

The Sit Rep

Newsletter of the NYC Office of Emergency Management

Sit. Speak. Plan.



A police dog takes a break at a NYC Veterinary Emergency Response Team (VERT) station during the 2004 Republican National Convention.

On November 18, OEM's Human Services Unit released the NYC Disaster Animal Response Plan (Animal Plan for short). The plan describes how the City will assist in the recovery and care of injured, stranded, or abandoned animals after an emergency. The plan also addresses the grisly topic of carcass disposal to prevent a potential health hazard.

"It's referred to as the Animal Plan, but it is really a plan for humans," Robert Van Pelt explained. "According to a Fritz Institute survey, approximately 44 percent of the people who did not evacuate for Hurricane Katrina stayed because they did not want to leave their pets behind."

New York City's Coastal Storm Plan (CSP) includes an animal sheltering component for just this reason, but the Animal Plan fills in the gaps by outlining support services necessary to shelter animals for an extended period. For example, the Animal Plan coordinates and empowers a team of veterinarian volunteers,

called "jump teams," to travel among the CSP's 509 shelters and provide emergency veterinary care for pets. The plan also coordinates the efforts of these jump teams to help care for working animals, like search and rescue canines, used by City, State, and federal agencies in the aftermath of a disaster.

In addition to planning for the medical needs of New York City's pet population, estimated at eight million by FEMA, the Animal Plan also focuses heavily on pet recovery and reunification.

"A lot of emergencies result in separation," Van Pelt explained. "Pet owners generally work during the day and may not be able to return home to secure pets during an emergency."

The Animal Plan links organizations that specialize in animal search and rescue, like Animal Care and Control, with others that specialize in transporting and sheltering animals, like Wheels of Hope,

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Editor's Note

Coats and scarves fill the entrance closets and freezing rain washes the fallen leaves from the sidewalks. Fall turned into winter so quickly it left this editor scurrying to catch up.

In spite of the bleak weather outside, this issue of the Sit Rep examines plans, milestones, and activities of the fall quarter. An analysis of the newly released Animal Plan, which the Human Services Unit reminds me is actually a human plan, is the feature story this issue.

An update from Kristen Rouse's second deployment to Afghanistan and a glimpse into the workings of the Legal Unit can also be found within. A sunny collage of photos from the August potluck appears at the end to remind us of warmer times.

If you're like me, you are getting excited about the holiday party. Christian has arranged an Italian feast and I hear the band is pretty amazing too. Pick up a ticket soon and join us for a cocktail and a smile.

As always, if you have any ideas, stories, or photos you want to share with the office, e-mail me at cvarley@oem.nyc.gov.

-Chris

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and coordinates their efforts through online partners like Petfinder.com. Thus, if any New Yorkers cannot get back to their pets due to injury, evacuation orders, or street closures, they will be able to locate them at any shelter at any time using the online database.

If local animal shelters are overwhelmed, a strong likelihood

because they operate near capacity before a disaster, the Animal Plan has pre-identified facilities that may be used as emergency animal shelters outside the five boroughs.

“NYC has a lot of strong pet-oriented organizations,” Van Pelt said, “the Animal Plan plays to their strengths and formalizes the relationships between them.”



Dr. John Charos and a colleague staff an NYC VERT triage station at the RNC.

Dispatches from Kristen Rouse



Kristen Rouse left OEM on November 6 for her second tour of duty in Afghanistan. Here is her first update from the field.

As of [December 6], I've officially been mobilized with the Vermont Army National Guard in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Right now we're getting settled into our training site near Indianapolis, which is where we expect to be before heading out to Afghanistan.

I am serving as the executive officer of a Forward Support Company that provides direct supply and maintenance support to an infantry battalion, which will be around 700-800 guys by the time we get overseas. I am the only female officer with this battalion. We have four other women of junior ranks in the unit. So, in addition to coordinating logistics for our warfighters, I am also looking out for our handful of women.

We have a really excellent chain of command, and all of my leaders, on up to the brigade commander himself, have expressed to me their support and how glad they are to have me going along for this deployment. I am proud and honored to be with Vermont's "Green Mountain Boys."

On [December 6], Vermont gave us a sendoff ceremony in Burlington where Governor Jim Douglas and Senators Patrick Leahy and Bernie Sanders all spoke in honor of our service and in support of our upcoming mission. It was really nice for us, and better still for all the families to hear these leaders offer their thanks and support for what we're doing.

The food and living quarters are decent and I have internet access—once I get done with the 15+ hour workday. Overall I can't complain. Feel free to write me at kristen.l.rouse@gmail.com.

Spotlight on the Legal Unit

The Sit Rep sat down with Stella Guarna, OEM's Deputy Commissioner for Legal Affairs, to learn how her team supports the agency's projects and staff.

The first responsibility of the Legal Unit is to ensure that OEM operates in compliance with all legal requirements at the local, state, and federal level.

