Happy New Year! Can you believe it is 2010? Shouldn’t we be flying in our own space ships by now? But that might result in more disasters. Speaking of disasters… Welcome to the Disaster Digest (aka UWEM Newsletter). In an effort to bring you a professional product containing the latest in emergency news on campus we have reformatted our newsletter. Please let us know if there are topics of interest you would like to see for the next issue. Happy reading!

Preparedness Challenge

“It won’t happen to me. Disasters happen in other places to other people.” We all have a tendency to think disasters don’t happen where we live. Reality is disasters have occurred across our state from severe winter storms, floods and extended power outages. Guess what? If you live in the Pacific Northwest, you live in a seismic zone, meaning we are at risk for earthquakes! Are you ready for the Big One?

Each of us has a personal responsibility to take action to prepare ourselves, our loved ones, homes, pets and neighborhoods. A disaster is an event that has exceeded the capabilities of typical first responders. This means you could be on your own for days to weeks.

Where do you begin to prepare for such an event? The concept of preparedness can seem overwhelming, so let’s break it down into steps. It’s time for you and your family to take the preparedness challenge. Prepare in a Year during 2010! Set up a planning calendar and select one hour each month to complete the designated monthly preparedness activity.

Winter Quarter
January: Action Plan
February: Out-of-Area Contact
March: Water Contact

Spring Quarter
April: 72-Hour Comfort Kit
May: Important Documents
June: Extended Events

Summer Quarter
July: Under the Bed
August: Utility Safety
September: Drop, Cover and Hold

Fall Quarter
October: Fire Safety
November: Shelter in Place
December: Home Hazard Hunt

For more information click here.
During the months of November and December, UWEM staff helped coordinate three H1N1 (swine flu) clinics on the UW Seattle campus and assisted the Bothell campus in their planning efforts for their satellite clinic. UWEM staff provided logistical support to the medical and facility teams to ensure a smooth operation. Nearly 4,000 UW students, faculty and staff were vaccinated prior to the holiday break. We would like to thank our partners at HUB, UW Police, Student Life, Housing and Food Services and Hall Health in assisting in this massive effort. While the second-wave of H1N1 seems to have passed and the pandemic is waning, we continue to be on watch for the resurgence of the third (and likely) final wave later this winter. County, state and local health authorities still encourage everyone to get their H1N1 vaccinations – now available in most private doctor’s offices, local pharmacies and in many community health clinics. What a simple, and practical, New Year’s resolution!

Apple Cup 2009

The Apple Cup is the annual rivalry with Washington State University and the largest college football game in the Pacific North West. The 2009 Apple Cup took place here at the UW in Husky Stadium on Saturday, November 28. UW Emergency Management was there to help with the many needs for emergency medical care. UWEM assisted at the University’s Special Event Mobile Operation Center (SEMOC) activation by helping with some communications/radio checks on the evening of Friday, November 27. UWEM sat in on the UWPD briefing prior to the game on Saturday, November 28 and responded to dispatched incidents by Husky First Aid to assist with the large volume of emergency medical calls. On scene, UWEM provided valuable information to the stadium Command Post about the incident that helped the Command Post prioritize emergency response efficiently.

Although it only occurs every other year at Husky Stadium, the Apple Cup represents a wonderful opportunity for UWEM to partner with UWPD and other emergency response departments in a more directly active way that promotes cooperation and builds a critical relationship for excellence in responding.

"As emergency managers we must continue to make sure that preparedness, and especially the preparedness of the public, is a top priority. What we do now to increase the preparedness of the public, who are a vital member of the emergency response team, will go a long way in increasing our success in responding to and recovering from the next disaster." Craig Fugate, FEMA Director
Conference Time April 6-7, 2010

Mark your calendars for yet another world-class conference! The Partners in Emergency Preparedness Conference will be held April 6-7, 2010 at the Tacoma Convention and Trade Center. This is the largest and most successful regional emergency preparedness conference in the Pacific Northwest. Annually the conference hosts nearly 700 people representing business, schools, government, the nonprofit sector, emergency management professionals and volunteer organizations.

The Partners Conference attracts top-notch speakers with expertise that includes earthquake research, contingency planning, school preparedness, technology, news media, and public health. Speakers and exhibitors provide cutting-edge information on subjects such as business continuity planning, school safety, public health preparedness, homeland security and public information.

http://www.piepc.org

Annual EOC Disaster Drill Announced

With the holidays behind us, UWEM staff and our campus disaster planning partners have begun to prepare for our annual springtime campus leadership disaster response and recovery drill. Scheduled for Thursday, April 22, 2010 from 10am – 4pm, this simulated crisis response center will test the ability of the University to respond and react to simulated events and incidents impacting the Seattle campus. While the date and time of the drill are known this year, the actual disaster event will be kept secret. The 6-hour drill will not impact university operations and will be conducted at the UW’s current Emergency Operations Center (EOC), located in the Bryant Building. UWEM staff is also recruiting volunteers to act as our disaster “simulators” and controllers for the drill. Contact Siri McLean at 206-897-8081 for more information.

