**LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE (LEPC)**

**ASSOCIATION**

**BUSINESS MEETING**

**October 13, 2023**

**8:00 a.m. - 12:00 P.M.**

**Egan Center**

**Anchorage, Alaska**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Amanda Loach - Anchorage

Deborah Jones - Bristol Bay

Michael Paschall - Delta Greeley

Forest Shreeve - Denali

Nancy Durham - Fairbanks North Star Borough

Michelle Brown - Juneau

Casey Cook - Mat-Su Borough

Thomas Vaden - Nome

Jeremy Aamodt - North Slope Borough

Craig Warren - Sitka

Emily Deach - Skagway

**I. CALL TO ORDER** - Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Association Co-Chairs, Mr. Casey Cook and Mr. Tom Vaden

Co-Chair Vaden called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

**A. Welcome And Introductions**

Co-Chair Vaden welcomed everyone to the fall meeting of the Local Emergency Planning Committee Association. He asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Mr. Roy English, LEPC Coordinator, confirmed that a quorum was present to conduct business.

**B. ADMINISTRATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Co-Chair Vaden made announcements about what to do in case of an emergency and other housekeeping items.

**II. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES**

Co-Chair stated that members should have received minutes to review in their packet. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

**MOTION:** Deborah Jones, Bristol Bay, moved to approve the LEPCA meeting minutes from April 21, 2023. Jeremy Aamodt, North Slope Borough seconded the motion.

Co-Chair Cook opened the floor for discussion. Mr. Pasquel had corrections to spelling of names--Debra Jones should be Deborah Jones. Co-Chair Cook asked if there were any objections to approving the minutes as amended. There were none.

Motion was **APPROVED** unanimously.

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Co-Chair Cook asked if there were any changes to the Agenda.

**MOTION:** Michael Pasquel, Delta-Greely, moved to approve the Agenda for October 13, 2023. Amanda Loach, Anchorage, seconded the motion.

Co-Chair Cook opened the floor for discussion. There was a request to include a discussion about the funding letter under correspondence/communications/presentations. Co-Chair Cook asked if there were any other changes. Hearing none, he asked if there were any objections to approving the Agenda as amended. There were none.

Motion was **APPROVED** unanimously.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. LEPC Status Report Form**

Co-Chair Vaden stated that at our last meeting we discussed using a written form to provide our local updates to the group. The intent is to make sure each member’s update is included in the record for the benefit of everyone while still having the opportunity to provide a verbal update at our meetings. Mr. English sent out a status report form, but we have not voted on it.

Ms. Brown doesn’t have a problem filling out the form, but she still enjoys the in-person discussion. Co-Chair Cook stated that we discussed that even though we’re using this form, members are still able to provide an update in person. This also gives people the option to share verbally or just say read my report. I think it fits both. That was my understanding of it. Any other discussion on kind of accepting the form and moving forward to have a written report process.

Mr. Paschall asked about the process of using this form and when do we start. He expected to use the form for this meeting. Co-Chair Cook responded that before we start using the form, committee members should have a chance to review, add anything, take anything off. Then we can vote, and it will be in effect for our next LEPC meeting.

Members and Director Bryan Fisher discussed the best use of this form. While it is good to provide a written report to the membership in general, it can also be used to help track local committee members. And Mr. Fisher commented that when the Commission is able to fund the local committees again, this form can be updated and used to provide quarterly progress reports or financial reports as part of reporting requirements to maintain your funding.

Then we share those reports with the association for the twice a year meetings. You can verbally brief what you submit in writing. So think of this as a living document. Decide on the format now, and we will work with you. And the SERC Finance Committee will work with you to adjust the form appropriately, if we ever see funding coming back to the committees through the Commission. Mr. English added that that the LEPCA requested the report form. We created a form and then sent it out to committee members for their feedback. He received a lot of feedback from members. But if there are more changes needed, please feel free to reach out to him offline.

Co-Chair Cook stated that if Michael wanted to list the names of his committee members, that’s an appropriate use of this form. It also sounds like we need to start tracking who the members are for the LEPCA through Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM). Director Fisher stated that we’ll make that an action item--to maintain a roster of who you have on your individual committees, and it can be updated twice a year.

***Action Items:***

* *DHS&EM to create and maintain a roster of individual committees with twice a year updates.*
* *Amend the committee status report form to include committee membership.*

Co-Chair Cook asked if there was any further discussion on the LEPC status report form. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the use of the form as amended.

**MOTION:** Deborah Jones, Bristol Bay, moved to approve the LEPC status report form as amended to include membership. Michelle Brown seconded the motion. Voice vote was taken.

Motion was **APPROVED** unanimously.

**V. CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS/PRESENTATIONS**

**A. SERC Finance Committee**

Co-Chair Vaden stated that, per Chair Vikalis, the Finance Committee has not met, so there are no changes to report.

**B. Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM)**

**1) Strategic Plans and Leadership - Bryan Fisher, Director of Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services**

Director Fisher stated that there are written reports in the meeting binders for committee members to review. He will share some highlights. We continue to respond to a number of state and federally declared disasters in Alaska. We are following the trend across the nation. We are averaging at least one declared emergency a month. In the past, at some point in the year, staff would take a break from responding to disasters and catch up on the disaster recovery process and all. But that hasn’t been the case for a while. We currently have approximately 47 open disasters in various stages of recovery and/or mitigation projects. So there really is zero downtime in our agency.

Currently, our agency is down to one open vacancy out of 60 staff. However, there has been a lot of changes and movement of staff as they are promoted to supervisory or management roles within the division. And then we have employees that are new to the state or to the division. So, we certainly ask for your patience as everybody’s learning their programs and new responsibilities. In addition, we heard from you over the summer that you don’t know who to call anymore. So, we have a new phone list for our division in the binder.

We're continuing to roll out the new State Cybersecurity Initiative. The Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act (IIJA) has funded the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program. We are continuing to process applications under that grant program for the first years’ worth of funding. We're a little bit behind on that just because of the rest of the grant work that we are working on, trying to get the Emergency Management Performance Grant out and the work we do on Homeland Security Grant Program and the Nonprofit Security Grant program. For those of you that have entities that applied for that grant, we are looking at doing the review of all of those applications and having the funding recommendations presented to me in November. So we'll push that back a couple of months from where we were originally planning to do that. It's an interesting grant. The money is available for the entire 40 years of the program as written in the law, as opposed to our normal grant programs that we allocate money on an annual basis.

Last week Deanna Criswell, Administrator of FEMA, presented to our professional association, and there is a very concerted effort and concern about the cyberspace threat to the nation. She has some specific examples of where misinformation and disinformation occurred with declared disasters across the country this last year. An example would be some of the misinformation in the state of Hawaii on Maui, about the fire, where there were rumors that if you registered for FEMA for assistance, if you lost your home, the state was going to take your land or FEMA was going to take your land, those kind of things. This misinformation was picked up by nation actors such as Russia, China and Iran and amplified through social media.

