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Local Law Enforcement for International Threats
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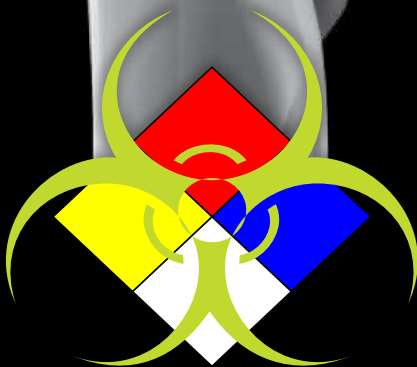
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Combating Threats – Both Domestic & Global

By Catherine L. Feinman



Disaster planners recognize the need to build interagency, interdisciplinary support to combat widespread disasters with far-reaching consequences. However, gaining such buy-in can be challenging – especially when stakeholders do not recognize the threat to their communities or do not understand the roles they can and should play in mitigating such threats. This is important considering that an international threat can quickly become a local problem and a local threat can transform into an international concern.

No matter where a mass casualty incident, a large natural disaster, or a cyberattack occur, such events can affect local communities in many ways – for example, they may need to get out of harm's way, respond with mutual aid, or plan for a similar scenario should it occur closer to home. The [U.S. Coast Guard](#), [local law enforcement agencies](#), [universities](#), and [emergency managers](#) are just a few of the stakeholder who are taking steps to close preparedness gaps.

For example, the U.S. Coast Guard conducts drug interdictions on the waterways. Without this partner, more drugs would be dispersed to numerous local jurisdictions. Local law enforcement identifies early signs of terrorism. Without this partner, many more terrorists would have the ability to launch their plans on the global stage. Universities educate stakeholders and prepare them for the “what ifs.” Without this partner, there would be fewer people equipped with the knowledge to recognize, mitigate, and respond to threats as they arise. Emergency managers bring together all the stakeholders. Without this partner, it would be more difficult to develop and execute disaster preparedness, response, and mitigation plans, thus hindering plans required across jurisdictions.

Everyone has a role to play in combating domestic and global threats. Whether formulating emergency plans for a large federal agency or simply using situational awareness to report suspicious activity at a school, no task or stakeholder is too small to overlook. Getting the buy-in and cooperation of all stakeholders is the challenge that emergency preparedness professionals must address. This edition of the *DomPrep Journal* provides a sampling of the successful efforts being made in various sectors – ranging from individual training opportunities to multimillion-dollar drug interdictions.

Local Law Enforcement for International Threats

By Richard Schoeberl & Anthony (Tony) Mottola

According to a recent United Nations Security Council [report](#), the number of Islamic State (IS) attacks is down over the past year. However, there is still no doubt that the IS remains a threat – both globally and domestically – particularly as it transforms into a more covert terrorist organization. Domestically, the IS remains a concern for law enforcement agencies. However, the threats have evolved from groups to individuals – radicalized from the array of propaganda and plethora of ideologies found on the internet.



This evolution of threats has forced law enforcement agencies (LEA) to transform their policing techniques. For the past quarter of a century – with the ever-changing landscape of transnational crime and, more specifically, terrorism – agencies have adapted to meet these conditions. In the early 1990s, the New York Police Department (NYPD) developed [Comp Stat](#) to combat crime through computer statistics. With the emergence of international terrorism on U.S. soil, LEAs had to shift tactics and train officers to the global threat, followed by development of the domestic threat from those seeking self-radicalization. In addition to the looming threat from abroad, more recently, left and right wing extremists have taken front stage with an ideology in terrorist tactics and civil unrest, similar to those of foreign terrorist organizations ([FTOs](#)). “Today’s terrorist landscape is more fluid and complex than ever,” as cited in the recent [White House’s National Strategy for Counterterrorism](#).

