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## Practicing What We Preach

By Curtis Sommerhoff

We say these year after year; catch phrases like “It only takes one” and “If we fail to plan then we plan to fail”; hoping to grab the attention of our residents and encourage them to dust off that layer of complacency that often comes with a succession of very quiet hurricane seasons. According to Colorado State University researchers, the 2010 hurricane season is going to produce above average activity. I know what this means to emergency managers, but will these statements motivate the public to take action?

It's been over four years since our last significant storm event in South Florida so I think it is safe to say that the complacency bug may have gotten hold of some. Instead of attacking it with several messages this year, I am going to focus on one; “Preparedness Starts at Home.”

Chances are if you are reading this newsletter you work in public safety, government or have an interest in disaster preparedness. Your friends, family and neighbors, like mine, are going to take their

preparedness cues from you. Let's show them that we practice what we preach.

Here are some of the steps I have taken and the activities I undertake each year, making sure everyone knows why it's been or being done.

- I prune my trees each spring, removing damaged limbs. This also deters root failure.
- Family and friends have all seen my safe room; aka my laundry room. We will be both safe and enjoying that fresh laundry smell.
- When it comes to water I have a supply of store-bought and bottle my own.
- If you have ever seen me in the grocery store then you've seen me using coupons; especially when purchasing my hurricane supplies.
- We've all invested in electronics. I have a surge protector to better assure I will have access to the news. Equally important, it's football season.
- Cordless phones are great, until the electricity goes out. That's why I have cordless and corded phones in my home.

• I've planned for my pets as well; ½ gallon of water per day per dog, current rabies tag and I.D. on their collars and they are in their carriers during the storm. This helps them feel secure and they're ready to move in case we need to get out of the house.

• I invested in a generator. To make sure I do not have problems with it when I need it, I keep it well maintained and test it throughout the year.

• My BBQ grill runs on propane so I have a full tank for the Memorial Day bar-b-que and it lasts through the end of the year.

• I keep my cars' gasoline tanks at least ½ full at all times. It gives me better fuel consumption. Come hurricane season I try to keep them full.

• Everyone in the neighborhood knows when I'm putting up my shutters. If I make enough noise, they'll come out and help. I use a combination of panel (more cost effective) and accordion (for upstairs.)

Let's spread our message visually this year, as well as verbally.

### From the Director's Chair

The Miami-Dade County Department of Emergency Management is actively monitoring the Deepwater Horizon incident and preparations are underway to deal with any impact.



## Dreaming the Not-So-Impossible Dream: Striving for Excellence

By Roslyn Viterbo

*"We are committed to bringing all of our departments through the Sterling process, not because we want to win awards, but because the journey is so informative and valuable to our management team and our organization."*  
~ George Burgess, County Manager Miami-Dade County

To assure that our Department is best meeting the needs of our communities; whether it is residents, stakeholders, or partners, we undertook that journey and completed the Sterling Challenge. Based on the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence the Sterling Challenge uses tested standards of excellence to

assess the overall profile of an organization as well as seven functional categories. It is, in the simplest terms, a business tool functioning as a guide to making improvements that generate better operations, customer value, and overall results.

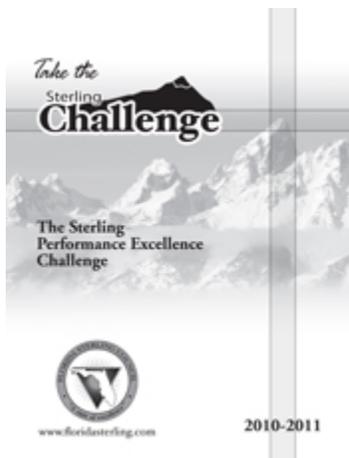
We first completed the 30-page application in which we defined our processes in the seven categories of the Sterling Criteria. These criteria are: Leadership; Strategic Planning; Customer Focus; Measurements, Analysis, and Knowledge Management; Workforce Focus; Process Management and Results.

Upon receipt of our application package in December 2009, the Florida Sterling Council assigned

our examiners and forwarded each of them copies of our submission. The examiners first independently reviewed the application and identified our strengths and areas for improvement; after which they came together, discussed their findings, and formed a consensus.

These same evaluators visited our office in March. At this time we provided a presentation highlighting some of our achievements. I don't want to toot our own horn but we have a great deal of which we can be proud.

DEM staff members have been asked to submit content for technical guides, sit on or chair





## DEM Employee Spotlight

This quarter our  
spotlight is shining on  
Matt Shpiner

Matthew, a Miami native, graduated with a BBA from the University of Miami (UM) in 2008. While at the UM, Matthew co-founded an on-campus Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) serving in the position of Vice President of Operations. He responded to two major activations for the UM: Hurricane Ernesto in 2006 and the Countywide Power Outage in February 2008, serving in the ICS positions of Operations Section Chief and Incident Commander, respectively.

Matthew continued his education receiving his Master's in Criminal Justice from Northeastern University in January 2010. In the course of his graduate studies Matthew accepted an Emergency Planner internship with the Massachusetts Port Authority at Boston's Logan International Airport. While there he developed the airport's All-Hazards Terminal Evacuation Plan. During his final semester he returned to Miami and began an internship with the Miami-Dade County Department of Emergency Management; developing a County-Wide All-Hazards Evacuation Plan.

