



# Knox County Emergency Management Agency

## EMA Director’s Report

March 2023



To: Commissioners Glaser, Pohlman, and Parent:

Below are the operational activities of the Knox County Emergency Management Agency for March 1 – 31, 2023.

### EOC Activations:

#### Ongoing

<b>KX2201(prior KX 2101 and KX2002): 2019 Novel Corona Virus outbreak (2019-nCoV/COVID-19) 1/20/20-5/11/23</b>	Currently (as of 4/4/23) there have been 8,229 cases in Knox County total, with the state having a total of 321,246 cases to date. Knox County has had 58 deaths, the state has had 2,979. Knox County has had 147 hospitalizations since the pandemic began, the state is showing 7,308.
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#### New

<b>KX2305: Winter Storm 3/14-15/2023</b>	EOC open at Level 2 during regular work hours before switching to Level 1 (remote) after hours. This was a pretty rough storm for Knox County. Our power outages are usually fairly pretty tame compared to other counties, but in the end we had a lot more outages than all other counties in the state. The coast had stronger winds and the moisture level in the snow was far higher, which resulted in sticky, heavy snow. At the highest point, we had over 16,000 outages, which is well past more than half of the county being out at the same time. During storms we set priorities for CMP based on life safety first, and normally there only end up being a handful of “level 1” response priority items, but for this storm there were so many incidents involving trees and lines blocking roads with no other route out, or lines setting fires on homes, etc. that at one point it seemed like half of the items were Level 1. We ended up with 72 roads on our tracking sheet, although several roads ended up with multiple calls, just at different ends of the road. We were lucky in the sense that the temperatures warmed up fairly quickly after the storm and the sun came out, so a lot of the snow was already gone not long after the storm was over.
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### Current Operations Updates

#### 1. Disaster Declarations: FEMA-4696-DR:

President Biden approved Disaster Declaration for the December 23, 2022 “Storm Elliott” for the State of Maine on March 23, 2023. Public Assistance will now be made available to the counties of Franklin, Knox, Oxford, Somerset, Waldo and York since those counties were able to verify that they met the required threshold for damages. All counties and municipalities in the state will also have access to funding through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. These funds become available after every disaster declaration in the hopes that it will enable eligible entities to do mitigation work that will help prevent future damages during storms and other events.

#### 2. Disaster Declarations: DR-4522 (COVID-19):

Assuming no one has any arguments with the items included in the request, we should be receiving \$13,545.81.

#### 3. Training:

##### Past:

- **ICS (Incident Command System) 402 Course** – this class is a requirement for policy makers/leadership at the municipal level as part of NIMS (National Incident Management System) compliance. We had a great class on March 9<sup>th</sup>, including select board members from Camden, Friendship, Vinalhaven, and Hope, as well as Commissioner Glaser joined us. I realized just prior to the class that it doesn’t look like Commissioners Pohlman or Parent have ever taken the course and they need to so I will make sure I notify both of you when the next session of this class is scheduled so we can get you caught up.

#### Future:

- **MGT-383: Emergency Operations Plans for Rural Jurisdictions** – we are still working on getting this one rescheduled, hopefully in the month of May.
- **MGT-406: Community Threat Group Identification, Assessment and Information Reporting for Rural Law Enforcement Officers** has finally been rescheduled for April 18<sup>th</sup>. Notice for the class has been distributed to law enforcement in Knox County as well as Lincoln, Waldo, and Sagadahoc Counties.
- **ICS 300/400:** These two classes are the advanced Incident Command System courses that leadership within the command structure are required to take as part of NIMS compliance. It has been a struggle to get these classes taught because there aren't a lot of people in the state who are certified to do so. We are working with a few regional instructors (including Tim Polky) to renew their certification so they can teach these classes here since so many of our agencies have staff needing to take them.
- **Knox County Citizen's Preparedness Academy:** besides the CPR and Stop the Bleed classes, I am working on adding other self-reliance and preparedness courses that will take place both at our offices and also at other entities. The goal is to have a program that takes place county-wide, at either no cost or very little cost to the public. To that end I met with the Adult Ed director for Five Town CSD/MSAD 28 on March 29<sup>th</sup> to start the discussion on what classes they might be willing to host. I will be reaching out to other programs and community partners, as well as distributing a survey on social media to help get feedback from those who might have interest in these classes to see what topics they would be interested in.

#### 4. Exercises:

- **CMP TTX:** I was invited by CMP to participate in an active-shooter table-top (TTX) exercise at their Rockland facility on March 28<sup>th</sup>. Their goal is to work towards having an active assailant policy for that facility. We have offered to make training available in the Incident Command System (similar to the 402 course) and Stop the Bleed.

#### 5. Sheltering:

I attended a meeting on March 24<sup>th</sup> that included representatives from the Knox County Homeless Coalition, Penquis, AIO, Red Cross, and members of the community who were interested in the topic. I realized as the discussion went on that the majority of the angst I was picking up on from the AIO staff was related to housing for the City's *homeless* population, which is not something the Red Cross or Emergency Management deals with unless it becomes a much larger problem since we deal with *mass care events*. That is why our office and the Red Cross did not open a regional Red Cross shelter during those two really cold days we had in February – since there was no storm, we didn't have widespread power outages and the percentage of Knox County residents impacted was low. It doesn't make sense to open a shelter on that scale for a handful of people. It made more sense for the town EMA directors to assist the few people here and there that needed assistance. Those who are homeless can certainly make use of warming centers or community sheltering, but as we saw with that severe cold snap, most of them were not interested because they didn't want to leave their belongings unattended, afraid it would get stolen. Very few took advantage of sleeping indoors opportunities that was offered to them.