The administrator's bigger concern is not the social media misinformation campaign, although we all have to work on combating that. The fact is we know for certain that many of these nation state actors, Russia, China, and Iran, are in our critical infrastructure systems. We know they’re there. We've been fighting them for years. It wouldn't take much for these foreign organizations to flip a switch and turn off your water system or turn off your power plant. So it's a very big concern for FEMA and Department of Homeland Security. It was an unusual briefing.

Normally when we hear from the head of FEMA, she's talking about disaster stuff. This was all about homeland security, cybersecurity, dealing with the threat from foreign nations against the United States. Speaking to that, I know we've all been watching the news for the last week of the horrific attacks by Hamas in Israel. There are no specific credible threats of violence anywhere in the United States, or specifically in Alaska. However, with what’s going on now in the Middle East, Homeland Security has elevated and enhanced vigilance with the FBI concerning the potential for attacks or threats or homegrown violent extremists to act. The Division is fully engaged with law enforcement and will share information with you as we can when it relates to your jurisdiction.

**2) Operations - Jen Wallace**

Director Fisher introduced Jen Wallace, the new Emergency Operations Center Manager. Claude Denver (ph) retired after 20 years. So that created opportunities for promotion and hiring of new folks in the operations section. He handed off to Ms. Wallace for her update.

Ms. Wallace stated that we have been in a continuous state of disaster for a good long time now. Since we met last time, we ended the winter and into the spring, holding together a lot of communities with power or water issues, post-Merbok infrastructure issues, catastrophic spring breakup flooding that was significantly later than normal and in a significantly larger area. Then we went into summer fires, which, thankfully, passed quicker than normal. Then Juneau Glacier outburst flooding, which was more catastrophic than originally thought it would be.

I agree with Bryan, that the frequency and intensity of these disasters is increasing significantly. And when I'm out in the communities on the ground, they're noticing that and they're doing their best to prepare for it. But I feel like that's going to be a huge stress on you guys and on us as a division in the future.

So it's been a constant state of disaster with a lot of staffing changes. And I'm really proud of our operations team. We hired two new folks who are fitting in really well, getting the feet under them very quickly and already out in the field. We’re also assisting Hawaii as best we can by sending staff. It’s been a great way for them to gain experience and we're thankful that we have a little bit of time to help in that recovery. We are super thankful for your patience with all of our changes. She asked if there were any questions.

Ms. Loach asked if we could consider supporting any of our local disasters here in Alaska through the Alaska Interstate Mutual Aid System. So if one of our neighbors in another community needs support there are resources for them. Ms. Wallace thanked Ms. Loach for a great suggestion. We don’t like to request Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) unless we absolutely have to because we know that others need help more than we do. So that is a great suggestion going forward.

**3) Preparedness - Jeff Lafferty and Michelle Torres**

Jeff Lafferty, DHS&EM Program Manager, reported that all three subsections have been extremely busy. There is an update in your meeting packet.

**Exercise -** The Exercise Office continues to work with local communities to develop exercises for those jurisdictions. Biggest things going on are that Exercise and FEMA Region 10 have jointly delivered the first of the three planned Rehearsal of Concept (ROC) drills this past April, which focused on validating the state's Distribution Management Plan (DMP) for a catastrophic incident. Next iteration of this is scheduled to be delivered in April, 2024, here in Anchorage with additional partners invited for this exercise. More information will be released later in October.

Looking ahead, the exercise guys are projecting all the way up to ROC 2025, which will be a large recovery based exercise, and that will finish up our ROC trilogy. And that is scheduled tentatively for March or April 2025. Also, the exercise office is working with southcentral region communities as well as other partner agencies and organizations for AlaskaEx 2024, which took the place of the Alaska Shield full scale exercise series. That's going to be conducted next spring, March 4-8, and will focus on a catastrophic 1964-style earthquake and tsunami. The Alaska National Guard has partnered with the Exercise Office on developing the event, which will coincide with their home Vigilant Guard exercise. This past week, the exercise guys were down in Valdez for the planning for this exercise.

**Training -** the DHS&EM State Training Office (STO) continues to work with federal, state, tribal, and local partners to coordinate and provide training across the state. Recently, the state training officer coordinated with Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) to schedule virtual training for much needed incident command system (ICS) intermediate and advanced classes. These virtual classes started during COVID-19 pandemic for training and have been very successful. More and more people are joining in the classes, which makes it much easier for the training officer, as well as local agencies, local jurisdictions and individuals. It also helps to track your training and your certificates.

Overall, in 2023 we scheduled 90 classes. We completed 57 of those, and unfortunately, we had to either cancel or postpone eight of those due to lack of participation by students. Oftentimes agencies or local jurisdictions request training. It's set up. But then when it comes time to get people to sign up, as you very well know, it's hard to put butts in a seat for various reasons.

So anytime, Jeff McKenzie, our state training officer, sets training up, he advertises it throughout the state many times. I would encourage you to go back to your jurisdictions and if a training is set up, whether somewhere within the state or within your jurisdiction, help advertise it as much as you can and encourage people to attend. A lot of time and money goes into setting up these classes. Oftentimes the trainer travels here from out-of-state and they'll waive the minimum number of seats for that class. They do that just for Alaska, which we appreciate. But when we can't even fill that reduced number, it's kind of an embarrassment. So, help us fill those classes.

**Outreach -** Outreach has been extremely busy, as always. You may or may not know that we have a podcast called Get Ready Alaska. If you haven't listened to it yet, I encourage you to do so. Jeremy Zidek and Michelle Torres host the podcast. I’ve listened to it and found it pretty interesting. They've had some great interviews with some interesting people from around the state. You can find it on all the major platforms--Apple Music, Amazon Music, Spotify and so on. If you haven't done so, go ahead and subscribe to it. There are good lessons in the podcast.

Earthquake simulator has been on the road a lot this past summer, up until weather shut us down. We've seen over 2,000 people go through the experience of the simulator. In August, two of the outreach team traveled down to FEMA Region 10 for the Youth Preparedness Council Summit. At the summit, they met the two Alaskan youth who will be part of the council. One is from Denali Park and the other is from Kake. Outreach is going to continue working with these young people over the next two years while they're on the council.

In June, Outreach Branch Chief Michelle Torres traveled to San Francisco this summer to attend the National Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Conference. She was accompanied by CERT members from Fairbanks and Mat-Su.

Many years ago, there were grant funds specifically for CERT. Those went away. And at the time, there just didn't seem to be a lot of interest in CERT. But something happened a few years ago and the idea of CERT was reinvigorated. So CERT started to grow again. Michelle's been at the forefront of the effort to bring CERT to various communities throughout the state. And we've seen great things with CERT. So I'm going to ask Michelle to speak to what's going on with CERT throughout Alaska.

