

Year in Review

2024



Prepare | Support | Recover

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The Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) is the lead agency for the support and coordination of emergency preparedness, training, response, recovery and mitigation to save lives, protect property, and reduce the impact of emergencies in Delaware.



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From the Director

DEMA is proud to present the **2024 Year in Review** to our partners. This annual lookback provides a chance for us to reflect as an agency on the multitude of projects and advancements that moved forward thanks to the collaborative efforts of our staff and partners. Our mission to "Prepare, Support, and Recover" may sound simple, but it takes an immense amount of effort year after year, and we are eager to showcase the work we've done.

2024 marked a return to more normal operations with a regular tempo of in-person meetings, trainings, and conferences. Because relationship-building is a priority at DEMA, staff are encouraged to take advantage of any opportunities to get out of the office in order to better understand our partners' needs and expectations. This ensures that we are leveraged to provide services and support that make the most difference. While we're grateful that those connections resumed and strengthened, 2024 certainly cannot be characterized as a slow year. This report will show that our agency remains small but effective and has a strong presence in many statewide initiatives that support all Delawareans.

In addition to closing out open grants for past disasters, (COVID-19, the remnants of Hurricane Ida, and Tropical Storm Isaias), we also continued to provide administrative support for our ongoing emergency management grant programs. After many years of incredible teamwork, we completed the migration of our grants management system into a cloud-based platform that will allow us to retire our paper trails and Access databases. We continued to make improvements to our physical space to ensure our ability to stay connected while meeting the demands of a modern workplace. We also unveiled a new employee recognition program to better say "thank you" for the tremendous work of our teammates.

To carry us into the future, we updated our multi-year Strategic Plan to guide our actions from 2024-2028 and also completed a comprehensive update of the Delaware Emergency Operations Plan, which serves as a blueprint to help DEMA fulfill its all-hazards mission. Thanks to the efforts of staff, DEMA passed our 5-year reaccreditation review to ensure our program continues to operate at the highest standards.



Director A.J. Schall

“DEMA passed our 5-year reaccreditation review to ensure our program continues to operate at the highest standards.”

Finally, DEMA provided much-needed support for several real-life incidents, including the CrowdStrike outage, the 2024 General Election, and the response to Hurricane Helene in the Carolinas.

We hope that you will take a moment to reflect on our accomplishments. As our agency continues to move forward to "Prepare, Support and Recover," we must be willing to challenge what we have done, learn from our experiences, embrace creativity, and above all else, work with our partners to save lives and property.

Response and Support

Winter Storm in January

DEMA activated to a Level 3 (Enhanced Watch) for a storm on January 19 that dropped five inches of snow and closed state offices in Kent and New Castle Counties. The National Weather Service issued a Winter Storm Warning and DeIDOT and DEMA posted a cautionary travel advisory due to poor visibility and freezing road surfaces from cold temperatures.

CrowdStrike® Statewide Cyber Event in July

On July 19, a faulty update by cybersecurity company CrowdStrike® caused a global IT outage and impacted many Delaware businesses and state agencies, including the Division of Motor Vehicles, which closed for the day. DEMA worked with the Department of Technology and Information to support statewide recovery from the event.

Hurricane Helene: EMAC Support to the Carolinas

Hurricane Helene was a Category 4 storm in September that left a trail of devastation and over 100 deaths in Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia, South Carolina and North Carolina. DEMA's Michael O'Malley served a two-week assignment in South Carolina through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). On September 28, DEMA deployed a 13-member task force of technicians with boats and equipment on an EMAC mission to conduct search-and-rescue operations and recovery efforts near Linville, North Carolina.

Primary and General Election Monitoring

DEMA activated staff and coordinated a Joint Information Center as part of a multi-agency effort to monitor and respond to any issues during the September Primary and November General Election.

A January 19 winter storm dropped five inches of snow and closed state offices in Kent and New Castle Counties.



DEMA deployed a 13-member task force (below) of trained personnel and several swift water rescue boats to North Carolina on September 28 for a 10-day EMAC mission to support search-and-rescue and recovery.



Terrorism Preparedness



Delaware State Police's critical care helicopter picked up supplies at DEMA as part of the new whole blood initiative.



