



EMAO NEWSLETTER

Aug 2025
Vol. 12

EMAO strives to advance public safety for Ohioans through effective collaborations with local, state, and federal partners.

WHY IS BEING INVOLVED WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS SO IMPORTANT?

First, everything we do in government is guided by a rule or law based on the legislation. These legislative items can certainly help, but they can also become an unfunded mandate or have disastrous unintended consequences. Imagine if legislation was passed requiring a county EMA to provide individual 4-hour trainings or exercises for each public safety agency in your respective county. In Wood County alone we have 25 fire/EMS and 12 law enforcement agencies, for our county this would likely require hiring a person dedicated specifically to this initiative (plus benefits, etc.).

Second, everyone is asking for resources and more money. I promise you, if you do not ask, no one will give you money. Would you just give someone money who is not asking for it, especially when everyone else is asking for more money than you have to give?

Third, a fundamental necessity of emergency management is building relationships. Just like all of us, elected officials are going to better respond to those they trust. If they do not know you, they may rely on the opinion or incorrect judgement of someone else. How many times in recent history have we watched emergency management professionals at various levels be crucified publicly, yet as we understand the process, we recognize they are actually doing a phenomenal job.

Early in my career, I had a hard time speaking with elected officials. When they had questions, I was uneasy responding. It took me a while to realize that most of the time, they are trying to make the best decision they can for their constituents. They realize that if they do not make them happy, they will not be voted back in to office, and most elected officials want to be reelected. Regardless of what you may think, they do want to hear from you. They, like all of us, don't know what they don't know. They would much prefer getting accurate information from the source and the subject matter experts. That way they can trust it, digest it and then decide what to do with it.

Easy tips for making contact with your local, state & federally elected officials:

- After an election, send them a congratulatory letter with your contact information should they need it.
- Invite them to a legislative round table in your respective EMA sector. You can learn how to interact with elected officials from someone who may be more comfortable doing so.
- When there is a notable disaster elsewhere in the country, that could reasonably occur in your county, invite them to your EOC to discuss how this could play out in your county, discuss any gaps you may have or resources you may lack to better prepare in advance of this type of event.
- Add them to an EMA newsletter distribution list.
- Invite them to LEPC meetings and exercises.

Article contributed by Wood County EMA Director Jeff Klein,
Co-Chair of Legislative Committee

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SAVE THE DATE

August 23, 2025

EMAO Coffee Talk - Amish Caucus (Virtual)

October 3, 2025

EMAO Fall Conference (Virtual)

October 16, 2025

Ohio EMA Fall Conference (Virtual)

November 14 - 20, 2025

IAEM Annual Conference (Louisville, KY)



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MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NATO Parliamentary Assembly Update

In May 2025, Montgomery County played a crucial role in supporting the NATO Parliamentary Assembly held in Dayton. The event provided an opportunity to strengthen our partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies while ensuring the safety and security of delegates, residents, and visitors.

Coordinating Emergency Operations

MCOEM's role involved comprehensive coordination of emergency operations, including monitoring and responding to public safety concerns, managing protests, and overseeing the safety of key facilities. Our team worked alongside Dayton Police, Fire, and other partners to maintain a unified command and facilitate a seamless emergency response.

Staffing and Activation Levels

MCOEM staff operated on-site 24/7 during the NATO Parliamentary Assembly event to ensure continuous operations. ESF personnel worked virtually to support the event, with staffing levels adjusted as needed based on operational requirements. The call center was staffed in person from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm to handle public inquiries, ensuring real-time access to information for delegates, media, and residents.

Call Center Operations

In response to the unique needs of the event, MCOEM operated a dedicated call center to handle public inquiries. We ensured that delegates, media, and residents had access to real-time information, ranging from safety updates to event-specific guidance. Our call center received 130 calls over the five days. Lessons learned from this call center operation will be used to enhance future large-scale event response capabilities.

Public Information Messaging

MCOEM, in collaboration with PIOs from partner agencies, developed pre-canned IPAWS messages as part of our preparedness plan. These messages were crafted in case of emergencies such as evacuations, protests, or security threats. Although these messages were not needed during the event, having them ready ensured that we could quickly communicate with the public if required.

Lessons Learned and Future Planning

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly provided invaluable insights into how we can better prepare for high-profile international events. After-action reviews are currently being compiled, and key takeaways will help improve MCOEM's response strategies, particularly in areas like interagency coordination, call center operations, and public communication.

Moving Forward

Overall, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly event went exactly as planned, with minimal interference or issues. MCOEM's diligent planning and coordination with our partners allowed the event to proceed smoothly, reinforcing our ability to manage large-scale, high-profile events effectively.

MCOEM remains committed to building on the success of our NATO response efforts. We are looking forward to integrating lessons learned into future emergency management planning, ensuring Montgomery County is always ready to meet the challenges of large-scale events and complex incidents. Thank you to all our partners and agencies who contributed to making the NATO Parliamentary Assembly a safe and successful event.

Article contributed by Montgomery County EMA Director Nedra Havens.





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IAEM

HIGHLIGHTS

40 Under 40 Awards

Shout out to the THREE Ohio honorees of the IAEM 40 Under 40 Award! This recognition spotlights professionals who are under 40 years old for their outstanding leadership and notable contributions to the emergency management profession.



Director Alex McCarthy, Delaware County
Director Michelle Pitstick-Clements, Clark County
Assistant Director Morgan Peterson, Hamilton County



National Emergency Management Awareness Month

The inaugural Emergency Management Awareness Month is taking place in August 2025! The purpose is to promote the capabilities of emergency management and the role of emergency managers. A couple ideas on how to do this include meet with community leaders, invite elected officials/decision makers to meetings, present an overview of emergency management and it's role at a community board meeting, etc. It's time to let everyone know what emergency management is all about!

SECTOR UPDATES

Scan to submit a sector update for the next newsletter



Central Sector	Met on June 23 rd in Knox County. Had a presentation from the US EPA on their emergency response program.
Northeast Sector	On 7/25, the NEO Sector meeting was hosted by Portage County. This meeting included a lengthy discussion regarding legislative issues at the state and the federal level.
North Central Sector	On 7/18, the NCEMAO meeting was hosted by Ottawa Co. at the Put-In-Bay Fire Dept.. and focused on emergency planning challenges unique to island regions like Ottawa and Erie Counties. Additionally, the meeting included updates on conferences, EMAO initiatives, and committee reports. We also celebrated the retirements of Beth Greer (Ottawa) & Mike Drusbacky (Ottawa).
Northwest Sector	Met on 7/16 in Wood County. Meeting included a presentation given by Matthew Curtin from the Ohio State Defense Force on AuxComm.
Southeast Sector	On May 20 th , the SWEMAO meeting included presentations from the Ohio Fire Chief's Response Plan, COTS, Red Cross, National Weather Service, and a staff report from Ohio EMA Liaisons. The next meeting is scheduled for August 18, 2025, with Ohio MARCS set to present.
Southwest Sector	On June 17 th , the Southwest and Western sectors hosted a follow up joint sector meeting. This meeting was to continue addressing legislative issues at the state and federal level. EMAO President Sarah McNamee (virtual) and President-Elect Alex McCarthy were also in attendance to discuss legislative and EMAO issues.
Western Sector	

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Officers: Sarah McNamee (Marion), President
Alex McCarthy (Delaware), President-Elect
Jason Troyer (Holmes), Vice President

Thomas Smoot (Summit), Past President
Jette Cander (Crawford), Treasurer
McKenzie Villatoro (Portage), Secretary