On a daily basis the Legal Unit supports OEM's role in various plans, and projects, and establishes frameworks for ongoing relationships by negotiating and drafting contracts.

The Legal Unit also informs and trains staff on changes in laws applicable to City employees, such as Conflicts of Interest Law.

Recently, the Legal Unit defined the terms and conditions that the City must satisfy in order to loan employees and equipment to assist in recovery projects outside New York City.

The Legal Unit also helped OEM gain the right to receive and administer regional catastrophic planning grant funds on behalf of New York City, Northern NJ, and portions of Pennsylvania and Connecticut.

Milestones

On Thanksgiving Day, Kevin Damiano, Heather Roiter's boyfriend of five years, flew to Chicago, surprised her in her parents' backyard, and proposed. She was completely surprised and, of course, said yes.



On November 1, Jacob Cooper ran the ING New York City marathon in 2:37:04. He finished 119th overall, and 20th in his age group. Go Jake, go!



OEM NEWS

ETAP Awards

On October 16, DoITT presented its annual Excellence in Technology Awards. OEM's Carlin Andrus received an award for IT Manager and Garry Johnson received an award for IT Support.

Notify NYC received an award for Best Application Serving The Public. Henry Jackson, Brett Whitney, and Lisa Schulman accepted the award on behalf of OEM.



Brett Whitney and Lisa Schulman pose with a awards for Notify NYC at the 2009 ETAP Awards.

USAR Drill

On November 2, 52 members of New York Task Force 1's Urban Search and Rescue Team deployed to Tonawanda, NY, to participate in Operation Vigilant Guard, an exercise designed to train military and civilian responders to work together after a disaster. The mock earthquake drill spanned three days and included more than 2,000 participants from New York City, New York State, and the Buffalo National Guard.

CERT Drill

On November 15, members of the New York City's Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) met at the Fire Academy on Randall's Island for a day of disaster training. CERT volunteers broke into teams to manage a drill that involved multiple fires, a gas leak, a building evacuation, traffic control, and victim triage.

The drill helped the CERTs brush up on response skills and practice communicating and working with other teams.

GIS Day

On November 18, OEM's GIS Division hosted its second annual GIS Day celebration. Activities included demonstrations of how to use OEM Blackberries to take geotagged photos (photos

with latitude/longitude coordinates) that can be displayed on a map, two jigsaw puzzles, a crossword puzzle, various gallery displays showing 2009 projects, and the "Guess the Landmark" contest.

This year, the harder landmarks to identify included NYC's only trailer park in the Goethals Bridge area of Staten Island and the former Police headquarters (now luxury housing) in Little Italy. Surprisingly, another one that was difficult for most people to readily identify was the Chrysler Building. The orthographic aerial photo or "orthophoto," which provides an angle looking straight down, can often make a familiar structure look quite different.

NYC TV stars

Frank Lowe, Keisha Husbands, and Lisa Schulman starred in new segments of NYC TV's program, "That's So New York." Frank hosted an episode at the Hamilton Senior Center to teach seniors how to prepare themselves for emergencies. Keisha and Lisa starred in an episode that documented a Ready New York Kids presentation at P.S. 13 in Queens. Both videos can be seen on OEM's YouTube page. Look for a new "That's So New York" piece on CERT to premiere soon.

Q&A with Deputy Commissioner of Operations John Scrivani



In October, John Scrivani joined OEM as Deputy Commissioner for Operations. Thanks to an introductory biography from Commissioner Bruno, we all learned that John

has an extensive background in emergency services and hazardous materials response. Last week, The Sit Rep got a chance to sit down with John and learn a little more about him.

Q: Where are you from?

"I'm a fifth generation Staten Islander. I tried to leave "The Rock" twice – once for college, and once after I got married, but I never managed to say away for more than

a few months. Now I live there happily with my wife Michele and my two children, Jack (6) and Emilia (5)."

Q: How did you get involved with the emergency services?

"It's the family business. The Scrivanis have about 100 years of collective experience with the New York City Police Department. I grew up visiting my dad at the precinct. My great uncle Eugene Scrivani was one of the original members of NYPD's first bomb squad."

Q: What drew you to work with hazardous materials?

"I became a cop because I like solving problems. Hazardous materials jobs are as big and complicated as a problem gets in this

city. The response is very precise and demanding, plus, there are lots of cool toys involved. I like using tools and working with my hands.

I used to restore old cars and I do a lot of home renovations for friends and family. My truck has so many tools in the back it looks like a contractor's vehicle."

Q: Tell us something most people may not know about you.

"I'm a USTA certified tennis instructor. I won three New York City tennis championships in college and when I was with the Police Department, I got to play an exhibition match against the champion from the Fire Department on Center Court at the US Open."

Potluck Photos

Remember the sunshine?