DEMA's Tom Schultz joined Kent Co. Dept. of Public Safety officials at the Blood Bank of Delmarva to announce new whole blood availability on paramedic vehicles. Delaware was the first to accomplish this statewide.

Terrorism Section Overview

Terrorism Section staff provided planning support for the January winter storm, the May DAFB Air Show, the July CrowdStrike® cyber event, and November's General Election. Staff conducted a Risk Capabilities Workshop on September 30 with 36 attendees from 16 partner agencies. Part of the annual Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR), the session was an opportunity to assess prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery capabilities within the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) process. Meetings were also held for agencies unable to attend or complete the THIRA/SPR survey. Working with the Division of Public Health and Blood Bank of Delmarva, DEMA also funded \$100,000 to support the initiative for paramedic agencies to provide pre-hospital blood.

Grant Programs

The **Homeland Security Grant Program** (HSGP) is designed to help prevent, prepare for, protect against, and respond to acts of terrorism and other threats. The **Nonprofit Security Grant Program** (NSGP) helps fund physical and cybersecurity enhancements and related activities to nonprofits at high risk of terrorist or other extremist attack. A new National Security Supplemental released in October has the potential to award an additional \$1.57 million to Delaware nonprofits. The **State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program** (SLCGP) helps state, local governments, and rural areas manage and address cybersecurity risks and threats to information systems while improving security of critical infrastructure.

Delaware was first in the nation to have all paramedic agencies able to offer whole blood to pre-hospital patients statewide.

Terrorism Highlights

- **Statewide Whole Blood Initiative**
Provided \$100,000 to enable county paramedic agencies and the Delaware State Police to provide pre-hospital blood products. Delaware was first in the U.S. to do this.
- **Emergency Plan Reviews and Updates**
Completed the biennial update of the Delaware Emergency Operations Plan, updated the Continuity of Government Plan and Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) with DTI and the Delaware National Guard, and completed the third year of the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR).
- **Grant Management System and Training**
Completed the new cloud-based grant management system for NSGP, EMPG, and SLCGP, with all grants now active in the platform. Multiple formal and informal sessions were held to train 175 users from over 270 organizations on their roles in the new system.



Homeland Security Grant Program

\$22.9 million

Managed \$22,947,750 in grants across 16 disciplines and 339 projects. Expended \$4,362,750 in FY24 on behalf of 58 projects.



Nonprofit Security Grant Program

\$8.07 million

Managed \$8,076,150 for 66 nonprofits and 81 projects. Awarded \$2,311,768 in FY24 for 16 nonprofits and 21 projects.



State and Local Cybersecurity Grants

\$10.1 million

Managed \$10,148,989 in SLCGP funds for state, local, and rural subrecipients throughout Delaware.

Swift Water Rescue Equipment and Training

DEMA provided \$200,000 in grants to the Wilmington Fire Department, Kent County Special Operations Team, and New Castle County Special Operations Team for new swift water rescue boats and specialized skills training for first responders. A trailer package for Sussex County is currently in process. The project is designed to boost Delaware's water rescue capabilities and also provide support to other states, such as the boats and trailers deployed to North Carolina by Delaware's swift water team.

Airspace Management Group and Strategy

DEMA staff began development of a statewide Airspace Management Working Group and a Delaware Airspace Management Strategy in collaboration with local, state, federal, and private sector partners. Originally started in 2019 to explore counter drone issues, the CUAS Working Group became the Airspace Management Working Group to better incorporate the full range of issues facing state and local partners. The group took many steps forward in 2024. For example, the Delaware State Police coordinated with the Department of Technology and Information to create a unified reporting option within DELJIS for all law enforcement responses to drone calls. Staff also presented an overview of the program to 130 attendees at the Hometown Security Conference on November 20.

DEMA provided \$200,000 for swift water rescue boats and special training that helped support North Carolina hurricane victims.



Delaware first responders attended this swift water rescue technician training by Atlantic Technical Rescue thanks to funding provided by DEMA. (Photo by Atlantic Tech Rescue)



DEMA funded the purchase of new radios for the Delaware Forest Service's Wildland Fire Program.



As part of the efforts of the Airspace Management Working Group, DEMA held a tabletop exercise in January 2024 at the St. Jones Reserve in Dover with state, county, and local governments, as well as the private sector and media outlets.

