on plans for closures and re-opening of public schools throughout the Parish. A representative of the **Latin American Civic Association of Louisiana (LACAL)** described assistance to Kenner's considerable Hispanic population in the event of a major storm. LACAL provides Spanish language interpreter services to the EOC during major storms and works closely with Kenner's Hispanic Resource Center to address local resident needs.

**The New Orleans Aviation Board Communications Office** discussed storm related conditions and activities affecting air operations at Louis Armstrong International Airport. The **Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office** addressed coordinating emergency plans with Kenner police, including enhanced security and traffic controls put into effect at the Airport during air evacuation operations related to severe weather conditions.

Utility companies in attendance included **Entergy, ATMOS Energy, Cox Communications and Veolia Wastewater**, whose representatives provided information on pre-storm maintenance initiatives, pre-staging of equipment and repair crews, and plans for rapid deployment of personnel for restorative operations following a significant storm event.

Representatives from the **Pontchartrain Center** management staff were on hand to discuss that facility's usefulness for staging and other activities. The **Esplanade Mall** management provided detailed information on retail activities at the facility in the event of a storm.

The **East Jefferson Levee District Police Department** detailed their plans for increased levee patrols, monitoring and emergency response and support of local law enforcement during storm events.

Representatives from **Ochsner Medical Center - Kenner** and **East Jefferson General Hospital** as well as **EJGH Emergency Medical Service (EMS)** discussed medical care and emergency services during storm events.

The **United States Coast Guard Auxiliary** detailed capabilities of its emergency communications (EMCOMM) team, which embeds with the City of Kenner at its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) providing essential backup communications during major storm events.

Representatives from various City agencies, including **Legal, Finance, Public Works, Kenner Television (K-TV), Information Technology and Telecommunications, Community Development, Human Resources, Purchasing, Inspection and Code Enforcement, Parks and Recreation, Clerk of Court, and Fleet Management** participated in the meeting.

In addition to the attendees at this yesterday's meeting, Kenner's Office of Emergency Management also works closely with the **Regional Transit Authority (RTA)** to ensure local bus service along pre-determined lines during designated evacuation periods. We collaborate with the **American Red Cross** concerning the establishment of post-storm emergency shelters when appropriate and necessary. We communicate regularly with the **East Jefferson Levee District** to address levee conditions, security and surveillance. Our flood control efforts also include close coordination with the **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** concerning all matters of construction along the levee system in Kenner. The **Port of South Louisiana** in Reserve, Louisiana, provides information on maritime hurricane preparedness all along the Lower Mississippi River and keeps City officials abreast of river conditions. We coordinate with the **Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries** and the **U.S. Coast Guard** to enhance our first responder training and ability to conduct waterborne and urban search and rescue operations. We also plan and train with local railroads, including **AMTRAK, Canadian National** and **Union Pacific**, to address any emergencies that might affect rail lines running through the region.

Mayor Yenni's staff and our Police and Fire Departments regularly attend public-private partnership meetings hosted by the **New Orleans Regional Planning Commission**. Agency representatives are active members of the **Jefferson Parish Homeland Security Committee**, the **Jefferson Parish Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)** and the **Region 1 Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI)**.

“Effective hurricane and disaster response requires continual collaboration, planning and attention to detail” said **Mayor Michael Yenni**. “Kenner’s city administration works year round to develop and sustain close relationships with our regional response partners.”

As we enter the 2014 hurricane season, Kenner residents and business owners should feel confident that City of Kenner officials and employees stand prepared to respond sufficiently to storm events. Year-round planning, training and coordination ensures that all of Kenner’s agencies are capable of responding in a unified fashion to meet the needs of our community.

## KENNER’S RESPONSE PARTNERS

**UNITED IN PURPOSE ... COMMITTED TO TEAM WORK**



*Douglas Dodt is the city of Kenner’s Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. Dodt can be reached at 471-2100 or [oem@kenner.la.us](mailto:oem@kenner.la.us). For additional information on any of the programs mentioned, visit Kenner’s Emergency Preparedness webpage at [www.kenner.la.us/pages/section\\_6\\_77.asp](http://www.kenner.la.us/pages/section_6_77.asp).*