Federal Priorities

Terrorism remains the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s (FBI) number one priority. However, after years of focusing heavily on thwarting attacks from abroad, the shift has gravitated to those of a homegrown nature, with more focus on the homegrown violent extremist. The [FBI](#) is currently investigating 5,000 terrorism-related cases globally. Within the United States alone, 1,000 are linked to the IS, while 850 are linked to domestic terrorists. Case in point, The United States has seen a 40% increase in the past year in groups linked to white supremacist extremism. In May 2019, Assistant Director of the FBI’s Counterterrorism Division Michael C. McGarrity advised the [House Homeland Security Committee](#) that:

There have been more arrests and deaths caused by domestic terrorists than international terrorists in recent years. We are most concerned about lone offenders, primarily using firearms, as these lone offenders represent the dominant trend for lethal domestic terrorists. Frequently, these individuals act without a clear group affiliation or guidance, making them challenging to identify, investigate, and disrupt.

Reinforcing the FBI's assessment on the threat of domestic attacks, Brian Murphy, principal deputy undersecretary for intelligence and analysis at the Department of Homeland Security advised the [House Committee on Homeland Security](#) that "Lone actors from these movements pose the greatest threat because of their ability to remain undetected by law enforcement."

Strategic Plan Trends

However, these 2019 revelations are not a new phenomenon to counterterrorism officials. In the [FBI Strategic Plan 2004-2009](#), officials forecasted that domestic terrorism will continue to present a threat to the United States and that new groups posing an increasingly violent threat will emerge. The plan further forecasts the growth in homegrown right-wing extremism, embracing racist sentiment or anti-government ideologies. These groups are forecasted to pose a significant threat because of their propensity for violence. The plan further highlights:

[The] most significant domestic terrorism threat over the next five years will be the lone actor, or lone wolf terrorist. They typically draw ideological inspiration from formal terrorist organizations, but operate on the fringes of those movements. Despite their ad hoc nature and generally limited resources, they can mount high-profile, extremely destructive attacks, and their operational planning is often difficult to detect.

Fast-forward to a [2009 Intelligence Assessment](#) disseminated by the Department of Homeland Security that stated the consequences of an economic downturn, illegal immigration, and the election of the first African American president, has "created a fertile recruiting environment for rightwing extremists and even resulted in confrontations between such groups and government authorities." The assessment further addresses the "lone wolf" concerns stating:

The possible passage of new restrictions on firearms and the return of military veterans facing significant challenges reintegrating into their communities could lead to the potential emergence of terrorist groups or lone wolf extremists capable of carrying out violent attacks.

The 2015 [Law Enforcement Assessment of the Violent Extremist Threat](#), conducted by the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security at Duke University, found that LEAs do not actually consider Islamic extremism to be their greatest threat, but rather consider anti-government extremists to be the greatest threat they are likely to encounter. Of those surveyed by the center, 74% conveyed anti-government extremism as a top concern in their respective areas and only 39% viewed Islamic extremism as a concern within their jurisdictions. The most recent White House's National Strategy for Counterterrorism acknowledges that, although the United States continues to face threats from abroad, there is a significant rise in domestic terrorism.

Recently, the debate to label far right-wing extremist groups as domestic terrorists have gained significant attention. Several attacks, including [protestors in Charlottesville and a synagogue in Pittsburgh](#), have led to many organizations like the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) to call for these groups to be investigated as domestic terrorists. Whether it is an FTO like IS or a domestic neo-fascism group, police departments must continue to stay informed from their federal counterparts of these groups' criminal tactics and techniques.

Thinning Resources

Federal agency resources (e.g., those of the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI) are already overextended on a national level, which makes it difficult to offer significant resources to local law enforcement. The FBI currently has 2,000 counterterrorism agents assigned, with only 250 agents focusing on domestic terrorism issues. The United States does not have a domestic terrorism statute; the Justice Department depends on vaguely connected statutes to prosecute domestic terrorism cases. The FBI defines [domestic terrorism](#) as, "Perpetrated by individuals and/or groups inspired by or associated with primarily U.S.-based movements that espouse extremist ideologies of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature." With the lack of domestic federal terrorism laws,

though, [federal terrorism cases are dropped to state level](#) terrorism charges. Currently, there are [34 U.S. states and the District of Columbia](#) with varying anti-terrorism laws for prosecution.