Recovery and Mitigation

DEMA's **Recovery and Mitigation Section** focuses on planning, mitigating, and recovering from natural events or hazards like hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and climate events such as coastal erosion. Along with managing FEMA Public and Individual Assistance funding, it also administers the **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**, **Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Grants (BRIC)**, and **Flood Mitigation Assistance Grants (FMA)**.

Mitigation Projects and Accomplishments

Delaware submitted 14 new mitigation projects to FEMA in 2024, of which 11 were approved for a total of \$2.9 million. Staff created new fillable application templates that will allow acceptance of applications year-round. DEMA completed 39 project consultations with town mayors, city managers, and county and state officials. Staff taught two damage assessment courses with content updated to meet new FEMA standards. DEMA also secured funding for the 2028 update to its State Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). Staff also began the process of digitizing the HMP into a user-friendly, interactive, map-based product with the help of ESRI ArcGIS software. This can help the public to be better informed to identify and reduce risks from hazards.

Public Assistance Program

Delaware was the first state in Region 3 to submit its 2025 Administrative Plan to FEMA. Staff worked with New Castle County and the FEMA Validate As You Go (VayGO) Team to confirm \$5.73 million in costs under the COVID-19 disaster declaration. DEMA also worked with external partners to produce two new YouTube videos to inform potential Delaware applicants about how to apply for funding under the Public Assistance program. DEMA also coordinated with FEMA and DNREC to progress the review, obligation and startup of the major Bancroft Bridge Replacement that brought over \$2.7 million to Delaware.



DEMA helped coordinate federal funding for the Bancroft Bridge Replacement Project in Wilmington.



State Hazard Mitigation Officer Phil Cane used a Trimble to help conduct a site assessment for a mitigation project to alleviate flooding on Bayshore Road in Bowers Beach.

Recovery Highlights

ESRI ArcGIS Advantage Program

2024 was DEMA's first year with ESRI's ArcGIS Advantage Program, which develops new custom tools to optimize GIS workflows. Updates included changes to the radiological emergency dashboard, a damage reporting tool to enable public reporting, and an ability to assign taskings to partner agencies.

Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems

DEMA reinvigorated its small unmanned aircraft system (sUAS or drone) program with a new policy that was reviewed and implemented in 2024. Several pilot trainings were completed to familiarize operators with flight controls and take-off and landing procedures. DEMA's drones were vital in supporting several key projects: the Fort Dupont Branch Channel Revetment, Madison and Monroe Flood Mitigation Project, Bancroft Bridge Project, and a hay fire near South St. Georges.

New Trimble Field Team for Projects

Trimble products offer geospatial capabilities and accurate location data to support survey applications throughout a project lifecycle. Staff utilized the Trimble on five projects.



DEMA Director A.J. Schall addressed the first meeting of the Disaster Housing Task Force and highlighted the challenges of meeting disaster housing needs in the face of limited supply and high demand.



DEMA joined Delaware State Housing Authority officials at the very first meeting of the Disaster Housing Task Force on February 25 in Dover. From left: DEMA Manager of Planning Jen Walls, Deputy Director Paige Fitzgerald, Recovery Planner Tara Wilbur, DSHA Director Cynthia Karnai and DSHA Emergency Management Coordinator Vanessa Cullen.



DEMA participated in a Family Assistance Center exercise on April 18 in Frankford that simulated a multi-agency response to a mass fatality incident designed to provide support to impacted families.



New Delaware Disaster Housing Strategy

DEMA partnered with the Delaware State Housing Authority in the creation of a Delaware Disaster Housing Strategy, developed in cooperation with government agencies at all levels and the nonprofit and private sectors. Staff attended 50 weekly strategy check-ins, 60 stakeholder meetings, three task force sessions, and participated in the FEMA Region 3 Housing Summit.