Michelle Torres, DHS&EM, stated that she is very excited to talk about CERT. While she’s sure she’s talk to every single one of you about CERT, she wants to talk about what’s been going on. This past year our Fairbank team did some very amazing work with the Haystack fires and also the search and rescue for two out of state hikers that got lost. The CERT team was very involved with that. They helped out a lot. In fact, the IMT team in Fairbanks for the Haystack fires called and told me what an amazing job the CERT team did and that they wanted them to be recognized for a job well done. Mat-Su Borough’s CERT team has been very involved in a lot of things too. We’ve partnered with them on different outreach events. We’ve done some safety events with them; we brought the earthquake simulator out. It’s been an awesome opportunity for outreach to the public.

Just this week, the Division signed a memo of understanding (MOU) to partner with the Alaska Forum, an organization that does a lot of rural community training. They received a grant to provide CERT trainings in rural communities over the next two years. So we expect to bring in over 100 rural community members for training. In fact we just had our first skills training with folks from Fort Yukon, Russian Mission, Chignik Lagoon and other communities. I wasn’t sure how it was going to turn out, if they took the class four months ago, are they going to remember what they learned in skills? I was super impressed. We'll be putting on another skills training class in April with our partner, Alaska Forum.

We also partnered with the State’s Independent Living Council with CERT. They're going to be bringing CERT into their teams with disabilities. So I'm really looking forward to that moving forward. If you're thinking that your community might want a CERT team, let’s start planning now for spring and fall training sessions. I know it can be a difficult time of year to plan training. But now is the time to get people involved. Recruit a CERT team lead, as a start. Reach out to me for help in planning and establishing a CERT team in your area.

When FEMA Youth Council started five years ago, Alaska had 40 applicant, which was the most youth that applied. It was pretty amazing. However, the number of applicants has dwindled over the years. So I'm asking for your help in getting the word out to the youth in your community. When you receive our letter or notice, think about the young people in your community and who may be a good fit for the council and pass along the information.

I can tell you right now that Youth Council members are absolutely amazing. The things that they do and the projects that they work on are impressive. They're going to be our future leaders. And we really need to cultivate that. The young lady we met from the Denali Borough is absolutely amazing. She's already taken CERT training through the University of Alaska with John Huffman. Her project will be on landslide education due to logging in that area and the potential for landslides. Again, help us get the word out for the Youth Council. We’d love to see more of our youth participate in this great opportunity. Thank you.

Mr. Lafferty wrapped up by stating that Jeremy Zidek was recently EMAC’d to Hawaii as a PIO in support of the fires there. He came back a few days ago. Jared Woody, our exercise officer, will be traveling over there under EMAC soon for three weeks in support of support of plans. Grant Section has been very busy as well. He asked if there were any questions.

Michael Paschall, Delta Greeley, asked about intermediate ICS training. Is that ongoing or what’s the status. Mr. Lafferty replied that as the training is set-up the information is going out. All individuals who’ve applied for training have been accepted. They then receive emails with detailed instructions for attendance of the academy.

Co-Chair Cook asked if there were any other questions or comments.

Michelle Brown, Juneau, asked what were the take aways from the CERT conference. Ms. Torres replied that the conference was pretty amazing. We were able to meet teams from all over the nation, small and large. Because a lot of our CERT teams have existed for a long time, they don’t have a standard operating procedure (SOP) manual or code of conduct set up. Because she is helping CERT teams set up procedure manuals, as she met folks from small and large CERT teams, she asked for copies of their SOP or code of conduct to bring back to our CERT teams as examples to use in creating these manuals.

One of the best classes she took was CERT leadership. We’re asking volunteers, people who may not have been in a leadership role before, to be accountable and to lead a team. So the leadership component that she took was really great to help her train or guide the leaders.

And lastly was Team CERT. Almost every one of us who went took the team Cert because we're really starting to see where youth want to be involved in CERT. We looked at how we can facilitate that interest whether through a college or a high school class or through an after school program. We recently had a letter from a young man in Fairbanks asking for help in putting together a CERT camp where the kids come in over a weekend and camp out in the school to do CERT training for two days. He was requesting help with backpacks and things like that in support of the camp. So, we are seeing kids who want to be involved and we want to support that.

Amanda Loach, Anchorage, asked about the technical assistance visit that was completed by Region 10 National Incident Management System (NIMS) Coordinator offering support and guidance regarding the National Qualification System (NQS) implementation. Since technical assistance is something you request, I’m interested in why we requested it and what we learned. Jeff McKenzie, training officer from DHS&EM, responded that we didn’t request it. It’s called a technical assist visit. On occasion Region 10 just comes up and assists us with where we’re at with the newest NIMS qualification or implementation. They have a form answer sheet, ask basic general questions and I answer them. Our meeting was about an hour and a half. They didn’t have questions for us. We didn’t learn anything. We basically reported out where we are in the process of implementation. I can provide that worksheet, if anyone is curious and would like to review it.

Mr. Lafferty followed up by stating that these visits aren’t uncommon and depends on who’s sitting in that seat in Region 10. They may come up every year and have done that in the past. Sometimes those meetings would last five minutes. It depends on the person, and if they want to visit Alaska.

Nancy Durham, Fairbanks, asked Mr. McKenzie concerning the advanced ICS training that coming up for Fairbanks at the end of this year, do we still have open seats for that training. Mr. McKenzie responded yes; we have two open seats. So, if anyone is interested in attending or knows of someone, connect with Jeff via email to mda.dhstraining@alaska.gov for an application and he will get them signed up.

Co-Chair Cook asked if there were any other questions. Hearing no, he commented that last year he threw Jeff McKenzie under the bus with incident qualification system (IQS) implementation. Jeff responded by taking it to heart and has made tremendous progress in making this training happen and he appreciates all the effort that Jeff has put into it. It means a lot to be listened to from this side of the table. Thank you to Jeff McKenzie for your efforts and thank you to Jeff Lafferty, as his boss, for your support in getting the job done.

And then for Jeff McKenzie and others, I am trying to bring an ICS 449 class, which is train the trainer so you can teach ICS 300 and 400, to Alaska. I need some commitments from local jurisdictions to send people to that class because I have to have a minimum number of people before the state will support that through the grant process. So by the end of today, please come up to me and tell me, yes, I would love to send two or three people to the MatSu borough to take ICS 449 sometime next year. Planning is up next.

**4) Planning - Richard Hildreth**

Richard Hildreth with the Division of Homeland Security Risk Management stated that for the Community Planning Team, the State of Alaska Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) has been updated and is awaiting promulgation by the governor. The Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) template has been developed and we hope other state agencies will use it as a guide to rewrite the COOP plan for their specific division or department.

As part of the Emergency Management Planning grant, we were asked to provide our FEMA 10 counterparts a distribution management plan. So, quite a few of our jurisdictions have been approached about generating a distribution management plan and have responded. This plan is intended as a supplement about a catastrophic disaster, how each jurisdiction would shuffle resources where they would want resources staged, how the jurisdictions expects to transport those various resources in and around their jurisdictions. Quite a great amount of work that's been developed in local jurisdictions. We appreciate your help in moving those plans forward.

