



# REM Meeting

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April 6, 2018

- **Welcome and Introductions**

- TJ Manor, REM Vice Chair
- Matt Garrison, Bell Helicopter
- Introductions

- **Guest Speakers**

- Kevin Oden, Natural Gas Service Disruption
  - Isolated in Dallas, but future of our profession will be overtaken by crumbling infrastructure resulting in bigger impacts.
  - A year ago may not have been as successful of a response because citywide changes from responding in cost-effective ways to a customer service orientation towards residents.
  - Timeline of Events:
    - February 23-27: Feb 23, house exploded, it was the third to have an incident as a result of gas leaks. The explosion killed a 12 year old girl and injured her family. This prompted an evacuation of 6 blocks, including 300 homes. A recreation center was set up in coordination with ARC. Atmos was handing out debit cards to residents. They were given hotel rooms and whatever resources they needed to get there. Dallas set up a command post. Conducted a townhall meeting for residents to ask questions. Dallas OEM were SME to Atmos for emergency management- public information, incident command, etc. Atmos was open to suggestions and welcomed help.
    - February 28: Discovered that all pipes in the area were corroded by soils and rain. Needed evacuations of 2800 homes, around 10,000 residents until pipes were replaced or repaired. Notified all department directors for 1800 meeting at the EOC. Divided into three groups; public information, logistics, support services. Needed to decide if they were going to evacuate all residents, as the gas was going to be shut off for a planned outage.
    - March 1: Press conference and announced financial support of \$250 per family. Challenges with providing debit cards for 10,000 people. Found a bank to cut cashiers checks from Amarillo and distributed those for short notice, but shifted to direct deposit and reloadable debit cards. Provided food and drinks for all residents while waiting.
    - March 2: Additional evacuations. Changed process at recreation centers to provide more efficient services. Three schools were offline because of evacuations, but they were brought back online with help by Atmos by CNG, as well as all private businesses.
    - March 3-7: Financial assistance ended, so residents had to return for additional financial assistance. Brought in Navy Seals to help provide security for financial distribution.
    - March 8-18: Reconnections began. Challenges with communicating with residents to turn services back on.



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- Residential Impacts and Services
  - Three command locations; EOC, Atmos Command, Field Command posts.
  - If there was a gas leak, hazmat deployed with Atmos to test. If it is bad, Atmos conducted a pressure test to how bad it was and to determine if evacuations were needed and for how far.
  - Once evacuated, they wanted to know where residents were staying and what their needs were. Maintained daily contact.
  - Initial support, financial support, and customer information center.
  - Briefings with Council, City Management, addressing unmet needs.
  - Communicating with the residents. Not a television or social media demographic. Reached residents by going door-to-door. Couldn't use reverse 9-1-1 or IPAWS because of risk of answering phone with gas leaks, resulting in an explosion.
  - Return to normal operations and complete reconnection services.
- Recreation Centers
  - Atmos placed a Vice-President at all centers for de-escalations with residents and to address concerns.
  - Needed translators. Young families, elderly, and Spanish speaking communities.
- Press was reporting on how much money residents were receiving, which raised concerns of safety.
- Residents didn't want public outreach, they wanted to feel safe. In the future, focus on building the personal relationship with community to help them feel safe and informed.
- David Taylor, Insurance Fraud
  - There are 16 investigators with Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) across the state that with 12,000 investigations open.
  - Responses, December 2015, Harvey, Denton Hail, Collin Co Hail.
  - The issue is that there is no licensing. Anyone can respond as a roofer after a disaster, committing contractor fraud. TDI is putting together plans for local governments to help their residents since there is a lack of licensing.
  - Following disasters, TDI began talking to law enforcement, then were introduced to emergency management and city officials. EM plans for the incident, but not how to prevent the fraud after the fact.
  - Out of state contractors or people come into town, take down payment for services, and then leave. There isn't a way to contact them because of lack of licensing.
  - Solicitation in Garland and Rowlett requires contractors to be registered with the city in order to receive permits. Permits are hung in the window, so it is obvious of a house that is being worked on doesn't have a permit.
  - Two guys from Houston borrowed a new truck from a dealership, got a pay as you go phone, and got a rush order on a car magnet to drive around acting as roofers so they collect down payments. It is difficult to prosecute because it becomes a civil case once any work has been performed (like placing a tarp on a roof).
  - If you allow solicitations within the city, background check the individuals.
  - Building permits: It is easy to see a building permit in a window of a home to see if it legitimate.
  - Delay on permit approvals that will allow for local, already permitted business the



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opportunity to work and discourage out of state contractors from coming to commit fraud.

- Additional actions: PSA released. Recommendations provided to city leadership. Involve local media.
- Contractors will report other contractors. Build relationship with contractors. Build inspector reporting contractors. Residents will stand up for themselves and make informed decisions. New city rules for permitting.
- Educate city and residents. Identify contractors. Deter fraud.
- Suggestions: do a background check on everyone. Don't issue permits for a two week period. Post all requirements online. Register all contractor and crew member. Register license plates on permits. All roof repairs to have a building permit. Require liability insurance from company.
- Registered contractors aren't more trust worthy, but we know who they are.

## ❖ Member Comments or Updates

- TDEM Updates: severe weather tonight. TDEM conference. Letters for presentations went out on Wednesday.
- NCTCOG Updates:
  - Special Events WG meeting was successful. The FBI continue their partnerships with the cities. Maybe hold a SEWG every two years.
  - June 21- Active Shooting Consequence Management workshop for emergency manager.
  - EMWG, RAC, and DSHS working on mass casualty framework.
  - Funded a regional response summit. Will fund a recovery summit soon, maybe November. Use the new national recovery framework in Austin.
  - Regional response directory on hold until emergency managers can be included to avoid point to point contacts without emergency management tracking.
  - Technical rescue training and exercise at TCC.
  - COG going through renovations in meeting spaces.
  - CIKR being looked at regionally. Trying to get a better picture of all of the assets.
  - Cyber threats group will meet next week.
  - New listservs.
- Congressman Burgess Emergency Preparedness Summit at Little Elm High School.

## ❖ Next Meeting:

- Next Meeting is June 1, 2018