Individual Assistance Program Highlights

Individual Assistance (IA) is a type of federal aid providing financial help and services to disaster victims who have uninsured or underinsured expenses and serious needs. Working with FEMA Region 3, DEMA held an "IA 101" training and completed many outreach initiatives, including door-hangers to provide information to residents and updated the IA section of the DEMA website. DEMA collaborated with DHSS and its Division of Public Health on several projects, including a Family Assistance Center Exercise, Disaster Recovery Center training, and a Rapid Needs Assessment Training. DEMA also participated in a National Mass Care exercise and collaborated on the Community Organizations Preparedness Engagement Project that assessed disaster response capabilities of 100 nonprofits in the state. DEMA finalized a guidebook for Delaware Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (DEVOAD) and also showcased its partnership with FEMA at the Inspire Conference, highlighting its achievement as the first state to use GIS mapping of cultural and historical sites to inform disaster management actions at all phases of the disaster cycle.

Technological Hazards

State Emergency Response Commission

The Delaware State Emergency Response Commission (SERC), created by the 1986 Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), is comprised of members from state and local government organizations and industry. The primary focus of the SERC is to enhance state and local emergency response and preparedness capabilities through better coordination and planning.



The 17th Annual Hazardous Materials Workshop was held on May 10 and 11.

New SERT Plan Adopted

The SERC approved a new State Emergency Response Team Plan at its December 2024 meeting. The plan's purpose is to establish state policy and an emergency response organization for responding to a broad class of hazardous material incidents. It identifies state, county, local and federal responsibilities designed to minimize damage to human health, natural resources, and property caused by the release or potential release of hazardous materials. The goal is to save lives, reduce injuries, minimize property or environmental damage, and minimize exposure of response personnel to hazardous substances.



Hazardous Materials Workshop

The 17th Hazardous Materials Workshop was held on May 10 and 11, 2024 at the Delaware State Fire School. The workshop is a free two-day training session for fire service, EMS, law enforcement, hazmat teams, industrial brigades, hospital DECON personnel, and chemical and poultry industry workers with comprehensive sessions that feature unique hands-on learning opportunities presented by outstanding industry leaders.

Radiological Preparedness

DEMA successfully passed a FEMA-graded radiological exercise on May 21, 2024.

From left: Senator Kyra Hoffner joined Patrick O'Connell, DEMA Radiological Emergency Planning Program Manager, Robert Brinsfield, Director of the Division of Public Health's Office of Radiation Control, and Kevin Musto, pharmacist at Atlantic Apothecary in Smyrna, at a potassium iodide distribution event on April 4 at the Volunteer Hose Company in Middletown.





DEMA completed a FEMA-graded medical services drill with Christiana Care, New Castle County Paramedics, New Castle County Emergency Management, and the Middletown Volunteer Hose Company on October 10.



David Burgin, PSEG Offsite and Response Program Manager, and Director A.J. Schall honored Kelly L. from Wilbur Elementary (above) and all the student contest winners (below) in Middletown on May 9.

Radiological Drills and Exercises

DEMA holds four quarterly drills to test response and warning capabilities for the Salem/Hope Creek Nuclear Stations with New Jersey State Police, Delaware State Police, and other state agencies. Drills were conducted on March 26, May 21, August 13, and December 10. DEMA successfully passed its biennial FEMA-graded REP drill on May 21, 2024. DEMA completed an annual FEMA-graded medical services drill with Christiana Care, New Castle County Paramedics, New Castle County Emergency Management, and Middletown's Volunteer Hose Company on October 10. DEMA also held reception center training on October 25 with the National Guard and Division of Public Health at the Stern Armory.

Potassium Iodide Distribution Events

DEMA and the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) distribute free potassium iodide (KI) tablets twice a year to those within 10 miles of the Salem/Hope Creek Nuclear Generating Stations (known as the Emergency Planning Zone or EPZ). This year, events were held in Middletown on April 4 and in Townsend on October 24.

Emergency Siren Tests

In cooperation with the Delaware State Police and PSEG, DEMA held quarterly siren tests of the Salem/Hope Creek Nuclear Generating Stations Alert and Notification system on January 2, April 2, July 2, and October 1. The 37 sirens within 10 miles of the plants were activated for three to five minutes followed by emergency alert system messages.

Annual PSEG Calendar Contest

DEMA and PSEG sponsor an annual calendar art contest for Delaware schools in the EPZ. The theme was "Patriotism: Recognizing America's Heroes." Twelve student winners were honored at a ceremony in Middletown on June 1.



