

# The Sit Rep

Newsletter of the NYC Office of Emergency Management

## OEM Unveils A Transforming Trailer



*Thomas Pollman's rendition of OEM's new CIMS trailer. When fully expanded it will measure 26 feet long and 18.5 feet wide. It will be OEM's third largest conference room after the North/South and the Situation Room.*

In 2006, OEM's Training and Exercises unit decided to spend a portion of its CIMS budget on a new vehicle. The staff planned to provide City agencies with a mobile work space to facilitate interagency coordination at the scene of an emergency. The ten-year-old ICC bus was no longer large enough, nor technologically advanced enough, to keep pace with the City's evolving needs. Three years and four major revisions later, OEM's CIMS trailer is preparing for its debut.

Large City agencies like the Police and Fire Departments have their own command vehicles, but many smaller agencies do not. The size and capabilities of the new CIMS trailer will allow it to serve as a field office for a number of different agencies.

"I think we should call it Switzerland because I want everyone to feel welcome," Fred Reich, OEM's Director of Operations, joked. "It's a comfortable space with a lot of useful technology to help keep our partners connected and involved."

The interior of the trailer is 26 feet long and 8.5 feet wide. Both sides of the trailer expand an additional five feet, allowing for a maximum width of 18.5 feet.

When fully expanded, the CIMS trailer can accommodate a meeting of 40 people, or provide 20 work stations equipped with phones, computers, and internet service. It will be OEM's third largest conference room (The North/South conference room is 36' long by 20' wide).

A number of new vehicles boast expanding sections, or pop-outs, as they are called by the CIMS vehicle design team, but OEM's vehicle stands apart because it is designed to be a functional workspace at any size. Most pop-out sections use peaked floors that flatten when expanded. OEM's trailer has a floor that rolls out like a carpet from underneath the vehicle.

This engineering feat allows responders to adjust the width of the vehicle to fit within the limitations of any given environment, a necessity in a busy and cramped city like New York.

The pop-outs are powered by a manual crank, which is supported by a system of gears that maximize the mechanical energy generated by each turn. This is the same principle that powers a ten-speed bicycle long distances with just a few pushes on the pedals. When the vehicle reaches the desired width, users simply stop turning the crank.

"We chose a manual operation system instead of electrical because we were concerned about an electrical system shorting out," Craig Bonney, OEM's Director of Support Services, explained. "There is a good chance this vehicle will be operating in some pretty tough environments."

In addition to the 20 work stations that fold into the walls like reverse Murphy Beds, the CIMS trailer boasts all the conveniences of an office: two printers, a copier, a fax machine, and all the latest communication tools and redundancies.

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## Editor's Note

The sun is shining, the birds are singing, and the trees are blooming. Spring is in the air and it's time for another issue of OEM's award-winning newsletter, The Sit Rep.

What award did it win? Don't worry about it. The point is this newsletter represents the hearts and minds of OEM's staff, and no known award is grand enough to salute the stories and accomplishments that lie within its pages.

This issue covers, the new CIMS trailer, Response's newest toy (p 1), as well as the recently signed Hazard Mitigation Plan (p 4).

Also, you may have heard, Notify NYC is about to go citywide. Lisa Schulman breaks down how the program got here and what's next (p 3).

Milestones includes a number of farewells as OEM said goodbye to a few good men and women this quarter. But, if goodbyes make you sad, just flip to the final page for a collage of the next generation of OEMers from OEM's Take Your Kids to Work Day.

If you have a story for the next issue of The Sit Rep, contact Chris Varley.



*The rolling floor that allows OEM's new CIMS trailer to serve as a functional workspace at any width is just one of the special features that helps this new vehicle serve the ever-changing needs of New York City.*

“The new CCC (CIMS Coordination Center) vehicle surely makes a statement based on its sheer size and capabilities,” Commissioner Bruno said.

“In part it was inspired by a conversation I had with Police Commissioner Ray Kelly when noting the overcrowded conditions in the

ICC during a 2007 Tornado briefing in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, he said, ‘Bruno – get OEM a vehicle that has its own zip code.’ Well I think we have accomplished that goal.”

“I just build things,” replied Henry Jackson, Deputy Commissioner for Technology, who oversaw the creation of this giant.

## Commissioner's Corner



*1. What do you miss most and least about your former Chief of Staff Seth Cummins?*

Most Missed about Seth – I miss his very sharp wit; great sense of humor; absolute loyalty; his true concern for my well being and his ability to speak in tongues.

Least Missed – napping at boring meetings; being a nudge (or maybe I did like that??) – I could be called a bit schizophrenic on this issue.