A byproduct of creating those distribution management plans is that FEMA Region 10 has been helping us get airport assessments by an external contractor. They come to your region, generate an airport assessment to judge the capacity of the airfield, resources on the airfield, the business space, the grant space, various businesses, various entities, how those airfields could be used for different types of disaster events were captured in the different distribution management plans.

Mr. Todd Russell has been working exhaustively hard trying to take your input and revise the SBR form. We've heard loudly that the form has been very difficult to complete every year. So we have modeled ourselves after a couple of other states within Region 10 by moving to a quarterly reporting method, quarterly survey, in an attempt to lift the burden off of end of the year reporting. Trying to get more relative information, more accurate information, and try to help you reduce the burden on your staff, by making it easier to complete that form.

For the All Hazard Resilience Team, as Bryan alluded to earlier, there’s been a tremendous amount of staff turnover. This team is led by Ben Schultz. The Alaska Partnership for Infrastructure Protection is led by Ben Hartlieb. If you have questions about APIP, you can reach out to him. APIP has a meeting in October. We have a Geohazards Coordinator, Mr. Anthony Picasso. This is his second year in the program and there’s a number of grants that he manages and includes earthquake, tsunami centric, and volcano issues.

Mr. David Lee manages the Small Community Emergency Response Plan (SCERP). That program is to guide communities with populations below 2,000 people on a quick flowchart of how to respond to disasters for the first 48-72 hours until help can arrive. If you would like help with your SCERP, contact Dave Lee.

We also conduct rural resilience workshops. Our next scheduled workshop is in January with the North Slope Borough. We’ve been working with borough staff to develop the agenda to make sure the topics are relevant and address concerns or issues. And then we’ll make sure we have appropriate state, federal, and local presenters there to discuss those concerns or issues and how we can help them.

The new State Hazard Mitigation officer is Mr. Garrett Brooks. He was a previous hazard mitigation grant program manager, so he's got some experience in mitigation. In addition, this team includes Mr. Rai Simpliciano, who runs the Building Resilience Infrastructure in Communities (BRIC) Program, which is a large federal payment plan. It's a very complex program. A lot of jurisdictions to assist in getting applications for projects submitted successfully.

Kim Barenburg is running the Hazard Grant program. As Director Fisher stated, there are 13 open disasters with an inventory of nearly 70 projects around the state that are at various stages of working through application review and project implementation. If you have questions about your application, please give us a ring and we'll help you.

Mr. John Andrews is the coordinator for the Hazard Mitigation program . In order to be eligible to apply for either the BRIC or HMD program, your jurisdiction’s hazardous mitigation plan has to be approved. So, please call us for assistance with this program. We rely largely on BRIC block grants to do most of our planning efforts with process. It can take a couple years to go through the whole process of appropriating funds and awarding contracts. So if you're at risk of having a plan expire in the next couple of years, please start reaching out to us now so we can put you in a queue for plan update.

Nancy Durham, Fairbanks, asked for the new quarterly reports, will we get those to fill out at the beginning of the quarter, so they’re turned in by the end of the quarter. Dave Reilly responded that the plan is to get those out at the beginning of each quarter. However, this one will probably be pushed out a month as we make this transition. Otherwise, you’d be doing your surveys right now.

Co-Chair Cook asked if there were any other questions. Hearing none, he commented that he’s been working with the division for a long time. In looking at the contact list that Bryan mentioned earlier, he recognizes only 30 of the 59 names. So, he asked if staff from Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Response (DHS&ER) could come up and introduce themselves, so we can put faces to names. Staff in the room introduced themselves, their team members and gave a brief overview of their roles.

**C. Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Spill Prevention and Response (SPAR) - Kara Kusche**

Kara Kusche introduced herself as the Prevention and Technical Support Manager with Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Spill Prevention and Response (SPAR). We have provided written updates to the State Emergency Management Commission (SERC) and Local Emergency Planning Committee Association, however she wanted to highlight a few changes to our regulations that occurred recently.

Regulated facilities in Alaska are required to have the financial ability to respond to an oil spill at the planning standard volume. Our updated financial responsibility regulations became effective about a week and a half ago on October 1, 2023. The dollar amounts of proof of financial responsibility were adjusted in accordance with changes to the Consumer Price Index for Anchorage metropolitan area for the second half of 2022. Also keeping up with the times, the update also removed requirements for how certain documents must be signed now allowing for electronic submission. Another recent regulation project here at DEC was a repeal of the above ground storage tank registration requirements for Class 2 facilities. Those are facilities that store non crude oil in above ground storage tanks that have capacities greater than 1000 gallons but also less than 420,000 gallons. These regulations were not specifically required by Alaska statutes and have not been enforced by the department since May, 2020. The regulations repeal become effective on October 18, 2020.

Speaking of staffing, I do want to mention that the department has filled our disaster coordinator position that is now filled by Erin Leaders, and she sits in the commissioner's office.

Two notable spills that have happened since we met last April are the University Lake Spill here in Anchorage and the Suicide Basin Flood Release in Juneau. Our written brief provides more details, but at this time I really want to emphasize and highlight the effective relationships we have with our partners. We work strongly with US Coast Guard, US EPA, Municipality of Anchorage, and so many other resource agencies on those spills. The open communication shared among these partners and our shared goals to protect human health and the environment really helped us respond both quickly and efficiently. We're grateful for all the collaboration that we continue to build in our work.

Lastly, and I think this is pretty exciting, I want to personally invite all of you to join us at DEC’s Division of Spill Prevention and Response (SPAR) open house at our warehouse which is located here in Anchorage. The open house will be on October 24, 2023, from 2:00-6:00 p.m. Staff will be there to answer questions, provide a tour of the warehouse. We'll have some hands on activities featuring common tools that we use in our prevention, preparedness and response work. The address is in your binders and you're certainly welcome to reach out to me or anyone on my team with any sort of questions. The official invitation e has also been posted to our social media account. Thank you all for allowing me to provide the updates. Happy to answer any questions.

BREAK (15 minutes)

Co-Chair Cook called the meeting back to order.

**D. Funding Letter from LEPCA**

Co-Chair Cook commented that it looks like we dropped the ball on this. In looking through the minutes, we were expecting letters from local emergency planning committees to come in so that Co-Chair Vaden and I could use those letters to write a letter on behalf of the LEPCA to DHS&EM in support of requesting funding for CERTs in Alaska. Basically, we didn't move forward with this because Tom and I didn't get the letters that we talked about at the last meeting to be able to formulate a letter to the legislature about funding. So that's kind of how I remember it.

Michael Paschell, Delta Greeley, stated I thought it was two things, independent. One was the LEPCs writing letters and the LEPCA writing a letter. But for me, I'll claim responsibility for us not writing one in terms of the local LEPC. But I'm going to pass the buck just a little bit on that. And then I think we need follow up from the Division because by the time I got back home, I simply didn’t remember we were going to do that until I read the minutes. I would have been happy to write a letter. But it didn't cross my mind. So, if we could have follow-up from the meeting, that would be helpful.

