

Meeting Notes

Joint meeting of COSTEP-CT : Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness and CT SHRAB : Connecticut State Historical Records Advisory Board, April 2, 2012, at the Middletown Library Service Center

Present: Barbara Austen, Conn. Historical Society; Susan Brosnan, Knights of Columbus Museum; James Campbell, New Haven Colony Historical Society; Kathy Craughwell-Varda, Conservation ConneCTion; Jane Cullinane, Conn. State Library; Lori Foley, Heritage Preservation; Rich Malley, Conn. Historical Society; Tara Kennedy, Yale Univ.; Tom Paske, FEMA-EHP; Lizette Pelletier, Conn. State Library; Betsy Pittman, Univ. of Conn.; LeAnn Power, Conn. State Library; Liz Shapiro, Conn. League of Historical Organizations; Jack Sullivan, FEMA-EHP; Anita Uhlan, FEMA-EHP; Meredith Vasta, Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center. Note taker: Jane.

MUTUAL AID MEETINGS

The joint meeting was called to discuss the content of the 5 regional half-day meetings to be held June 25-27, 2012. The meetings are funded by a State and National Partnership (SNAP) grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), and need to be completed by June 30, 2012. Lori Foley will facilitate the meetings.

Four meeting sites have been established and a fifth is expected to be finalized soon. The sites are:

Region 1: Greenwich Historical Society, Greenwich [to be finalized]

Region 2: Knights of Columbus, New Haven

Region 3: Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford

Region 4: Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center

Region 5: Litchfield Historical Society, Litchfield

Jane Cullinane reviewed the purpose of COSTEP-CT; to encourage communication between emergency responders and cultural heritage organizations when the organization needs help during an emergency and to help the organizations be of help to their communities in the event of an emergency.

Lizette Pelletier described the purpose of CT SHRAB: to the support the preservation of historical records through the work of NHPRC, the granting arm of the National Archives. The 19 member advisory board is made up of historians, archivists, and other individuals appointed by the governor. Its primary role is to review and make recommendations on grant applications from Connecticut.

Kathy Craughwell-Varda said the purpose of the Mutual Aid meetings is exemplified by the experience of the Barnum Museum after it was damaged by a tornado. The museum director was overwhelmed by offers of help, such as the loan of a dehumidifier, in the days following the tornado, but was not yet ready to accept help of that nature. Mutual Aid groups would use existing lines of communication to offer advice and other aid when the folks at the affected site are ready to ask.

The five regions where the meetings will be held coordinate with the 5 regional offices of the state Dept. of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), Emergency Management Division (formerly the Dept. of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS)).

<http://www.ct.gov/demhs/cwp/view.asp?a=1903&q=295316&demhsNav=1>. Kathy will need the steering committee and the board members to spread the word about the regional meetings to promote them.

Lori Foley then led the group through a series of questions to determine how to lead the discussion at the meetings.

INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

Lori pointed out any Mutual Aid group will need to use the Incident Command System (ICS) <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/IncidentCommandSystem.shtm> . This system provides a standardized framework with defined responsibilities for responding to an incident. It will also allow the members to more easily interact with local first responders.

She recommended David Carmicheal's book *Implementing the Incident Command System at the institutional level : a handbook for libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural institutions*. <http://www.rescuingrecords.com/ics.html>

POINT OF CONTACT

The Mutual Aid groups will also need a Point of Contact (POC): someone available to receive emergency reports and coordinate the appropriate response, and a backup person or two. The people at today's meeting are likely to become the POC for their regions.

We should look to the American Institute for Conservation – Collections Emergency Response Team (AIC-CERT) as a model. It utilizes a single phone number that forwards any call, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to the POC on duty. The POC then decides when he or she can answer a technical question or whether to involve additional people. The Northeast Document Conservation Center [NEDCC] has a recording during non-business hours that refers the caller to the POC on duty.

We need to take advantage of the fact that people already have the habit of calling someone they know and trust. Liz Shapiro of the Conn. League of Historical Organizations already fields calls from historical societies with emergency or preservation questions. Many individuals at today's meeting do the same.

DISASTER PLANS

Members of the mutual aid group will need to have their own disaster plans in place or be working on one. Kathy said that Conservation ConneCTion got an extension on its funding and will be able to offer another series of disaster planning workshops.

MUTUAL AID AGREEMENTS

It is important to get a written agreement among the members to formalize expectations and obligations. Institutions may not participate if the benefits are not seen to outweigh the costs.

POCKET RESPONSE PLAN

We should customize the Pocket Response Plan™ (PREP™) from the Council of State Archivists, <http://www.statearchivists.org/prepare/framework/prep.htm>, with Connecticut phone numbers and contacts. PREP is a portable disaster plan with phone numbers on one side and a checklist of emergency response actions on the other. It is an initiative. The PREP™ prints on 8.5 x 14 inch (or larger) paper and folds to the size of a credit card and can be carried in someone's wallet at all times.

WHO TO INVITE

The target audience is local cultural heritage organizations and regional and local emergency management directors. Jane and Lizette spoke to Dana Conover, Chief of Operations at DESPP, who said he would forward our invitation to the regional managers. The 50 institutions that participated in the

Conservation ConneCTion disaster preparedness workshops, held over the last two years, and that have completed a disaster plan, are the core group of cultural heritage organizations to be invited and would potentially become the leaders of the mutual aid group in their region.

We discussed the difficulty that COSTEP-CT has had in getting emergency managers to the table. Their participation is crucial to the success of the mutual aid initiative. Most organization could handle a small institutional disaster. Our institutions need to demonstrate to the local and regional emergency management directors that we won't be a drain on their resources. Also if emergency responders don't know about a group, it will have a difficult time getting the emergency managers' attention when it is needed the most. Jack Sullivan said it is important to keep trying to bring the emergency responders on board.

Jane was disappointed that an initial view of who to invite did not include town clerks. She hoped the Mutual Aid groups would form within a town, crossing the line from town hall to library and historical society. James Campbell pointed out that the line between public and private organizations might be too strong to cross.

PR FOR THE MEETINGS

COSTEP-CT is not well known in the cultural heritage community and its mission overlaps with other organizations. COSTEP-CT members need to have an elevator speech: a 30 second speech to use on any occasion that quickly defines what we are doing and what we can do for you. Perhaps we need business cards or handouts with the elevator speech and contact information.

Liz Shapiro said another way to get efforts like this moving is to make friends with 25 people, who will bring their friends along, and so forth, like a pyramid scheme. This takes advantage of the tendency that people call the people they know and trust.

The meeting announcements will be sent in a variety of ways. We can customize the announcement for each group:

- Emails and a flyer to invite people from different cultural heritage constituencies, such as museums, historical societies and librarians, as well as emergency responders
- We can send announcements over various listservs
- Personal phone calls to individuals we hope will come
- A website announcement can contain more details

One way to entice participants is to tell them what they will get:

- 3 phone numbers for emergency contacts
- 3 sample disaster plans
- 3 documents to download
- Free food

PROGRAM CONTENT

- Overview
- Disaster plans
- Sample documents
- Keep the focus on mutual aid
- Case study of a real experience in getting outside help

- Case study of a real experience receiving federal disaster assistance
- Networking: bring your business cards

HOMEWORK

- Kathy, Tara Kennedy and Liz will draft the PR and announcement
- Jack Sullivan will contact at least one emergency management director in each region
- Jane and Lizette will look at how to retool the PReP™ for Connecticut