Comprehensive School Safety

CPTED School Safety Course

Over 30 participants attended the National Association of School Resource Officers' (NASRO) "Crime Prevention through Environmental Design" (CPTED) course. It uses design, management, and activity strategies to reduce opportunities for crime, reduce fear, and improve school safety. From left: NASRO course instructor Joey Melvin, CSSP planner Nicole Shuler-Geer, NASRO instructor Rob Reyngoudt, and DEMA Director A.J. Schall.



School Safety Highlights

School Safety Training

Trained 2,097 people on school safety: 230 on ALICE, 16 on the Navigate EMS portal, and 1,851 on the Standard Reunification Method, Standard Response Protocol, and the School Safety and Wellness Suite. A total of 207 are now trained in the Standard Reunification Method. Public Consulting Group will introduce virtual refresher training for the threat assessment program.

Statewide School Mapping Project

Mapping of all public and charter schools is now completed and maps shared with police, fire, 911, and emergency management agencies.

Quarterly Safety Meetings

Implemented quarterly safety meetings to include DEMA, Department of Education (DOE), Delaware Information and Analysis Center (DIAC) and district safety leads.

Safety and Wellness Suite

Continued implementing and onboarding schools and districts in the School Safety and Wellness Suite that includes the Safe DE app. A total of 69 schools and districts are enrolled.



School Safety Overview

The Comprehensive School Safety Program (CSSP) team oversees 233 public and charter schools, and five voluntary alternative schools, for overall compliance with the Omnibus School Safety Act. Oversight includes two required annual lockdowns and one annual table-top exercise, training on active threat situations, mental health topics, prevention strategies, mitigation strategies, conducting in-depth school assessments, and assisting with lockdowns and tabletops. CSSP also reviews and approves plans under House Bill 49 (H.B. 49) that requires new construction or renovations of \$1 million or more to fulfill school safety requirements. The team is also tasked with joint approval of House Bill 388 (H.B. 388) applications, intended to supply schools with additional funds to improve safety or security. In 2024, staff approved 10 H.B. 49 plans and also approved 124 applications under H.B. 388. CSSP achieved 100 percent compliance on lockdown drills, table-tops, infrastructure assessments, and completed plans.



Training and Education

1,296 people were trained in all-hazards courses and 600 participated in 18 exercises.



DEMA's **Training and Exercise Section** prepares the all-hazard response community by providing comprehensive training, conducting exercises, and coordinating National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliance to save lives and reduce the impact of emergencies.

Training Program Accomplishments

In 2024, DEMA trained 1,296 participants from state and local governments and private organizations through all-hazards and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in-residency courses. Another 30 people received hands-on training in the RAVE alert and notification system, complemented by online sessions. In addition, Job Qualification Standard (JQS) training was refreshed for all DEMA personnel with a specific focus on their Incident Command System (ICS) duties. Orientation sessions were also held for new staff and interns. Staff organized a total of 18 exercises, including six workshops, seven tabletop exercises, and five functional drills, engaging over 600 personnel statewide. DEMA also held its annual Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW), which fosters participation from cooperating partner agencies and establishes a cohesive strategy for Delaware's training and exercise program, thereby ensuring efficient resource utilization and community involvement.



Lt. Col. Daniel Macleish of the Delaware National Guard and DEMA Training Director Tom Nesbella met at the Integrated Planning Preparedness Workshop, which maps a strategy for the multi-year training and exercise program.

Training Highlights

Delaware Air Rescue Team (DART)

Conducted annual DART hoist training with the Delaware State Police (DSP), State Fire School, Special Ops Teams, and local fire companies. On October 13, DART responded to a distress call off Bowers Beach, hoisting an injured firefighter and transporting him to Christiana Hospital via DSP helicopter.

Swift Water Rescue Training

Coordinated swift water rescue training for local fire companies and special ops teams. Twenty members of New Castle County's team were trained as NFPA 1670 Rescue Technicians. Kent County's team trained 19 Inland Rescue Swimmers, 10 Rescue Boat Operators, 26 Swift Water and 10 Floodwater Rescue Techs. Smyrna had five Ice Rescue Technicians, five Swift Water Rescue Techs, and 12 Rescue Boat Operators. In October, Delaware Task Force 1 deployed to North Carolina to conduct search and rescue and recovery efforts after Hurricane Helene.