Co-Chair Cook responded that he could empathize with Michael. This is still important for the LEPCA to support the Division through our letters and ground level communication that they can use when we ask the legislature for money for LEPCs. Are there any other comments on that?

Michelle Brown, Juneau, agreed with Michael. I'd like you to follow up with us with an email reminding us to write a letter in support of the budget line item.

Roy English, LEPC Coordinator wanted to address a couple things concerning the letters. It is a simple thing for us to remind you about these letters. That’s not a big ask, but I would like to remind you that in our duties, coordination and technical support, this is something that needs to be driven by the LEPCs themselves. I can send out reminder emails, but the initiative needs to come from the LEPCs to push forward.

Director Fisher added that it's one thing for the committees to send something up to the association and the association to send something to the State Emergency Response Commission. I can't tell you what to do, but my recommendation is that you as individual committees need to work with your local legislators and send that communication correspondence to them as well. The commission, I think I can speak on behalf of the Finance Committee of the SERC, will be happy to work with getting money to you all if the legislature appropriates funding for the work of the Local Emergency Planning Committees. So we can ask as a commission, the legislature to fund that.

However, we need you to do your part with your local legislators to advocate for funding, if that's what each committee in the association is looking for. You have a powerful voice as a constituent. Especially if your state legislator is on the finance committee. So, just a reminder and a recommendation to include your state legislator in this conversation and correspondence.

Michelle Brown, Juneau, prior funding for the LEPC, we also were able to use for CERT. I’m wondering if that could still be the case if funding came back. Co-Chair Cook responded that she put that in her letter and ask her local legislator as well. In his experience, it seems that legislators, as a whole, seem to respond better when there's some sort of formal organization also supporting the local community. That's where we came up with the idea of two letters--one from the local committee and one form the association. Tom and I agreed to write that letter for the LEPCA, but we need your input as well.

So I think what I heard was Roy will send out an email to say hey, pursuant to the conversation you guys had, your LEPC support letters for funding are due to LEPCA chairs in five minutes or next week, whatever that may be. And then that gives you an opportunity to meet with your LEPCs, get the letter, do whatever you need to do internally for that and send it to us. And Tom and I can sit down and formulate our support letter for your local community.

Mr. English stated that the second part of Michelle’s question was about the minutes. So I apologize for the confusion on that. The minutes were made available some time ago, but what many of you saw was there was an amendment to the read ahead that was sent out two weeks beforehand. So that may be where some of the confusion is. Minutes are also available on our website.

Michelle Brown asked when are the minutes available. Roy responded that we try to have them within 30 days of the receiving them from our transcription service. Ms. Brown asked that when they go up on the website, can you send out an email to everyone notifying us of that? Mr. English responded that we can do that.

Co-Chair Cook commented problem solved. He asked if there was nay other comments or questions on the funding letter to the Division.

Amanda Loach, Anchorage, stated that my LEPC recommended a special work session which was allowable in our bylaws in order to discuss what we might want to go forward. And we also had a presentation from an academic research study that was done on how to help LEPCs be successful. So what I'm suggesting, and I don't know if it's in the LEPCA bylaws or not, is should we have a special online meeting where perhaps we're given a presentation on what might be included in the letter or what we might want to bring forward from our LEPCs. And then we discussed that and put together an agenda. Actually had a meeting separately as the LEPC about this. And I'm not suggesting doing that in person. I'm suggesting a teams meeting

Director Fisher responded that we're certainly happy to host a Teams or a Zoom meeting for the association to do that kind of thing. I guess we'll work through the co-chairs to try to schedule something like it doesn't cost us anything. We already have the ability to do post virtual meetings for you all as an association and we don’t have to participate, as it's you all are talking locally. So I don't think that's a problem at all. Are you talking about John?

Amanda Loach, Anchorage, responded University of Alaska Anchorage. The Emergency Manager's name is John Huffman, and he does have a role in our LEPC. His master's research paper was conducted with limited firsthand sources because there's not a lot of research on this. But his master's research paper was on how to help LEPCs be successful. He delivered a presentation to my LEPC in a special session. We discussed that. And from there my LEPC was able.to put together a letter for this purpose.

Director Fisher stated that he had a conversation with Mr. Huffman, the Emergency Manager for University of Alaska Anchorage. I'm sure he would be more than happy to participate in a discussion with you all about that. A lot of good info just in my conversation with him about outputs. Not just we want money because we used to have it, we don't get it anymore, but what the outputs would be. The Commission and the Department of Environmental Conservation and our agency had worked the last couple of years trying to define what the bare minimum required activities are for your committees under federal, state statute and regulation. John's got some very thoughtful ideas in his master's research paper, like Amanda said. We would absolutely be happy to invite him and I'm sure he'd be happy to talk to you all on a follow-up virtual meeting.

Amanda Loach, Anchorage, as a follow-up, since my LEPC did approve a letter to move forward, I would be happy to provide that to any of you that would be interested in that letter. Thank you.

Co-Chair Cook asked if there are any other comments or discussion on the funding letter. So we'll wait to get letters from you guys sent through Roy to the SERC, then on to the legislators.

***Action Items:***

* *Roy English to send a reminder email to LEPCs to write a letter to the LEPCA in support of funding request for LEPCs in the state budget.*
* *LEPCA co-chairs to write a letter to the SERC in support of request for a line item in the state budget to fund LEPCs.*
* ***LEPCs to advocate for this funding with their state legislator.***
* *Roy English to notify LEPCA members when these meeting minutes are available and posted to the website. (or attach a copy to the email?)*
* *Understand that the Division can host a Teams meeting for LEPCs to discuss the letters. Co-Chairs to coordinate date/time of teams meeting.*
* *Understand that the Division can invite John Huffman, UAA Emergency Manager, to present at the Teams meeting how LEPCs can be successful as part of the letter writing campaign. Co-Chairs to decide if they would like to have this presentation on the agenda.*

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Co-Chair Cook stated that Jeremy Aamodt, North Slope Borough, signed up to speak.

Jeremy Aamodt, North Slope Borough, I work for North Slope Borough as a Risk Manager and Emergency Manager. I would like to introduce Dave Engel, the Emergency Program Manager, to say a few words.

Dave Engel, Emergency Program Manager for the North Slope Borough. We have seen historically that our LEPCs have done very good things throughout the borough. Unfortunately, through atrophy or lack of support internally, our LEPCs have failed. And so we're trying to   
re- establish those. As we are required by law to report these kind of things in our communities, the North Slope has seen actual repercussions of our failed LEPCs. So, we're trying to re-establish these LEPCs throughout the North Slope Borough so that we can be adherent to federal and state laws. If you have any questions, I'll have it answered. Thank you.