I was invited to a meeting of community sheltering volunteers in Friendship at the Hahn Center on March 28<sup>th</sup>. It gave me the opportunity to introduce myself to them and to teach them about sheltering at various levels. Friendship was one of the first towns to get community sheltering started in Knox County and over the years we have referred representatives from other towns to Friendship's EMA Director, Phil Bramhall. I attended a similar meeting a couple months ago at a church in South Thomaston when their EMA Director, Betty Thomas, had invited me.

#### 6. Infectious Diseases:

- **COVID:** As of 3/28/23, the moving seven-day sum for Knox County is 13. Community **LEVELS = LOW** and Community **TRANSMISSION = HIGH** for Knox County (per USCDC).

For those who don't know, the federal government has decided to end both the COVID-19 National Emergency and the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency for COVID-19 as of May 11, 2023. The formal end of these emergency declarations does mean that some federal funding will disappear. One program that will continue is the funeral assistance for those whose death can be in part attributed to COVID-19.

### Vaccination Clinics in KNOX COUNTY

Location	Date & Time	Ages & Vaccines	Details
<b>ROCKPORT</b> - Pharmacy at PenBay Medical Center, 6 Glen Cove Drive	Monday–Friday: 9 am – 7 pm. Weekends/Holidays: 10 am – 3 pm.	Ages 5+. *For walk-in’s, first dose only. Make appointment for other doses.	Open to the public, walk-in’s for first dose <a href="#">Make appointment here for other doses.</a>

- **Influenza:** The most common virus strain currently circulating is influenza A (99% of cases).
- **Mpox:** The US CDC has started distributing information on cases using “Mpox” instead of “Monkeypox”. The US currently has a total of 30,286 cases. Every state in the US now has some cases. Maine still currently has 13 cases total, with Knox County still having 1 case reported so far. World-wide there are 86,746 confirmed cases in 110 countries. As of right now, the US has the most cases of all of the countries reporting them – just over a quarter of the cases world-wide. World-wide there have only been 112 reported deaths in 19 countries; 38 of the deaths occurred in the US.

#### 7. **Grants:**

- **2019 HSGP (Homeland Security Grant Program)** – September 1, 2016 – August 31, 2019. This grant should have been closed out at the end of August but was held up due to MEMA having issues with their system. All five of the delinquent payments for this grant have been received.
- **2022 HSGP (Homeland Security Grant Program)** – September 1, 2022 – August 31, 2025. I was relieved to finally be able to give Zach Greene the go-ahead to start spending the nearly \$30,000 I had earmarked for cyber-security improvements. He is already putting the funding to good use.
- **2023 HSGP (Homeland Security Grant Program)** – the Notice of Funding Opportunity for this grant was released February 27<sup>th</sup>. In preparation for this grant I have been contacting school districts to work on their security priorities so we can start including projects to fund upgrades to the local schools to hopefully make them safer. I am also working with Jim Hagan and Zach Greene on developing safety and security enhancements for County facilities.

#### 8. **Grant Reimbursement Backlog:**

Currently we are at about \$3,674.24 in payments we’re still waiting on from the State for 2022, and \$57,559.06 for 2023.

#### 9. **Hazard Mitigation Plan Update:**

Within the next four weeks I should hear whether our application for hazard mitigation funds (to fund the plan review process) has been approved. The current Knox County Hazard Mitigation Plan doesn’t expire until August 20, 2024, but at the end of March we started working on a hazard assessment with the help of staff from the Maine Emergency Management Agency, which will then be used as part of the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. The last hazard assessment was done in 2018 using a more simplified process and where we’re starting the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, it seemed like a good time to also do a thorough examination of Knox County hazards.

#### 10. **GIS Program:**

*Presentations/Classes taught:* UNC Chapel Hill on Hazard Mitigation/GIS

*Board/Group participation:* Beginning with Habitat GIS Sub-Group meeting & chaired GeoLibrary Board meeting.

*Coastal Resilience Partnership participation:* attended the virtual North Haven community meeting.

We continued our focus on developing county based web-applications (ex. visual budget, LEPC, planning, Knox Hub). Our hazard mitigation collaboration with MEMA’s Natural Hazards Planner continues, focusing on developing the full Hazard Mitigation Plan application; support from Bowdoin students is available. Support for and development of county GIS solutions continues (KCRA/KRCC/KXEMA/Maintenance/Administration).

*Public Safety GIS development/support:* Camden FD, Cushing FD, Enhanced Mutual Aid, Rockland FD, Union EMS.

**Ongoing County GIS efforts:**

- a) GIS Infrastructure maintenance, monitoring, management, development/expansion
- b) Program planning, needs assessment, data sourcing, project development, outreach, training development, documentation. We continue to work with CGIS Solutions to develop, integrate, and maintain our enterprise GIS system.

**Municipal Work:**

- **Appleton** – began support for Comprehensive Plan maps & continued public parcel viewer support
- **Camden** – began development of assessing GIS application for revaluation & cemetery mapping support continued
- **North Haven** – began mapping support for SLZ ordinance update & Island Fellow GIS support continued
- **Rockland** – technical support for assessor and wastewater continues
- **St. George** – continue revisions of the “advanced” resilience viewer (BETA)
- **So. Thomaston** – parcel viewer development continues
- **Union** – provided support for citizen science initiative
- **Vinalhaven** – cemetery mapping support resumed

KXGIS continues to maintain and update the Knox Hub. Since initial launch, the site has been visited 25,673 times. As always, please let us know of any content that might be appropriate to include on Knox Hub and please, feel free to share - <https://knox-hub-knoxme.hub.arcgis.com/>.

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Feel free to contact me if you have any questions about anything in this report or if you just want to come down to EMA and see what we're up to!

Respectfully,

Director Richards

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