A Message from Philip Mann, PE
Emergency Management Technical Committee Chairperson, 2016-2017

Changes strike rapidly in this ever-changing world and Public Works plays a direct part in the planning, preparation, response, recovery and mitigating future events. Every year, we experience unexpected natural and man-made disasters. 2016 has seen wildfires, extreme rains, 100 year flooding in places like West Virginia, tornados, homeland security disasters like the Pulse Night Club shooting in Orlando, etc. In each case, Public Works must respond whether it is to establish traffic control at a perimeter or deal with the debris, destruction and reconstruction after severe flooding. It is imperative that we take the lead in restoring Lifeline Services.

We don’t know what tomorrow holds but we, as public works professionals, must be prepared to meet the challenges whether it is our daily projects, maintenance and operations or responding to the next disaster. We must continue to work with other first responders and develop integrated response plans and understand the premise of Unified Command. We need to train, collaborate, exercise, evaluate and repeat the cycle. By being repetitive, we will be able to respond quickly and efficiently to disasters and emergencies and mesh right in with the other first responders. Public Works professionals are recognized First Responders and we must play an integral role in the “All-Hazards” and “Whole Community” approach to emergency management and homeland security. We are constantly being reminded that we must be prepared to stand on our own for the first 72 hours.

Change will continue to be forthcoming for public works professionals. Technological and policy changes in our daily operations and emergency management will be dotted across our future. APWA Emergency Management Committee members represent APWA on many diverse committees on some of these issues such as FirstNet Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network, the National Homeland Security Consortium, FHWA’s Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Program, etc.

Your Emergency Management Technical Committee and subcommittee members are dedicated to representing our association in ways never envisioned only a few years ago. Contributions from individuals across the United States and Canada are building credibility, relationships and learning opportunities that elevate our industry status among emergency services peers. As individuals and leaders, each of us is called to action in furthering education, training, exercising, and preparedness throughout all public works agencies.

Collaboration between APWA and FEMA/EMI led to the creation of four public works-centric online courses, available as independent study programs. Compliance with National Incident Management System (NIMS) requires that all agency responders complete IS-100, IS-200, IS-700 and IS-800 online courses. Together with the following four, a well-rounded training base is available to all organization staff—at no cost, other than the commitment of time.

* IS-552 The Public Works Role in Emergency Management
* IS-554 Emergency Planning for Public Works
* IS-556 Damage Assessment for Public Works
* IS-558 Public Works and Disaster Recovery
In addition to system training, the Emergency Management Committee recommends that in 2014, the big health issue was Ebola. Now, in 2016, Zika has been on the forefront of public works leaders conversations. This mosquito born virus has become a challenge to health providers. It also continues to present problems to public works agencies that have mosquito control programs as we must deal with the growing fear and misinformation being spread. Over the coming year, public works agencies will work with Health Departments to continue to address this growing problem.

Members also have the opportunity to network and discuss electronically, these and other issues via the APWA Connect Emergency Management infoNOW community. If you are not a member now, you should sign up. Follow the links in the Resources section of the APWA website to become involved.

The Emergency Management Committee urges each public works professional to take the lead in working with your fellow first responders. Utilize disaster drills and planned special events as training opportunities for you and your staff to integrate into your community’s Incident Command System (ICS).

If you would like to be involved in the work of the Emergency Management Committee or one of the subcommittees, please contact me (mannpr@cityofgainesville.org) or any of the other committee members.

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