Co-Chair Cook asked if there were any questions for Dave or Jeremy. He stated welcome back. So, programmatically, you guys have a seat at the table, obviously. And then next meeting we'll do a formal introduction again, we go around the table and you'll be part of the LEPCA.

He asked if there were any other public comments? Hearing none, we’ll move on to New Business and I’ll turn the gavel over to Tom.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Michael Paschall: Solicitation for LEPC representative on the SERC Work Plan Committee.**

Co-Chair Vaden asked Michael Paschall from Delta-Greeley to speak to this agenda item.

Michael Paschall, Delta-Greeley, stated that I am Chair of the SERC Planning Committee, and I am looking for input either as a committee member, or informally, on what the individual LEPCs would like to see SERC concentrate on as a committee.

There is a draft work plan in progress and staff is assisting with that. If anyone, either here or in your LEPC, is interested in being a part of that work plan committee to help drive that conversation, reach out to Division staff or TO myself. I'm trying to drive the SERC to review its process, its role and its impact on the communities to be more effective in supporting preparedness in our local communities through various strategies. And I’m happy to answer any questions.

Co-Chair Vaden asked if there were any questions for Michael? Hearing none, he moved on to the next agenda item.

**VII. LEPC VERBAL STATUS REPORTS**

Co-Chair Vaden asked members to go around the table and mention highlights of what’s going on and any concerns you may have in your LEPC.

**North Slope Borough - Jeremy Aamodt -** We're currently working on reestablishing our LEPC with the institutions running there. We should be able to get started with this framework.

**Anchorage - Amanda Loach -** We've had three meetings at Anchorage LEPC since the last time that this group met. In our June meeting, we worked on our whole community information form together with our LEPC. We adopted survey this year in our jurisdiction to include the LEPC's input. So we just sent them a survey on Google and then they were able to help us answer some of the questions in the whole community. Very helpful for us and helpful for them as well, to be part of the process. So that's something that we did in June.

The next thing that we did, which we discussed in the previous item on the agenda, we worked on our LEPC letter to the LEPCA to give hopefully the state recommendations on changes that might be made in order to support LEPCs a little bit better. Through that we recommended advising the structure funding planning through hazardous materials and other related sources. We also recommended completing a multi-year strategic planning process for the SERC and HazMat specific and all hazard emissions. And then we describe activities to do that.

And then thirdly, which I think is a really important thing for the state to note, is we provided recommendations for non-monetary support through leveraging existing resources. I think you all know that existing resources and figuring out how to utilize those better based on information and data is how we really can change how we work together. So providing non-monetary support through leveraging existing resources, something that is very important in our recommendation.

Thirdly, in our September meeting we were excited to have the first ever upper Cook Inlet tsunami study conducted. So we had a presentation on our first ever tsunami study for the upper Cook Inlet with neighboring communities in the Kenai Peninsula Borough and the Mat-Su Borough which were also affected by that study. And we will be rolling that out to our communities in the coming months and years. We really appreciate having that new information for our community and reporting.

**Fairbanks North Star Borough - Nancy Durham -**  We restarted our LEPC meetings and had our first one again at the end of May. We did not have one this past quarter, but we are looking forward to the next one in November. We have established chairs, officials, and elected officials. We co-hosted and participated in our first Emergency Preparedness Safety Day. We have upcoming training with our biggest being next year, August 19-23. We have the community support L930 exercise for FEMA. We were the only ones who worked within the state and we're going to have not-trained development. We are starting our Homeland Committee meetings. So, anyone near us, if you're interested, please let me know if you want to participate in the exercise. We're also hoping to exercise our future state mutual aid agreement during this exercise. So this is a big exercise for us and our partners, especially since we have so much hazmat in our training system through our jurisdiction. So please let me know if you’re interested in participation in any of this training. Other than that, we've just been responding to events, training, and outreach. All my vacancies have been filled and we're bringing staff up to speed. So, I’m happy to thank my staff for their hard work.

**Denali Borough - Forest Shreeve -** . Our goal was to get our LEPC set up and going again before this meeting. That did not happen. However, we contacted quite a few people, and we have five people who are willing to participate on the LEPC. So we are starting to plan our first meeting that'll happen in January. It’s a pretty big step forward for us to get five people going for the city.

We completed our street sign project. So all of the roads within the borough, all constructed roads, and most of the unconstructed roads, have street signs up. Even some of our four-wheeler trails have street signs. But that actually helped us quite a bit during the Anderson complex fires, rather than cardboard signs going up, getting blown off and stuff, the new street signs helped firefighters respond--even street signs back in the rural area. This was a big help in response time, people lost out, really confusing areas.

We also had over 300 folks within the borough who requested an address and have been assigned an address according to our new addressing system. And that has also been a huge help on response time in the area as well. Both the street sign and address sign projects were started by the LEPC four or five years ago. So we’re really excited to get that back up and going and see what other projects we can get going.

We were able to have partnered with the fire department, Forestry and Smokey groups to put on Firewise education meetings that went really well. We were able to open up another brush collection site to make it four brush collection sites for the borough. We collect brush and burn it off in the fall, which was done yesterday. As I drove down, I stopped by our collection sites. There were about 30 brush piles being burned. So the Firewise program is going well.

We received SHSB grants for backup generators for the Tri-Valley School, McKinley Village and Cantwell fire departments. The Tri Valley School is our evacuation shelter for pretty much anything that occurs within the borough. So it's good to know we are going to have reliable backup for power for that shelter.

The next big thing that we're moving forward with is developing our Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Forestry is providing funding to develop our CWPP throughout the borough. Anderson has a CWPP, which was implemented the last few summers for fires in their area. The fire crew gave suggestions of updates to the CWPP, that we’ll be able to incorporate. McKinley Village, the locals there along with the fire department created their own CWPP for that little area. So that leaves three large unprotected or unplanned areas throughout the borough that will be covered by our CWPP.

**Delta-Greeley - Michael Paschell -** We are working with DNR on our Community Wildlife Protection Plan that is about to expire. We've been reaching out to area organizations and businesses to update contact information and resources. We want to address and prepare for loss of communications due to loss of power. That is a continuing issue.

**Sitka - Craig Warren -** We have a dormant volcano that is now considered historically active and it's about 5 miles from Sitka. So when we went through all of our annex and emergency operation plans, we discovered that we don't have a volcano plan. So I'm having to start over from scratch and make yet another annex. And when we were looking at this and talking to the Alaska volcano observatory, who have now got a whole big sensor on this volcano, we realized that we don't have any loss of water plan. So once again we know that these documents are fluid documents that we're supposed to reevaluate and re-up them. I'm still finding documentation for two hospitals. We haven't had two hospitals now in about five years. So this is my wake up call to reevaluate our plans often and always be prepared for that new plan that's going to have to arise or in this case start over. Two new plans. So we are busy.