The threat of terrorism on U.S. soil continues to loom with the recent arrests of four suspected [IS members](#) in Nicaragua. It is believed the four men's destination was the U.S. border for illegal entry. It is conceivable that they would have enlisted members of

Mexican cartels to assist them in crossing the U.S. border. Cartel members that control the drug running and human trafficking on the border are known as [gatekeepers](#). Gatekeepers control every aspect of the border area for the Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs). These gatekeepers and TCOs have long been suspected of aiding ["special interest aliens" or terrorist watch list individuals](#) to enter the United States as part of their human smuggling activities. TCOs' criminal and terrorist transgressions have led to a proposal to change their designation from TCO to FTO.

In 2011, U.S. border agents found a cache of weapons, including a rocket launcher, assault rifles, and explosives near the Texas Rio Grande. TCOs have long used terrorist tactics to protect their narcotic and human smuggling operations. U.S. Congress Representatives Mark

Green (Tennessee) and Chip Roy (Texas) introduced a [proposal](#) to the State Department to designate Mexican cartels as FTOs. President Donald Trump is “[very seriously](#)” considering the proposal to hinder the cartels’ hold on border operations. This could have a significant impact on law enforcement policing policies throughout the nation.

There are approximately [200 sanctuary jurisdictions](#) in the United States that limit LEAs from policing the public. Officers cannot report on illegal immigrants involved in criminal activity, which can include nationally recognized gangs or transnational gangs like the Mexican cartels. This can be a concerning issue for law enforcement officers who are attempting to identify subjects charged with a crime. Many illegals involved in criminal activity carry fake identification with fictitious names or claim to be juveniles to avoid adult prosecution. Details, like identifying subjects, are often overlooked by lawmakers in jurisdictions, which leave the onus on the officers while processing arrests. The ability for law enforcement officers to confer with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) can be a valuable resource in deterring recidivism, illegal reentries, or [visa overstays](#). It may be a federal issue dealing with illegal aliens, but it is the patrol officer’s job to accurately identify subjects for crime victims and courts.

Local Actions for an International Threat

In a recent interview with the author and retired Texas Department of Public Safety Captain [Jaeson Jones](#), who spent 20 years investigating Mexican cartels, he stated:

The cartels are involved in many of the crimes listed in the “Uniform Crime Report” (UCR), but also transnational crimes like kidnapping, indentured servitude, human trafficking, human smuggling, sex trafficking, public corruption, drug trafficking, gun trafficking and money laundering; none of which are reported on the UCR.

Jones further added that designating the cartels as terrorist organizations:

- Limits the mobility of the cartels domestically and internationally;
- Provides authority to the Department of Defense to work with host nation’s military; and
- Allows the Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of the Treasury to investigate the group’s criminal and monetary network.

In 2018, Mexican cartels were linked to the murders of more than [100 politicians](#) to sway Mexico’s elections from a political plateau of fighting organized crime and gang warfare. This will have a direct effect on the law enforcement officers who protect the U.S. public. These officers must be trained to identify the cartels through human trafficking, sex trafficking, and narcotics that are crossing U.S. borders. As members working for cartels head to the cities, suburbs, and rural neighborhoods, officers must have the ability to also identify traits (e.g., tattoos, hand signs, narcotics connections) linked to the cartels in the law enforcement officers’ jurisdictions.

Domestic terrorism threats pose a unique challenge for law enforcement agencies chiefly due to a variety of existing motivational factors, the propensity for potential violence, and the varying methods of undetected attacks. The laser focus on Islamic international terrorism groups over the past several years has allowed domestic terrorism organizations to gain prominence and attract new members, thus complicating this evolving threat. It is a daunting task, though not impossible, for any agency to modify its policing styles for the changing threat of domestic terrorism. The NYPD has repeatedly proven this, especially since the 9/11 attacks. The NYPD established a counterterrorism unit, rebuilt its Intelligence Division, and embedded officers within overseas law enforcement agencies to identify and police international terrorism.