New Online Earthquake Prediction Tool

Have you ever wondered what the chances are of a major earthquake hitting your home, school or business? While there currently are scores of technical tools, websites, academic and geologic studies to answer that complicated question, you now can find the answer in less than 10 seconds with just the click of a mouse! Go [here](http://www.piepc.org) enter your zip code and viola! Out spits some cool numbers, graphics and probabilities of a damaging earthquake (over magnitude 5 or greater) in the next week through 5 years. You even get to pick the variables! While some local seismologists and earth scientists do not feel that there is enough “good science” behind this website and its predictions, UWEM staff feels that any simple tools to raise awareness and spur action to prepare can’t be all that bad.
UW Internal Grant Helps Keep US Safe

UWEM’s on-going assistance of awarding grants to departments who have applied for emergency funds is a very important part of keeping the campus safe during times of crisis. Selected departments are continuously busy purchasing necessary items to keep the university going during times of major events. Just to give you an example of what some of these monies can do for a department and the campus as a whole, we’d like to share some of the important things that are being done.

The Environmental Health & Safety Dept. of the UW received a very important grant to purchase critical air monitoring equipment for the PEAT Team (The Universities Pre-Entry Assessment Team). The equipment will provide the capability to safely enter and assess buildings post-earthquake for hazardous materials releases. This capability would be required for buildings that contain chemical, radiological or biological materials before the buildings can be searched for survivors or given an interior structural assessment by the campus engineers. It would also enable the PEAT Team to have faster and more accurate readings and data communication to the EOC, safer equipment to protect the lives of our entry teams, less time spent by the team in calibration of their meters just to mention a few critical upgrades. UWEM is proud to be part of the granting process to allow these important purchases to be made.

Padelford Garage Retrofit Complete

The University of Washington was overjoyed when Facilities Services (via UWEM) received the formal notice on March 25, 2008 that the UW received a $620,000 grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to seismically strengthen the Padelford Garage and pedestrian walkway.

After a 2-year proposal, application and review cycle, the UW is happy to announce the upgraded completion of this very critical university structure!! We are now awaiting the final inspection by engineers. The Padelford Garage was identified in the UW’s Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Analysis (HIVA) as one of the UW structures most susceptible to earthquake damage, especially due to landslides.

Construction and renovation activities began as soon as the formal contract was signed. Capital Projects in conjunction with UW Parking Services, were the UW’s project managers, with UWEM/Facilities Services (aka Steve Charvat) acting as the Principal Investigator for the grant. This grant marks a milestone for the UW since the establishment of the Emergency Management Office: over $4 million in grants to support and protect the university against natural and human-caused hazards and disasters!
Winter Weather Tips

Winter in the Pacific Northwest can be fun and challenging. A few tips to help keep you safe will maximize the fun and reduce some of the challenges may be found here.

Some additional tips for personal outdoor safety in the winter are to dress appropriately for weather and always have an extra layer or two. Avoid wearing cotton. It loses all of its insulating value when wet and can promote hypothermia. Cotton socks will eventually cause blisters. Wear wool or technical fabrics such as polar fleece. These will keep their insulating value, even when wet. This goes for your hands and head, too. Dress in layers, with the first layer being a “wicking” material that will help keep your skin warm and dry. The middle layers should be bulky for insulation and the outer layers should be wind and water-proof. Remember: NO COTTON.

Plan appropriately for the time of year. A late-afternoon walk in the woods will be in the dark by 4:00 PM. Take a buddy with you and be sure to have the 10 outdoor essentials. One final thing we recommend: A fully charged cell phone (turn it off until you need it). Depending on where you are in Washington, you may or may not get service. However, countless Search and Rescue (SAR) missions have been successful because the subject of the search had a cell phone to either call for help with or to signal SAR aircraft with at night (the back-lit screen of the cell phone can be seen for miles with night-vision devices pilots use).

Winter safety preparedness is about using a little bit of ingenuity and foresight to have an enjoyable, safe time outside and to have some options available to you if something unexpected happens.

Disaster Housing Pilot Program

“Guess what mom? I got a double-wide!” Yes those were my exact words as I arrived at the National Emergency Training Center (NETC) last month. It was my first trip to EMI and scheduled to take two courses back to back meant I would be living on campus for two weeks. As luck would have it I was chosen to live in and evaluate one of the six Disaster Housing Pilot Program trailers.

My “double-wide” was a pleasant surprise. It consisted of two bedrooms, a living room, dining room, full kitchen and bath. Before I arrived my biggest concern was how warm would I be in this trailer during the cold nights back east. Again to my surprise my home away from home was very toasty. My only complaint was in the bathroom. There was no counter space for toiletries and the mirror above the sink was placed for a 6 foot tall male. I could only see half my face in it and never really know what I looked like when I walked out the door.

The Disaster Housing Pilot Program is run by the Joint Housing Solutions Group (JHSG). Created by FEMA in September 2006 to research, evaluate, and document alternatives to traditional disaster housing. The pilot will help FEMA better understand each unit’s performance capabilities and limitations in assisting disaster victims. The goal being to identify viable alternatives and provide flexibility in FEMA’s selection of disaster housing.

If you are attending a class at EMI and would like to participate in this pilot program, send an email to FEMA-Housing@dhs.gov.

- Siri-Elizabeth McLean