Delaware Air Response Team Training

In June, the Delaware Air Response Team (DART) conducted its annual hoist training to develop lifesaving skills. Participants included the Delaware State Police aviation section, the Delaware State Fire School, special operations teams, and local fire companies.

Community Outreach

UD 60th Anniversary Event



The University of Delaware's Disaster Research Center held a 60th anniversary event in May that featured a talk with Valerie Biden-Owens, Chair of the Biden Institute, and Anthony Fauci, former director of the National Institutes of Health. DEMA staff attending were (from left): Christine Beste, Frances Cordell, Nikki Testa, Travis Tuson, and Director A.J. Schall.

Outreach Program Overview

DEMA's Community Outreach Section continued engaging the public and promoting preparedness at events including the LIFE Conference, Delaware State Fair, and Family Emergency Preparedness Day. Staff supported 57 events that reached 11,282 people and also attended the Delaware Highway Safety Conference, two potassium iodide distribution events, hurricane evacuation planning workshops in each county, and a flood insurance forum in Lewes with Delaware Sea Grant.



Reached **11,282** at
57 community events

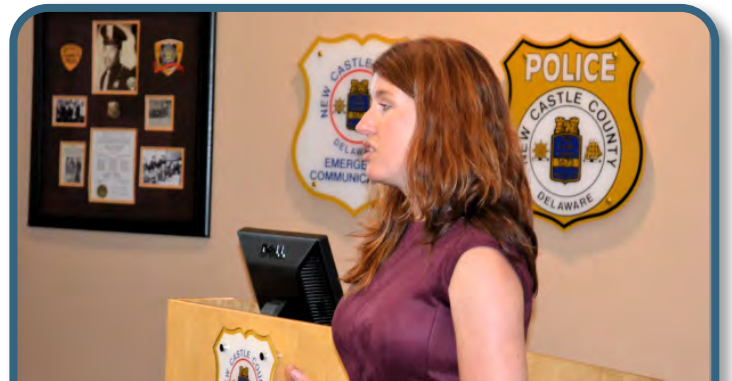
Outreach Highlights

Community Emergency Response Team

DEMA trained 181 CERT participants through 22 training and development activities. There were six statewide basic training courses, as well as three in Sussex County, two in the City of Wilmington, and two in New Castle County. Four new CERT teams were formed: two in the City of Wilmington, one in New Castle County, and one in Sussex County.

Hurricane Evacuation Workshops

On June 10, DEMA joined Delaware Sea Grant and New Castle County Emergency Management for a hurricane evacuation planning workshop with municipal and community leaders to discuss Delmarva hurricane preparedness, flood zones, and resources such as the "Know Your Zone" page on the PrepareDE.org website.



Deputy Director Paige Fitzgerald addressed the Hurricane Evacuation Planning Workshop in June.



DEMA participated in the 2024 Flood Insurance Forum with Delaware Sea Grant in Lewes.

Community Emergency Response Team

The Community Emergency Response Team program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for hazards that may occur where they live. CERT offers participants a consistent, national approach to volunteer training and organization so professional responders can focus on more complex tasks during disasters. Under a new state coordinator, DEMA reinstated sponsor meetings to enable more focus on statewide collaboration, knowledge and resource sharing, and overall program consistency. DEMA also continued to support CERT Basic Training by sponsors through a partnership agreement with the Delaware State Fire School for CERT trainer/instructors. DEMA also worked with sponsors to formulate statewide CERT policy guidance to establish how CERT will operate in Delaware.



Above, CERT volunteers at a meeting in Sussex County. DEMA has taken steps to revitalize CERT in collaboration with its statewide partner agencies. (Photo by Barbara Dean)

Family Emergency Preparedness Day

More than 35 organizations participated in the 17th Annual Family Emergency Preparedness Day held on September 14 at Brecknock Park in Camden. As part of National Preparedness Month in September, the event attracted more than 800 attendees who had a chance to meet first responders and resource experts in a family-friendly environment that offered a wealth of information on emergency preparedness. DEMA hosted the event with Kent County's Parks and Recreation and Department of Public Safety, the Delaware State Fire School, and the Delaware Division of Public Health Office of Preparedness.

FAMILY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS DAY



Kent County Paramedics conducted hands-on CPR training for all ages at FEP Day in Brecknock Park.