Police departments across the nation developed a network of information sharing that was unprecedented. The same must be done for cartels as they teeter on becoming FTOs and for far-right extremists as the call to investigate them as domestic terrorists increases. The collaboration of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies can bring about change to policing domestic terrorists' organizations. Agencies liaising and sharing intelligence will help to curtail the growing threat of cartels, left- and right-wing extremists, and self-radicalizing entities. If federal and state lawmakers use the same tenacity to fight the changing domestic terrorist threat of cartels and extremists, the environment will become safer for the United States.

Richard Schoeberl (pictured above), has 25 years of security and law enforcement experience, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Central Intelligence Agency's National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). He has served in a variety of positions throughout his career, ranging from supervisory special agent at the FBI's headquarters in Washington, D.C., to acting unit chief of the International Terrorism Operations Section at the NCTC's headquarters in Langley, Virginia. Before these organizations, he worked as a special agent investigating violent crime, international terrorism, terrorist financing, cyberterrorism, and organized drugs. He was also assigned numerous collateral duties during his FBI tour – including a certified instructor and member of the agency's SWAT program. In addition to the FBI and NCTC, he is an author and has served as a media contributor for Fox News, CNN, PBS, NPR, Al-Jazeera Television, Al Arabiya Television, Al Hurra, and Sky News in Europe. Additionally, he has authored numerous articles on terrorism and security. He is currently a professor of Criminology and Homeland Security at Martin Methodist College and works with Hope for Justice – a global nonprofit combatting human trafficking.

Anthony (Tony) Mottola has over 35 years of law enforcement and security experience including the New York City Police Department and the United States Air Force. He retired as a sergeant detective (SDS) after 25 years as a member of NYPD. He served as executive officer for the NYPD Intelligence Bureau's Strategic Unit, which is a covert counterterrorism initiative and director of the Domestic Liaison Program. He represented the Intelligence Bureau in numerous investigations to include the Boston Bombing, civil unrest, mass shootings, and large-scale incidents outside New York City. During his tenure with the NYPD, he worked additional assignments in Counter Terrorism, Gang Intelligence, Detective Bureau, Task Force, Street Narcotics Enforcement Unit, anti-gang/graffiti units, and patrol. He was a first responder/search leader for recovery efforts and supervisor of security details in the immediate aftermath of World Trade Center attacks. He holds a master's degree from Marist College and a doctoral candidate at Nova Southeastern University. He also co-authored and published the book, "Graffiti," to assist law enforcement in gang investigations and deciphering graffiti. Additionally, he is a professor with Iona College's Criminal Justice Department and Martin Methodist College.

Just Another Day in the Office for the United States Coast Guard

By Martin D. Masiuk

Watching the video of crew members from the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Cutter Munro board and interdict a self-propelled, semi-submersible drug-smuggling vessel on 18 June 2019 is exciting. Their actions were heroic and highly productive. Because of that bravery, 39,000 pounds of cocaine and 933 pounds of marijuana worth a combined estimated \$569 million was seized. For the average person, the video is thrilling. However, for the U.S. Coast Guard, it was just another day in the office. DomPrep salutes the men and women of the USCG who are “Always Ready” to prevent the next maritime disaster and respond to the call when needed.



DomPrep’s Publisher, Martin (Marty) Masiuk recently conducted a podcast interview with DomPrep Advisor CDR Joseph J. Leonard Jr. (USCG, ret.) to hear his reaction on this extraordinary drug seizure. Joe then elaborates on the many missions that the Coast Guard conduct every day.

[Listen](#) to podcast.

Mission Areas:

Non-Homeland Security missions include:

- Marine Safety
- Search and Rescue
- Living Marine Resources (Fisheries Law Enforcement)
- Marine Environmental Protection
- Ice Operations

Homeland Security missions include:

- Ports, Waterways, and Coastal Security (PWCS)
- Drug Interdiction
- Migrant Interdiction
- Defense Readiness
- Other Law Enforcement.