Our LEPC is still active. We usually take the summers off. We've been seeing a lot of growth with our cruise ship industry. Passengers have increased about three-fold in the last three years. We used to have 240,000 passengers max for the season. Now we're seeing numbers of 700,000. So it's a huge increase and burden on the community when there's 20 days out of the year that our population more than doubles. It's a stretch on emergency services. The Coast Guard and cruise ship industry want us to do more drills on what if there's an active shooter at the terminal. What if we have a mass rescue operation that needs to go off? How do we unload a boat of 4500 people on a town of 500? So it's been an exciting year. We've been busy in the planning process and keep looking out for what's going to come at you next. Thank you.

**Skagway - Emily Deach -** My name is Emily Deach and I'm the Deputy Borough Manager. We have not had an LEPC coordinator for several years now. And so that effort has gone by the wayside unfortunately. We do have a local Department of Disaster Emergency Services. Through that department we've been able to keep up with an inventory of our emergency supplies and things like that. Our Emergency Operations Plan needs an update because, while we don't have volcanoes, we've been having a lot of rockslides. So I think we need to give more attention to that in our plan.

For the past couple of years, we’ve been dealing with more active rockslides with higher volume of material coming down specifically in high use areas such as public use facilities. We also have a lot of cruise passengers during the summer and have established evacuation plans specific to that area. However, the logistics of moving at least 5,000 people into our community of 1,200 is very difficult. That's been really our main focus the past couple of years.

We are a sub applicant for the BRIC grant through the state. We are in the pre-award stage. So that's good news. And we're optimistic that we'll get that. And that grant would fund a project is to do a large-scale mitigation of the rock slope or the hillside above those public facilities. This means removing a very large rock that everyone is very afraid of coming down. For now, we've got monitoring up there, and redundant monitoring. We've also had a lot of rockslides now on our other highways, like the Klondike highway that goes into Canada. And we’re also experiencing rockslides on the road that up to a more rural, unincorporated community out there. And just this week we saw some pretty big rocks on the road. So we've had to discuss and put into place plans for evacuation of residents out there because with a major rockslide, they would have no road access to the town. So that's been a big issue.

With all the rain we've been having in southeast Alaska, we've been having flood events both in town and in rural areas. There is an old levee that runs alongside our airport in the town of Skagway that provides some protection. But it needs to be rehabilitated to provide more protection. We hope to work with the Army Corps of Engineers to reuse the entire length of that levee, which is partially managed by the state, partially by the municipality. So we're working on that.

We're also looking to establish a community wildfire protection plan. We're applying, through Alaska, in a bundled grant application with a handful of other communities. We're also working on addressing and street naming. In our rural areas there are private driveways that have several houses on them, but there are no street names on them. We don’t have anything in our code to standardize how we apply or how we come up with addresses and names. We're working on that as well. We're working on our dispatch capabilities. The equipment that we have needs to be upgraded and we need redundancy. Lastly, we worked with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on a new tsunami brochure. We hope to be more active, and I plan to reach out to Mr. English to discuss how we can. I'm fairly new to the LEPC world, so it would be good to have more orientation about that. Thank you.

**Juneau - Michelle Brown -** The largest event that we’ve had this year is the Mendenhall Glacier flooding. It’s fairly new and we don’t have a lot of data. The data that we do have shows that we should expect larger and larger events. So, working on preparing for that. They did a study of a bridge that we put in for one of our main corridors. The result of the study is that the bridge is so well constructed, it will stand through almost anything. However, the ground around it is vulnerable and can be washed away.

Another amazing thing was the flooding in the neighborhoods. At first it looked like the river was handling the overflow of water, then all of a sudden, the culverts in the neighborhoods were being filled and water was shooting out of them. The river started to rise, and everything flooded. It was a big learning experience about how things can happen and what it looks like. And also figuring out how to deal with flood mapping, to still allow people to have insurance on their property and get funding to buy homes and things like that. Because there are a lot of things to think about.

One of our challenges has been with our faith communities in Juneau. In the past, instead of working together to help in a disaster, they each did their own thing and sometimes duplicated each other’s efforts by setting up their own shelter and food distribution. This takes away from resources that can be used in a main community shelter. A few years ago we tried to bring them together, but it blew up because of conflict.

And this year, we finally got the faith community together with about 42 people from different organizations that are coming together and learning to work with each other. We're holding quarterly events for training and then we have an exercise coming up. They have chosen for themselves who will be doing what and what role they want to take on. They used to think our congregation will do this, but now they’re figuring out in their brain, we could just take on a distribution of things for infants, for example. Things like formula, diapers and so on. Another group could take on food distribution. So we're coordinating that with them, and they're cooperating with each other without conflict and division.

They're training their members to be able to come to a main shelter and be a resource there. And also, we are surveying their properties to find out just how much of a resource they can be for a shelter. So we know exactly what we've got and where. This is a really big deal that it’s going forward and we're very grateful. Thank you.

FIRE DRILL (participants exited the room)

Co-Chair Cook called the meeting back to order.

**Bristol Bay - Deborah Jones -** We’re still working on getting our LEPC back together. I had some health concerns come up after our last meeting in the spring, so I took a lot of time off this summer. Our fire chief is settling into the position. We've had a lot more turnover, and I feel like a broken record every time I come here and I'm reporting staff turnover in the borough. Our finance director just turned a resignation in this week. Our planner has moved on to a different department. They're willing to do a 25/75% split between the two departments right now. So working on that,

Our home address project has kind of gone by the wayside a little bit. The assembly did adopt everything, so we're working on making our community members aware of their new addresses. Still working with public works, fire department, police department to get signs ordered and in place. I'd like to hear more from Denali Borough on how you guys implemented the signs to help us get going in that right direction. We had a meeting with state Fire Marshal's office this spring to talk about community wildfire protection plans. So, trying to get some of our local businesses and other entities to support that. There’s not a whole lot of support staff from the borough or form the community for LEPC, so it’s been hard to get things done when I take time off. But I'm still trying and don’t plan to give up anytime soon..

Looking at the minutes from last meeting concerning Tier 2 facilities. A lot of our processing facilities are a lot more open to sharing the data about things that they have on site and incorporating local EMS fire response into their emergency plans. So we've been working with quite a few of the processing facilities in hopes to get all of them on board this next spring. I think it's a good way for our fire department EMS to be able to better serve the community if we can get those processors on board, as well as other local entities, like the power company, as well.

So just working on things like that this winter. I hope to have better report next spring. I do see that a lot of our rural departments have had a lot of things going on while it's warm. Things are starting to cool off, so we'll have a little bit more time to do in office things. Hoping to get more departments from the borough on board with LEPC support and then trying to get other community members support us as well.

**Aleutian/Pribilof Islands -** Co-Chair Cook stated that we also have a LEPC written status report form Aleutian/Pribilof Islands in the packet.

**Nome - Tom Vaden -** Our LEPC is meeting. We've been monitoring a few things. So while we're doing outreach for the Nome LEPC, and not for the whole general region, what happens in the region affects Nome. So we're monitoring harmful algae blooms in the Bering Strait and communicating to people in small camps not to eat the crab, not to eat the whales and stuff like that.