Matt interviewed for and based on his previous emergency management background, his stellar performance to date and having scored the highest during the interview process he was awarded the position of Emergency Management Specialist on February 24<sup>th</sup>.

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local, state and federal committees; received numerous awards and recognitions; and hold themselves personally accountable to the mission of this office.

Next the evaluators interviewed each staff member, individually and/or in groups and had several complete a survey. Through this the evaluators were able to verify if the Department had accurately portrayed its work processes and operational framework. Upon completion of their assessment they provided a preliminary out-briefing of their findings.

All-in-all our report was pretty favorable; not to say it was without areas upon which we could improve. One area that stood out was customer satisfaction. The evaluators pointed out that though the office and staff had numerous recognitions and awards that those did not necessarily speak for our customers.

Our Director did not need to wait for the formal report to acknowledge that this was an issue; he immediately tasked staff with developing the Department's Partner/Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey. So please, if you receive one from our Department do not disregard it. We are making a sincere effort to improve our Department and need your insight and input.



The American Red Cross and AmeriCorps start setting up for their role as instructors.



Aventura's Police Department Crime Prevention Unit made sure everyone was well fed...Hmmm, good.

## CERTs – We've Dusted off the Rust

By Roslyn Viterbo

The Department of Emergency Management (DEM) hosted a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) refresher course on Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup>. In addition to DEM staff, the American Red Cross (ARC) and AmeriCorps provided instructors and controllers.

The hands-on refresher was held at the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Urban Search and Rescue training facility so that the participants could get the real-life feel of a disaster area. Four skills vital to emergency first responders were practiced; medical operations, including triage and first aid; lifts and carries, for removing the injured person(s) from harm's way; fire suppression, extinguishing small fires and

cribbing. Cribbing is the mechanism for lifting large and/or heavy objects off of a trapped person.

Participation in this refresher course also offered the opportunity for Miami-Dade County CERTs to interact with CERT members from other locales. The refresher course was opened to the regional teams and both Hallandale and Hollywood CERTS joined in.



The City of Aventura, a long-time supporter of the County's CERT program, provided a delicious lunch for everyone, including hot dogs and an assortment of chips and sodas. Everyone went back for seconds.

As a special thank-you to our CERT members for their commitment to our County, each participant was given a CERT All-Weather Forms book. This is an excellent tool for our CERTs to have on hand as it contains multiple copies of each standard CERT form. Pages are perforated and can be easily removed and turned over to professional public safety personnel when they arrive on scene. Everyone was very excited to receive this addition to their CERT kits.

If you are interested in learning more about this valuable program please visit:  
<http://www.miamidade.gov/oem/CERT.asp>

# Activate!

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Department of Emergency Management

## Volunteer Opportunities

American Red Cross of Greater Miami & the Keys  
(305) 644-1200  
[American Red Cross](#)

Switchboard of Miami  
(305) 358-1640 x 139  
[Switchboard of Miami](#)

Hands on Miami  
(305) 646-7200  
[Hands On Miami](#)

Citizen's Crime Watch  
(305) 470 - 1670  
[Citizens Crime Watch](#)

Miami-Dade Police Dept  
Citizens Volunteer Program  
(305) 471-2360  
[MDPD Citizen Volunteer](#)

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)  
(305) 468-5400  
[CERT](#)

### Department of Emergency Management

Main number: 305-468-5400  
Fax: 305-468-5401

[www.miamidade.gov/oem](http://www.miamidade.gov/oem)

3-1-1 Answer Center: 305-468-5900  
Special Needs: 305-513-7700  
TDD: 305-468-5402

#### DEM Vision

"A disaster ready community."

#### DEM Mission Statement

"To support our community's disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation needs through the coordination of information and resources"

## Photo Gallery



M-D Emergency Management distributes materials developed for young children at a South Dade Event



A team poses next to their trophy, a successful cribbing during which they lifted about 1000+ lbs at the April CERT Refresher Course.



New renovations to the Miami-Dade County EOC include a video wall that allows us to capture and display multiple data views in one easy-to-view central location.

## Upcoming Trainings

**June 23 – 9:30am to 2:30pm**  
Rapid Assessment Planning (G-250.7)  
West Palm Beach, Florida  
[Apply for this Training](#)

**June 28 – 29, 8:30am to 5:00pm**  
Mitigation Planning Workshop for Local Government (G-318)  
Palm Beach County  
[Apply for this Training](#)

**July 7-9**  
MGT-347 – ICS Executive Summary  
Tamarac, Florida  
[Apply for this training](#)

**July 27-28 or July 29-30**  
HSEEP Toolkit Lab Training Course  
Plantation, Florida  
[To apply for July 27 - 28](#)  
[To apply for July 29 - 30](#)

For more information on upcoming or online EM courses, click [here](#) for state-sponsored training and [here](#) for FEMA's independent study program

## Dates to Remember

**July 4<sup>th</sup>** – Independence Day

### Did You Know?

**June is 'Home Safety Month'** – Visit the Home Safety Council's website to see a slew of safety hints by clicking on this link: [Home Safety Month](#)

**Carlos Alvarez**  
Mayor

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