Composition:

- U.S. Coast Guard (40,992)
- U.S. Coast Guard Reserve (7,000)
- U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary (31,000)
- Civilians (8,577)
- 2 Areas/9 Districts/37 Sectors
- 243 Cutters/1,650 Small Boats
- 201 Aircraft (rotary-wing and fixed-wing)

A Typical Day in the Coast Guard (Source: 2017 USCG News):

- Conducts 45 search and rescue cases
- Saves 10 lives
- Saves over \$1.2M in property
- Seizes 874 pounds of cocaine and 214 pounds of marijuana



United States Coast Guard, 18 June 2019

- Conducts 57 waterborne patrols of critical maritime infrastructure
- Interdicts 17 illegal migrants; escorts 5 high-capacity passenger vessels
- Conducts 24 security boardings in and around U.S. ports
- Screens 360 merchant vessels for potential security threats prior to arrival in U.S. ports
- Conducts 14 fisheries conservation boardings
- Services 82 buoys and fixed aids to navigation
- Investigates 35 pollution incidents
- Completes 26 safety examinations on foreign vessels
- Conducts 105 marine inspections
- Investigates 14 marine casualties involving commercial vessels
- Facilitates movement of \$8.7 billion worth of goods and commodities through the nation's maritime transportation system

Average Day in the Coast Guard Auxiliary (Source: USCG Auxiliary Website, 2019):

- Completes 62.5 safety patrols
- Completes 6.2 regatta patrols
- Performs 10.2 vessel assists
- Assists 28 people
- Saves 1 life
- Saves \$341,290 in property
- Participates in 100 operational support missions
- Participates in 48.7 administrative support missions
- Completes 13.4 recruiting support missions
- Educates 369 people on boating safety
- Performs 299 vessel safety checks
- Attends 70 public affairs functions
- Ready – Relevant – Responsive

Martin Masiuk is publisher and founder of DomesticPreparedness.com (DomPrep). Comments and suggestions are welcome. Publisher@DomPrep.com

Seven Universities Upping Cybersecurity Educational Programs

By Joseph Scherrer & David Reddick

Seven universities in the St. Louis, Missouri, area have banded together to improve the quality of cybersecurity education they offer their students. By increasing the number of graduates, together they strive to meet the demand for skilled cybersecurity workers in the region.



It is estimated that there are more open jobs in cybersecurity and information security than qualified graduates, with estimates of 3.5 million open positions by [2021](#). According to a 2018 study by [ISC](#), a nonprofit membership organization, 2.93 million positions were open and unfilled that year. Unless they can hire trained security staff, organizations will not have the capability to create and enforce the correct controls they need to detect or avoid expensive cyberattacks. Failure to implement strong cybersecurity protections can prove very expensive.

A March 2019 report by [CNBC](#), which featured the ISC study, noted the average data breach cost companies \$3.86 million, while large-scale breaches can cost \$350 million or more. For cybersecurity job seekers, this situation bodes well. According to the [U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), the median annual pay in 2018 for a cybersecurity analyst already exceeded \$100,000.

Working Together to Close the Gap

The regional talent gap and the high stakes associated with cybersecurity motivated seven universities in the St. Louis area to band together to constructively deal with these issues. Initial discussions began in February 2017 with a small working group and focused on areas of collaboration, opportunities, and challenges. Ultimately, in December 2017, deans from the institutions agreed to establish the Gateway Higher Education Cybersecurity Consortium ([GHECC](#)), an unprecedented formal collaboration wholly focused on cybersecurity.

GHECC Member Universities
Fontbonne University
Maryville University
Saint Louis University
Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville
University of Missouri – St. Louis
Washington University in St. Louis
Webster University

GHECC's purpose is to establish deliberate cooperation and systematic collaboration of regional universities with an educational and research interest in cybersecurity and magnify

the impact of those institutions on cybersecurity education, research, and economic development. Its mission is to:

- Facilitate communication among universities, commercial firms, government entities, and community organizations on the range of challenges and opportunities surrounding cybersecurity;

- Identify avenues for academic collaboration in the cybersecurity arena;
- Create and disseminate cybersecurity knowledge; and
- Solve pressing cybersecurity problems of interest to regional stakeholders.