The Camden-Wyoming Fire Company demonstrated vehicle extrication procedures for FEP Day attendees.



Delaware State Police brought its helicopter, marine unit, and community engagement team to FEP Day.

Logistics Section

Logistics Section Overview

In both daily operations and emergencies, DEMA's Logistics Section ensures resources are procured in an efficient, economical manner while ensuring overall readiness and response capabilities. In 2024, staff completed updates of the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) Plan, the Delaware Distribution Management Plan, the Delaware Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) Plan, and its best practices guide. DEMA received and distributed \$1.34 million in weapons of mass destruction (WMD) grant equipment to Delaware agencies. DEMA also continued coordinating the Law Enforcement Organization Program and was first in the nation to complete its annual Law Enforcement Support Organization (LESO) inventory. Staff continued to manage the Emergency Driving Waivers Program and supported the incident management team for NASCAR races in Dover. Staff also provided homeless care kits for the Division of Public Health with hand sanitizers, thermometers, bandanas, cotton gloves, and food.



From left, Lester Hobbs and Adam Davis conducting a radiological program inventory and equipment check.



\$1.34 million in WMD grant equipment to Delaware agencies.

Logistics Highlights

■ EMAC Mission Coordination

EMAC Coordinator Lester Hobbs and staff coordinated the deployment of 115 personnel to areas in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida impacted by Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

■ Training and Exercise Support

Logistics staff completed quarterly FEMA National Radio System (FNARS) operator training, provided National Guard radiological van training, assisted the Delaware Medical Response and Surge Exercise, and supported the Family Assistance Center Exercise. Three staff also completed EMAC A-Team training.

■ Equipment Checks and Maintenance

Staff conducted weekly tests of DEWAS and NAWAS, managed 13 fleet vehicles and 9 trailers, calibrated radiological equipment, and ensured generators, satellite phones, and telecommunications are ready when needed.

Emergency Planning Meeting

The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) was enacted under Title III of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) to protect the public from hazardous materials. Each state has a State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) and a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) for each district. The National Association of SARA Title III Program Officials (NASTTPO) held its April 2024 meeting in Charlotte, NC. Attending from Delaware were: (from left to right) Nicholas Butler, DNREC EPCRA Reporting Program, Steven Phillips, DEMA Planner SERC Executive Director, Charles "Chip" Stevenson, Sussex County LEPC Chairperson, and Brandon Olenik, Kent County LEPC Co-Chairperson.



Delaware emergency management officials attended the NASTTPO Conference in April 2024 in Charlotte, NC.

Information Technology



DEMA conducted an onsite drill with the Delaware National Guard to support backup communications during emergencies and disasters.



Information Technology Overview

In 2024, DEMA's IT section undertook a comprehensive upgrade of the training room, which now features modern cameras and an enhanced sound system, with increased capabilities for virtual meetings and separate collaboration areas. DEMA also modernized the second floor offices to improve staff connectivity and efficiency. Through an initiative led by DTI, DEMA upgraded several servers to Windows Server 2022. In addition to supporting many drills and exercises, IT staff activated in response to the CrowdStrike® outage, supported state primary and general election operations, and assisted the Office of Marijuana Commissioner during its lottery drawing for licensure. IT staff enhanced cybersecurity by mitigating over 300 critical and 200 high-level system vulnerabilities. DEMA also expanded its emergency messaging system (EMnet) to include satellite functionality, along with the installation of the FNARS radio system. Staff also completed hardware and software improvements, such as integrating Starlink into communication capabilities and upgrading continuity of operations (COOP) equipment. In collaboration with the State Swiftwater team, technology and logistical support were provided during deployments. DEMA also worked with DTI to approve several new business cases to improve operational capabilities and efficiencies, including the introduction of new software solutions.

Technology Highlights

- **Drone Equipment and Maintenance**
Acquired and continued to maintain drones for the DEMA drone program and supported policy development, training, and initial and ongoing certification standards for the team.
- **New Hardware and Software Upgrades**
Expanded the EMnet emergency messaging system with satellite capability, integrated Starlink into communications, upgraded its continuity of operations (COOP) equipment, and introduced new software solutions.