*2. Did the Mayor really accuse OEM of breeding the H1N1 virus to promote the new Pandemic Flu guide?*

That question poses a very interesting scenario and conjures a mysterious series of events. Long before H1N1 emerged, OEM's Communication Unit (Lisa Schulman, Judith Kane, Chris Varley, along with Amber Greene) worked long and hard with DOHMH to create, edit and perfect this wonderful Pan Flu guide.

Seemingly serendipitously, on the day that the H1N1 flu emerged, Lisa had asked me to sign off on the ReadyNY Pandemic Flu guide copy and to have Deputy Mayor Ed Skyler do the same. We both immediately approved the guide. It was excellent. So when the H1N1 emerged, I was able to offer that the guide could be posted on line at NYC.gov and NYC.gov/oem immediately.

Now there was a sighting of a diminutive woman, dressed in soccer gear with tiny cleats, wearing long elbow length white dinner gloves with a test tube in hand! Hmm... Could that have been an OEM staffer? And could that staffer been seeding the virus? Nahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.

## Baby Boom



Lucy Grace Markowski  
7 lbs, 10 ozs  
Born April 13, 2009  
to Alex and Lauren Markowski



Sholom Bereznyak  
6 lbs, 11.4 ozs  
Born May 7, 2009  
to Victoria Bereznyak

# Notification Sensation: Notify NYC Goes Citywide

On May 28, Notify NYC, the City's emergency notification system, will start sending messages about emergencies throughout New York City. In addition to providing emergency updates, the new version of the service will provide subscribers with school closure information, public health advisories, and unscheduled parking rule updates. Registrants will also be able to register by phone, and identify several zip codes about which they'd like to receive information.

The citywide rollout of Notify NYC will make it the largest emergency notification system in the country. It will cater to an extremely dense and technologically savvy population in a place where emergencies happen every day.

"No city in the world has found the right formula of technology, messages, and frequency to keep people sufficiently informed and engaged," said program manager Brett Whitney.

Notify NYC was conceived when members of Community District (CD) 1 in Lower Manhattan urged City officials to keep them informed of emergency activity in their neighborhood. The September 11 attacks taught CD 1 residents that they must stay vigilant and aware.

In December 2007, the City launched a pilot version of Notify NYC that monitored four sections of New York City: Lower Manhattan, the northeast Bronx, southwest Staten Island, and the Rockaways of Queens. Subscribers registered to receive e-mails, text messages, and/or recorded phone calls about activity in any of these four areas. More than 10,000 people registered and received over 100 messages about street closures, utility outages, and a tornado warning, among other emergency updates.

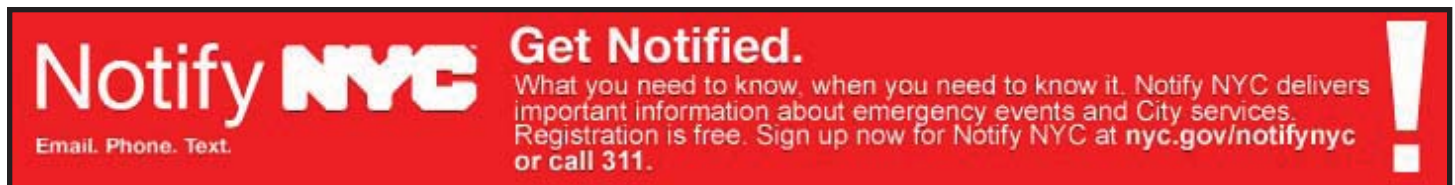
"The pilot was great to evaluate how the notification technology would perform," said Whitney.

OEM was able to compare two vendors, specifically their distribution speed and reliability, and OEM now feels confident rolling out the service to notify even more New Yorkers.

In April, five staffers joined the Notify NYC team to monitor citywide events in Watch Command and craft messages for the rising numbers of subscribers. These men see themselves at the helm of a vital City initiative.

"Knowing that our messages can influence the lives of citizens is something that I take very seriously," said Adam Cohen.

In the coming years, Brett and his team will build a proprietary message delivery system that the City can customize as subscribers' needs change. He hopes that in the second phase of this program New York City will set the standard for similar programs across the country.



## Milestones



"New York Skyline Distortion 1," a mural created by OEM's Jennifer Adger, now enlivens the wall of conference room 3A. Jennifer has been painting for years and has more work available on her website, [www.jenniferadger.net](http://www.jenniferadger.net). Enjoy!

Tayo Ajayi graduated from CUNY's College of Staten Island with a Master of Science in Business Management and Project

Management. He plans to use his skills to more thoroughly deny requests for new Blackberrys.

Christopher Varley completed the Journalism Certificate at New York University's School of Continuing Professional Studies. He hopes to use his new skills to write newsletters.

Seth Cummins has left OEM after five years of service to be MTA's General Counsel. OEM thanked him with a year's supply of NoDoze.