As a nonprofit organization, the GHECC operates under bylaws and a governance structure to guide strategy, plans, and activities in pursuit of its mission. The GHECC accomplishes its mission through a governing board, executive committee, and several standing working groups including membership and outreach, corporate engagement, student involvement, and education and research planning. In the latter half of 2019, the GHECC will be conducting a hackathon, a career fair, and an industry talent summit.

Addressing Community Needs

The St. Louis region is home to several significant federal facilities, including Scott Air Force Base, which houses the United States Transportation Command. In addition, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency is constructing a \$1.7 billion facility in downtown St. Louis. Both of these agencies have a significant – and growing – need for trained cybersecurity employees. GHECC is working with each of those agencies, with the expectation of continued coordination to help fill the talent gap. Additionally, the region is home to large corporate operations – including Mastercard, Edward Jones, Bayer Plant Science Division, and Centene – that have engaged the consortium to support their cybersecurity needs.



Leading cybersecurity executives say it takes years to effectively train a new hire to become proficient in the range of skills required of a cybersecurity practitioner. The consortium is working with industry leaders to help its member universities develop and improve their cybersecurity degree programs. Similarly, the consortium provides a vehicle for its members to hear from potential employers and create courses that align with the needs of corporate and government clients.

By building cybersecurity undergraduate, graduate, and Ph.D. programs with employers in mind – while also taking into account the growing academic body of knowledge – the consortium believes academia can increase the pipeline of skilled cybersecurity technicians and engineers to begin narrowing the cybersecurity skills gap.

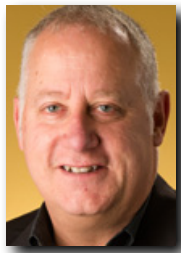
Joseph Scherrer (pictured above) is executive director, Professional Education, McKelvey School of Engineering, Washington University in St. Louis and a member of the Executive Committee for the Gateway Higher Education Cybersecurity Consortium. He also is a retired U.S. Air Force Colonel.

David Reddick is executive director of the Consortium. He also is chief strategy officer and co-founder of Bio-Defense Network, a public health preparedness consultancy.

Reducing Weather Anxiety Among Emergency Managers

By Andrew Altizer & Steve Harris

Imagine this scenario. A tornado watch has been in effect for the past six hours. The severe thunderstorm warning expires as the squall line passes over the area, which escaped significant severe weather. Although the Storm Prediction Center shows the area has been downgraded from enhanced to marginal, the Day 4-8 prediction indicates a 15% chance of severe weather in the area on Wednesday – today is Friday. Here comes another one.



Midwestern, Southern, and Southeastern emergency managers experience extended severe weather threats during the spring and early summer months. Coastal emergency managers and certain inland emergency managers must keep an eye on the hurricane threat, especially during the peak of hurricane season, which usually starts in August. In addition, Southwestern, Midwestern, and Northeastern emergency managers are often frequently under great pressure for winter weather.

- Weather threats are exhausting – especially when the forecast is ongoing. As such, emergency managers need to know what to do to reduce weather anxiety. Following are several ideas – some more concrete than others:
- Truly understand the potential impacts of weather on the community. Develop strategies to reduce the impacts. Ensure that executive leadership understands the potential impacts, and supports the response and continuity efforts.
- Minimize new initiatives and programs during known inclement and severe weather seasons. Planning a new “roll out” or large symposium increases the stress level when severe weather looms.
- Exercise – tabletops, drills, and functional exercises designed to increase preparedness and reduce impacts will be very beneficial when the storm hits. Physical exercise also is a great stress reducer.
- Build collaborative relationships with the people responsible for the aftermath of storm damage. Know the people who clear the snow and ice, or clear debris from the roadways. Meet, and sometimes just visit, with them frequently – not just when a storm is approaching. Knowing they are prepared and available will make the emergency manager’s job far less stressful.
- Trust – have a good relationship with the executive who makes weather-related decisions. This person understands that weather is fickle and often unpredictable.