Processed **2,917** financial transactions

Fiscal Section Overview

In 2024, DEMA's Fiscal Section administered 10 grant programs and 30 direct federal grants and managed a total budget of more than \$391 million. With a team of seven staff members, it processed a total of 2,917 transactions. This included 403 subgrant payments, of which 211 were for state subgrants and 192 for local subgrants. Staff also made 31 payments for radiological emergency program (REP) subgrants and 372 payments for federal subgrants. The agency expended almost \$76 million across 19 funding categories (see table below), with the largest for COVID Public Assistance at almost \$59 million.

Fund Type	Expenditures
General State Funds	\$901,307.64
Resilience Fund	\$12,796.73
ARPA Subgrant	\$936,725.57
Emergency Mgmt. Performance Grant	\$3,202,976.26
EMPG-S/ARPA	\$389,172.29
Homeland Security Grant	\$5,621,160.75
Nonprofit Security Grant	\$1,876,282.12
State & Local Cybersecurity Grant	\$537,484.81
Hazardous Materials Grant	\$105,451.46
Hazard Mitigation COVID	\$319,607.37
Hazard Mitigation Isaias	\$82,039.62
Hazard Mitigation Ida	\$113,991.95
Public Assistance COVID	\$58,883,342.80
Public Assistance Isaias	\$68,363.26
Public Assistance Ida	\$618,737.66
Building Resilient Infrastructure Grant	\$188,980.06
School Safety Program	\$343,124.97
Local Emergency Planning Committee	\$55,895.18
Radiological Grant	\$1,508,620.34
TOTAL	\$75,766,060.84



At the Association of Government Accountants annual meeting in Denver are: (from left) Mequoria Bowden, Mary Cordell, Stacy Wagner, Cindy Carney, and Frances Cordell.



Gov. John Carney observed March 2024 as "Certified Government Financial Managers Month" in Delaware. CGFM is a certification that signifies ethics and expertise and promotes public trust and accountability. From left, Johnathan Charles (State Auditor), Dawn Haw-Young (DeIDOT), Governor Carney, Alaina Egolf (DART), Mequoria Bowden (DHSS), and Frances Cordell (DEMA).

Financial Transactions	Amount
All DEMA Vouchers	1,665
Purchase Orders	95
Payroll Funding Adjustments	124
Pcard Transactions	828
State Subgrants	153
Other Transactions	52
TOTAL	2,917

Agency Awards

2024 Employee Recognition Awards

Director A.J. Schall and Department of Safety & Homeland Security Secretary Nathaniel McQueen recognized Information Technology Manager Jon Rutledge as "Employee of the Year" and the Fiscal Section's Cindy Carney, Stacy Wagner, Viviyan Christian, Nancy Biddle, William Schaefer, Frances Cordell, and Nicole Jenkins as "Team of the Year" at the annual employee recognition luncheon. State Exercise Officer Mike O'Malley was also recognized as "Employee of the 4th Quarter." The awards exemplify DEMA's commitment to "Prioritize People Above All Else," as well as the other agency strategic goals.



Employee of 4th Quarter

Mike O'Malley
State Exercise Officer



Employee of the Year

Jon Rutledge
IT Manager

Team of the Year



DEMA Fiscal Section: Cindy Carney, Stacy Wagner, Director A.J. Schall, Viviyan Christian, Nancy Biddle, William Schaefer, Frances Cordell, Nicole Jenkins, and Secretary McQueen.

Acknowledgments



Deputy Director Paige Fitzgerald, Secretary Nathaniel McQueen, Director A.J. Schall, Principal Planner Edward "Tony" Lee, and Deputy Director Chris Murtha recognized Tony Lee on his retirement after more than 20 years of service to Delaware.



Director A.J. Schall congratulated and honored longtime administrative specialist Nancy Wyatt on her retirement from DEMA after more than 17 years of service.



DSHS Deputy Secretary Kimberly Chandler and Director A.J. Schall honored Deputy Director Chris Murtha (center) for many years of service as he departed for a new position.



School Safety Planner Nicole Shuler-Geer is recognized by Director A.J. Schall for more than 26 years in Delaware public safety upon her departure from DEMA in August 2024.



Senior Accountant Shirley Lee is honored by Director A.J. Schall on her retirement for many decades of outstanding service to the Delaware Emergency Management Agency.



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