Fred Reich earned a Bachelor in Fire Science and Emergency Management from John Jay College of Criminal Justice. After three years with OEM, Fred plans to retire at the end of May and use his skills to smash golf balls down the fairway.

Jim McGuinness retired in May after more than a year of service in OEM operations.



Michael DenDekker, former OEMer, was elected to the New York State Assembly on January 10, 2009.

Kit Lee has left OEM for greener pastures after rising from an intern to serve for a year as a consultant to the CERT program.

Congratulations on all the milestones, and to all who are leaving OEM, thank you for your service and your friendship. You will be missed.



## OEM NEWS

### Disaster Volunteer

#### Conference

On May 18, OEM hosted the third annual Disaster Volunteer Conference for its partners in the Citizen Corps Council (CCC). More than 200 representatives and volunteers from CCC organizations attended the event. The conference focused on leadership and cross-agency coordination. Harvard University's Dr. Barry Dorn delivered the keynote address.

#### PATH Drill

On May 17, OEM and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey hosted Operation Safe PATH 2009 to practice the emergency response to explosions on a New Jersey-bound PATH train. More than 800 emergency responders participated including police, firefighters, environmental, and health officials. More than 100 Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members acted as victims on the train.

### Five Boro Bike Tour

On May 3, CERT teams across New York City came out to help support the TD Bank Five Boro Bike Tour and the more than 31,500 riders. CERT members put their training to use directing traffic and managing the distribution of water and snacks. At one rest area, the teams provided a warming van to help riders escape the cold.

### TV OEM- live streaming feeds from emergencies

This spring, OEM responders will switch from using still cameras to document jobs to using video cameras. The footage will be transmitted over the NCYWIN network via direct feeds to both Watch Command and the Mayor's Emergency Operations Center. The real-time video will facilitate decision making by senior officials who cannot reach the scene.

### OEMer Publishes Op-Ed in The New York Times

On March 17, Kristen Rouse published an Op Ed about her experience in Afghanistan in the New York Times. If you haven't had a chance to read her article, [check it out here](#). It's illuminating.

### Canned Food Drive

This spring, OEM began collecting canned goods during the monthly Birthday Babies celebrations. Each month the collection is donated to a city food bank to assist less fortunate New Yorkers. So far, the agency has collected more than 150 canned goods.

### OCME Recognizes OEMers at World Trade Site

On May 8, OEM staff attended a ceremony honoring individuals who worked on the WTC project. (Left to right: Michael Foy, Elefteria Zagoreos, Michael Casagrande, Fred Reich, Brad Gair, Charles Hirsch, Fred Sachs, Brian Hastings, Steve Vassi, Cas Holloway, Alex Timlin, John Buneta and Jim Conroy.) (Not all individuals honored were present.)



## OEM Helps NYC Qualify for Hazard Mitigation Funds

In March 2009, Mayor Bloomberg signed an executive order to adopt OEM's Hazard Mitigation Plan for New York City.

The Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies natural hazards that may affect New York City, and the actions and activities that would reduce the loss of life, property damage, economic disruption, and disaster assistance costs resulting from those hazards.

By signing the plan, Mayor Bloomberg made New York City eligible to receive federal funds set aside for projects focused on hazard mitigation.

"The projects we included in the plan came from various City agencies and ranged in size from small upgrades to major infrastructure improvements. All projects were included as long as they work to make the city more resilient," Amy Schultz, OEM's Director of Transportation and Infrastructure, said. "The plan includes synopses of more than 300 projects."

The hazard mitigation fund first

appeared in 2000, when the Disaster Mitigation Act established a pre-disaster mitigation program and new requirements for the national post-disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

Funding was limited, and in 2004, FEMA formalized the request process by asking cities to submit formal mitigation plans for pre-approval. Some cities' plans were cleared immediately, but New York was cut off from the funds.

In 2007, Amy's team: Heather Roiter, Rex Asiedu, Dave Blitzler, and Josh Friedman from GIS, went to work researching and dissecting FEMA's new requirements and created a new plan to re-apply for both sets of funds on behalf of New York City.



"New York City is a big and complicated place to do mitigation planning," Amy said. "We really studied FEMA's guidance documents to make sure we provided all the information."

The first project OEM submitted to FEMA was a facilities study to determine the benefits of installing storm shutters on the windows of OEM's headquarters.

In addition to applying for its own grants, OEM is responsible for monitoring and updating the plan, and helping its partners apply for this resource.

Only mitigation projects from government agencies are currently eligible for the funds, but a lot of NYC's infrastructure is run by private companies. Big companies like Con Edison and Verizon, whose mitigation plans require million-dollar investments, would benefit greatly from these funds.

"It is possible for OEM to partner with private agencies and apply on their behalf, but the project may not be approved," Amy said. "We are in uncharted territory."

# Bring Your Kids To Work Day 2009

Who's the cutest? You decide.