- Regularly focus on continuity. Emergency managers cannot stop a storm, but they can develop effective strategies to reduce the impacts after the storm. Knowing that there is a plan (and back-up plan when relevant) for power outages, debris removal, food service, etc. eases the stresses that come with the job.
- Have a family plan. For example, needing to “pick up the kids after school” just after the National Weather Service ([NWS](#)) issues a weather bulletin is extremely stressful if there is no back-up plan.
- Build resource capacity to meet the threat – snow/ice removal equipment, generators, chainsaws, food, etc. all provide the emergency manager with a certain level of comfort.
- Spend extra time, effort, and resources with key stakeholders (e.g., residence life/housing on a campus) to make sure they are prepared for the aftermath of storms.
- Participate in the NWS’s Storm Ready Program. For either a community or campus, this certification through the local NWS office is an excellent way to review, improve, and standardize severe weather preparedness and response procedures.
- Develop a good relationship with the local NWS office. It certainly inspires more confidence in a forecast when the senior leadership team knows that the weather forecast came directly from the NWS versus a weather app on a phone. Each NWS office offers a variety of products that are designed to equip county, local, and campus decision-makers with reliable and current weather forecasts.
- Have a back-up weather-monitoring plan – as funding permits – using a private weather service vendor or a local weather station. Although the NWS should be the standard for communicating weather watches and warnings to the community, private weather providers and local weather monitoring stations are excellent tools to provide another source of information in order to supplement NWS forecasts. Additionally, special events (e.g., outdoor concerts, sporting events, festivals, commencement) may require an additional level of specialized forecasting for lighting monitoring, wind speeds, and precise storm tracking that vendors and local weather stations will likely be able to provide.



- For emergency managers on a college campus or those who live in or near a college town, check to see if there is a geography and/or atmospheric sciences program. Such programs may offer access to several meteorologists on campus who can provide local weather monitoring forecasts.
- Test the emergency notification system. Many community members rely on outdoor warning sirens and other emergency notification phone/text systems for their primary notification method for severe weather warnings. Having emergency notification systems that are well maintained (outdoor sirens), are tested frequently, and have high levels of participation (phone/text systems) can reduce stress for emergency management professionals during periods of severe weather.
- Test the emergency operations center (EOC) by activating either virtually or in person by having appropriate personnel respond to the actual EOC site. Many personnel may know that they are required to be part of an EOC during a weather emergency, but a large number may not know their roles or responsibilities once they respond. Partial and virtual activations may be ideal for severe weather monitoring situations.
- Continue to educate members of the community about the importance of having family emergency plans and emergency kits as well as knowing which types of severe weather can impact them. If these preparedness actions are embraced by members of the community, it can help reduce the number of 911 calls, which then decreases the need for public safety resources for non-life-threatening response calls during severe weather.

There is little doubt that severe weather causes anxiety for emergency management professionals. It is not enjoyable to receive an email from the NWS indicating a special weather webinar is scheduled for Saturday at 2 p.m. due to the potential for severe weather in the area. Hopefully, several of the tips included above can possibly reduce some of that anxiety and build confidence among senior leadership team.

Andrew Altizer (pictured above) is the director of emergency management at the Department of Public Safety, Kennesaw State University. He previously served as the director of emergency preparedness at Georgia Tech, and as the critical infrastructure protection program manager at Georgia Emergency Management Agency. He has a Master of Arts degree in Higher Education Administration from the University of Missouri, and Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice from Truman State University. He also has over 10 years of military experience, including in Afghanistan in 2002.

Steven (Steve) Harris is the director of the Office of Emergency Preparedness and Insurance and Claims Management for the University of Georgia. Previously, he served as the State School Safety Unit manager with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency – Office of Homeland Security (GEMA). He has also served as a police officer and as an assistant security administrator of a school district. He graduated from Georgia Southern University with a degree in history and continued his education at The University of Georgia by receiving a master's degree in social science education. He has worked in public safety for 24 years and holds a Professional Emergency Manager certification through the State of Georgia.

UNLABELED LEAKING BARREL



FLIR Griffin G510

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