We're also monitoring highly pathogenic avian influenza, which has made a transition into mammals somehow. And it seems to be more in the predators that are eating sick birds. So, we’re trying to tell people if you see a sick bird, you can eat it, if you cook the meat well done. So, the message has been it’s okay to eat a sick bird that’s had influenza versus you cannot eat the animals that have been affected by the algae blooms because you can’t take the neurotoxins out of the meat by cooking it. That has been a challenge.

In June the cable that provided internet access in Nome was cut. So we had a lot of businesses without telecommunications. And they’re trying to figure out how to do commerce if you don’t have internet. So a lot of people have gone to Starlink for connection. So it was really interesting seeing Starlink on a house or on someone’s car with a cable going into a window so they could do work. But the cable was repaired a couple of weeks ago and things should be a lot better now.

**Mat-Su Borough - Casey Cook -** Our LEPC is continuing to meet quarterly. The highlights for the LEPC is working with the Emergency Management Office to publish a 40 page preparedness book that we just delivered yesterday. So it'd be fun to see one of those at home, to have some of them delivered to the SERC. So here's what that looks like. So it's a 40 page booklet, seven and a half by eleven, all types of things, from COVID to seal alarms, to earthquakes, to volcanoes, to everything that folks in the Mat-Su borough are expected to encounter. So we'll be handing those out to the community.

We started meeting with a senior housing group, so we included all of our assisted living facilities that catered to seniors to include some of the larger ones. And so we've been meeting with them, doing some emergency planning for their populations to include food distribution. Going back to Dave's comment on distribution. We're also doing the preparedness and planning for the Arctic Winter Games that are coming to the Mat-Su Borough in March. That's a big planning push. And we just delivered our Preparedness Expo last week of September in Wasilla and over 2,000 people attended that five-hour activity. So that's how we're keeping busy at the Mat-Su Borough.

**IX. MEMBERS CLOSING COMMENTS**

Jeremy Aamodt, North Slope Borough had no comments.

Nancy Durham, Fairbanks North Star Borough, I want to thank the State for all of your help this past year.

Michael Paschall, Delta-Greeley, I’m disappointed in our attendance. Obviously, the pandemic created a different atmosphere for a lot of things, for hybrid Teams and in-person meetings. I don't know if that's done away with but having eleven in the room but ten are missing is a sad state for our future. I'm not sure what the answer is. But certainly, have some discussions on as to where we're headed given with what’s involved here. Some of it's more of a travel issue than others.

Craig Warren, Sitka, echoed what Michael said. It seems like all of our workload is going up while we don’t have Bryan’s complaint of full staff. So, Roy, thank you for putting pressure on me. Don't be afraid to do the same thing to the others.

Emily Deach, Skagway, thank you for having me and I plan to be more involved in the future if I have anything to say about it. So, thanks.

Michelle Brown, Juneau, I’m also grateful to be able to be here and part of this group. I know Juneau appreciates it. I think that there's a lot of weather events going on out there and it was more difficult to fly. And I also wish that people would plan their lodging so we would be able to have additional opportunities to meet after the meeting or the night before, so we can have discussions with vendors and not rushing out after the meeting. I think that would be a valuable asset for those that wish it. I think it would help with attendance and it would also help collaboration and getting to know one another. Lastly, I would like a copy of the book that Casey mentioned.

Deborah Jones, Bristol Bay, I appreciate the work that Michelle Torres was doing with CERT information and helping get our youth more involved. Once we get our youth involved in the communities, we can then help more people be active in our LEPC, not just my community, but all the communities. And I think that can help increase our numbers here as well. I've been doing this since 2017 and this is one of the smallest attendance. I agree with Michael that COVID has changed things a lot.

But I would like to see more support from each of our communities that are involved. I appreciate the report form writing. I dropped the ball on that. But I do appreciate your work in that and would like to see more of us getting the form filled out and turned in. We can all share that information with one another and help one another be more prepared for our community. If you work with the train the trainer program, I would like to know more about that and what kind of set up for that. And that’s all I have. Thank you.

Dave Reilley, State of Alaska, to just kind of give a little precursor. The same topic about meetings is going to be brought up in the SERC and the discussion of the SERC is going to be go to a virtual option in the fall and have the in-person meeting in the spring. That's correlated to the Emergency Management Conference that is held in the spring. So I just wanted to make sure you guys were aware of this topic coming up at the SERC meeting.

Director Fisher stated that if that does come to pass, this fall meeting would be virtual, but the spring meeting will be a hybrid. We were just talking about it this week at the staff level to make sure that we get some of the other committees to join the camp. Travel for the spring meeting. We're planning to do that anyway.

Michelle Brown, Juneau, stated that she personally doesn’t like virtual meetings. It is a lot of work to manage them, to get the right equipment set up so we can hold them. And after setting them up, they're still a bit of a pain to run. But I have to say, now that Shay can participate in our LEPC from a distance, we recommend our members come in person because we have, it seems that we're more actively involved with each other and get things done at the table. But it's also great to have a virtual component for those who couldn't come once in a while and those who live out of state. Best thing is to get them in the room if they can be, and virtual for those who really can't be. Their attendance is really valuable to our training, knowledge and things like that. So that would be my recommendation.

Tom Vaden, Nome, has nothing to say.

Casey Cook, Mat-Su Borough doesn't have anything to say. However, I made myself a note for that LEPCA letter and I'll include the missing communities from the meeting to say, here's the reason why it might be helpful to support the LEPCs in the community with the money. Because if they can't write their plans, if they can't get themselves motivated, if they can't have a person leading the charge, then it kind of defeats the whole purpose of doing that. So I'll put that in the letter. I'm also going to add funding opportunities to that letter as well. Work on it. But I made myself note for both of them. So that's my comment.

Director Fisher stated that we had a new member from our Planning Section just join us, David Lee. He wanted to introduce Dave to the committee. So David and I started in the division together. He's actually been there longer than I have. In the early 90s, we grew up doing communications and IT. David's previous job was in the operations section. When you called the State Emergency Operations Center, he was probably one of the people who answered the phone for you. And David's now moved up to the All-Hazards Planning Resilience Unit and is working on the Small Community Emergency Response Plans. So I'm glad you guys can see his face, too.

Co-Chair Cook thanked Bryan and added that he has one more comment. Since I made my demand that we get some ICS449 students, I've had two organizations commit three people, and we just heard about Bristol Bay’s interest in that, too. So, Jeff will add these emails to the list, and we’ll keep you posted. So I appreciate that.

**NEXT MEETING - Friday, April 12, 2024, in Anchorage.**

Co-Chair Vaden announced that our next meeting is April 12th in Anchorage at the end of the Preparedness Conference. I’ll entertain a motion to adjourn.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Nancy Durham moved to adjourn. Deborah Jones seconded.

Co-Chair Vaden adjourned the meeting at 10:40 a.m.