

## Connecticut's Emergency Planning and Preparedness Initiative

Several workgroups have been formed as elements of Governor Malloy's Emergency Planning and Preparedness Initiative (EPPI), which has been established with state, local and private entities working together under the leadership of the state's Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection/Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DESPP-DEMHS) Statewide Advisory Council to enhance emergency plans, preparedness and training at every level.<sup>[1]</sup> The Consumer Counsel and several staff members with specialized experience in telecommunications and energy issues have volunteered to assist the Governor's office and DESPP-DEMHS in structuring and implementing the statewide exercise and draft strategic plans for ongoing conduct of public utilities and municipalities confronted with emergency conditions.

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<sup>[1]</sup> See <http://www.governor.ct.gov/malloy/cwp/view.asp?A=4010&Q=493690>

William J. Hackett, State Emergency Management Director, DEMHS/DESPP, Action Plan, January 3, 2012, noting that in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene and the October Nor'Easter, the Witt Report noted that :

public sector emergency response planning at the state and local levels does not adequately focus on actions needed in a significant power outage and assignment of responsibilities in mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery in utility disruption events. State and local plans call for reports from power companies, but do not [specifically] address multi-agency actions or coordination needed to address energy disruption.

DEMHS/DESPP outlined a process for improving the State's planning and preparedness, particularly with regard to large scale power outages. The purpose of this work is to:

- Improve information-sharing during an emergency between state and local officials, and our utility providers;
- Provide clear, specific guidance on the inter-related roles and responsibilities of state and local officials, and the private sector, including utilities, in mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, particularly in utility disruption events.

The foundation work being performed by the Governor’s Task Forces through the EPPI process, incorporating input from all state agencies, municipalities, and industry participants, should be used to form the basis for a new model for managing the public rights of way and restoration processes in the future.<sup>[2]</sup> The OCC has testified and filed evidence in the PURA Docket No. 11-09-09, *Review Of The Public Service Companies’ Response To 2011 Storms* detailing how enhanced pole administration involving PURA and other state agencies including the OCC, together with the municipalities and public service companies is essential to improving restoration of service across the state in future emergency events.

Perhaps most exciting will be a Statewide Exercise to be held during July 28-31, 2012 across the state, the first live emergency exercise ever held in the state. Notable among these working groups are the Multi-Partner Energy and Utilities Policy Working Group, combining Emergency Support

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<sup>[2]</sup> *Connecticut October 2011 Snowstorm Power Restoration Report*, Prepared by: Witt Associates December 1, 2011, at 31:

- **“Conclusion –**
- “Improvements can be addressed on multiple issues through an inclusive planning process and the engraining of emergency plans and procedures in each entity’s culture and operations. Plans are best developed with the input of those who will be involved in response.”
- “In many cases, it appears that public sector agencies were not involved in the development of CL&P’s emergency plans and procedures, and CL&P was not involved in development of state and local government response plans and procedures.”
- EPPI - “Adherence to accepted planning guidance regarding an inclusive planning process that emphasizes ongoing multi-agency involvement in preparedness (such as using Emergency Support Functions to organize responsibilities and preparedness activities) should be considered an improvement measure for the state’s DEMHS – both for state plans and DEMHS guidance to local governments.
  - While CL&P shared its new Emergency Response Plan with municipalities, there had been little or no opportunity to exercise the updated plan, which allows for practice of roles and responsibilities, identification of areas for additional resources or training, and work on coordination issues.”

Function (ESF) 2 (Communications) and ESF 12 (Energy) leadership and subject matter experts, as well as the Exercise and Planning Preparedness Initiative - Technology Work Group, which is addressing the state's initiatives regarding GIS data collection and mapping,<sup>[3]</sup> Public Safety Interoperability Communications,<sup>[4]</sup> and the state's WebEOC system upgrades.<sup>[5]</sup>

These groups are also charged with exploring a cross-agency enforcement team with the Department of Energy & Environmental

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<sup>[3]</sup> Connecticut, coordinating with the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) and the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI), has joined many states that have moved to development of a common framework for management of their geospatial data. Geographic data are essential to many operations, yet they are expensive and time consuming to produce. Many organizations need the same basic geographic data for their applications and spend precious resources duplicating existing data sets. Others go without data because they cannot afford the production costs. Furthermore, when an application or problem covers more than one jurisdiction, it is often difficult to find and combine existing data. The state is now focused on providing a reliable, standardized source for commonly needed and used geographic data themes, which will prove very useful in monitoring and disseminating information concerning the PROW and its elements, especially in times of emergency.

<sup>[4]</sup> To provide immediate and coordinated assistance, the state's public safety workers must be able to communicate with each other in the mobile radio communication environment effectively, swiftly and securely. "Interoperability" simply refers to the ability of public safety personnel, including utility employees, to communicate by radio with staff from other agencies, on demand and in real time. Public safety agencies require three distinct types of interoperability — day-today, mutual aid, and task force. **Day-to-day interoperability** involves coordination during routine public safety operations. Interoperability is required, for example, when firefighters from around a county join forces to battle a structural fire or when neighboring law enforcement agencies must work together during a vehicular chase. **Mutual aid interoperability** involves a joint and immediate response to catastrophic accidents or natural disasters and requires tactical communications among numerous groups of public safety personnel. **Task force interoperability** involves local, state and federal agencies coming together for an extended period of time to address a public safety problem.

<sup>[5]</sup> WebEOC is a customizable web-based application that allows agencies to communicate and coordinate response and recovery operations in a secure, real-time, online environment. It allows state, municipal and federal agencies to share information during an emergency and provides a common operating picture for all, enhancing situational awareness and improving interoperable communications. The Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security DEMHS, along with multiple state and local partners, developed this web-based application to mirror the way emergency management preparedness, response and recovery are conducted at the municipal, regional and State(Emergency Operations Center (EOC)) levels.

Protection (DEEP) and PURA instead of creating a brand new division to better utilize existing resources, and investigating handling management and administration of poles and wires as part of an enforcement team.

In order to improve information-sharing during an emergency between state and local officials, and the utility providers, the working groups will provide clear, specific guidance on the interrelated roles and responsibilities of state and local officials, and the private sector, including utilities, in mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, particularly in utility disruption events.

The fundamental goals of the Governor's EPPI are:

- To enhance the existing State Response Framework and local plans to create more comprehensive planning to identify in detail multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional response and coordination actions, roles and responsibilities;
- To increase the quality of communications between local and state governments and utilities during emergencies; and
- To increase utilities' interface with Connecticut emergency management systems.

Emergencies are not the only time the electric distribution companies (EDC) administrators will serve the public interest, however, since the current pole management system has proved to be inadequate to the routine tasks and processes affecting the PROW. Today, attachers and

citizens often face lengthy, cumbersome, and expensive proceedings that are frankly not responsive to the demands imposed by the current competitive electric and telecommunications market. During the routine course of utility regulatory affairs, EDC pole administration will promote responsive and supportive pole administration. The EDC administrators will be able to easily manage an orderly and reliable process for pole attachments and reattachments that provides fair and timely access. Economic opportunity and job creation, as well as greater access to advanced services such as broadband connections to the Internet, will be enhanced by streamlined, transparent, and equitable attachment licensing and pricing enforcement of fair standards for maintenance and replacement of utility poles.