

Fort Bend County CERT Member Provides Support to Galveston County during Hurricane Humberto Response

When Hurricane Humberto made landfall recently on the Bolivar Peninsula, Fort Bend County emergency management staff provided needed support to Galveston County. Offering professional assistance and needed relief workers, seven emergency responders from Fort Bend supported Galveston County.

At about 5:30 am on September 13th, Danny Jan, Assistant Emergency Management Coordinator for Fort Bend County, received a phone call from a State of Texas official who was indicating a need for a trained Public Information Officer to assist with standing up a Joint Information Center to handle numerous information requests from local, national, and international media organizations. Jan indicated, "I immediately thought of Elsa Malakoff Maxey, Media Relations Specialist, for the City of Missouri City. I know Elsa is a key participant in the Fort Bend PIO Network, an initiative implemented by the County Office of Emergency Management (OEM), so I contacted Russell Sander, Missouri City's Emergency Management Coordinator and asked if Elsa might be available to assist. Next thing I knew, she was en route to Galveston very early in the morning."

A little bit later in the morning, Jeff Braun, the County's Emergency Management Coordinator, after reviewing situation reports concerning the previous night's landfall near High Island, learned that Galveston County was facing major power and telephone disruptions; the emergency medical system was stressed; and the American Red Cross and other agencies were on their way to the peninsula. "Galveston County is a regional partner," said Braun, "and because of the problems, I contacted the Galveston County EOC and asked if they needed any assistance." After learning of a need for fresh EOC staffing to relief planning, logistics, and communications positions, Braun requested Jan to put together a team to head to Galveston.

The EOC Support Team gathered by Jan and sent to Galveston included Jan; Jim Winton, a Sheriff's Deputy assigned to County Road & Bridge; Janette Walker, OEM Planner; Debbie Kaminski, Assistant Purchasing Agent; Ron Drachenberg, Assistant County Engineer; and Allan Hill, a citizen volunteer amateur radio operator and CERT member who routinely works at the County EOC during times of crisis. These six left in the morning to join Malakoff Maxey. Braun indicated that we sent "the best of our best."

Today, the County Judge will recognize the contributions of these seven individuals at the regularly scheduled Commissioner's Court meeting at 1:00 pm. Judge Robert Hebert, who is also the County's Emergency Management Director, states: "I am proud of our Fort Bend County emergency management responders. Disaster Response is a regional issue and it is not only right, it is truly necessary for the counties in the Houston-Galveston region to support each other in times of disaster. I am fully aware that it may be Fort Bend County requesting assistance from Galveston County the next time. "