

SAFER OHIO

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**PREVENTING
THE WORST DAY
FROM HAPPENING**

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Inter-Agency Collaboration Creates a Safer Ohio

Who is going to be there to help when a major disaster hits? What happens during a disaster like Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy? Who will be there if a major tornado strikes a heavily-populated area (like Joplin, Missouri)? Remember storms like Hurricanes Hugo, Rita, or Ike? Here in Ohio, we've been spared from the wrath of these super storms, though we did feel some effects from Sandy and the remnants of Ike. But how prepared is Ohio? And who is going to be there to help Ohioans when disaster strikes?

Ohio has a cadre of resources to bring to bear, as well as teams of dedicated men and women who plan, prepare and practice for a day they hope will never come. Whether it is state and county emergency management agencies, the Ohio National Guard, the Ohio State Highway Patrol, local fire, police and EMS, or search and rescue units, they are all working diligently to be ready when needed, when they will spring into action to help Ohioans recover from a major disaster.

“The State of Ohio and the Ohio Department of Public Safety have made great strides in the past few years planning and preparing for any and all disasters we may face,” said Sima Merick, executive director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (Ohio EMA). “All these efforts focus on making our great state a safer one.”

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Improvements recently undertaken in Ohio's emergency preparedness include:

- Creating regional offices within the Ohio Emergency Management Agency for a quicker response so we can better support response efforts at the local level;
- Strengthening relationships with non-profit organizations like the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army;
- Nurturing partnerships with key private sector allies, because we know the government is not the only solution, and that we are all in this together;
- Creating Safer Ohio teams to understand and deal with a crisis as it unfolds;
- Continuing to upgrade radio systems with a goal of interoperability so that responders from different jurisdictions can talk to each other in real-time;
- Increasing coordination and collaboration with the Ohio National Guard; and
- Enhancing our intelligence gathering to ensure enterprise-wide situational awareness.

Many of these resources were on display this spring at Buckeye Lake State Park during a series of emergency response exercises and demonstrations. When the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said the Buckeye Lake dam was in danger of failing earlier this year, state and local first responders and emergency managers

stepped up to reassure the local community that all would be ready if needed. Demonstrations of emergency services at Buckeye Lake Safety Day on May 30 included:

- A water rescue by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources;
- An Ohio EMA mobile communications tower, which can provide emergency communications to first responders; and
- Emergency response vehicles (boats, communications vehicle, mobile command centers, etc.) from several local and state agencies.

Considered by many as the highlight of the day were capabilities displayed by the Ohio National Guard, which utilized two helicopters to demonstrate their rescue capabilities, plucking an "injured" swimmer from the water, and rescuing a victim from the land, hoisting both to safety. The National Guard also displayed a water making unit, which converted lake water into drinkable water.

Training and exercises are key elements of disaster preparedness and go hand-in-hand with inter-agency collaboration. Taking an all-hazards approach, Ohio EMA has conducted a wide-ranging series of exercises that focus on the possible incidents Ohio's first responders may face.

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Agencies participating in Buckeye Lake Safety Day demonstrated rescue capabilities and other emergency response tactics for local residents.

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“The best way to ensure preparedness for any incident is to test your response plans by conducting drills and exercises,” Merick said. “How you practice in a controlled environment is usually a good indicator of how you respond to a real-world incident.”

In addition to nuclear power plant exercises, Ohio EMA held seven regional oil and gas exercises in eastern Ohio and an “active shooter” exercise at a Columbus-area shopping mall. These focused on local response plans, resources the state can bring to assist the local response effort and the need to coordinate. Other exercises held within the past year, in conjunction with other state agencies, covered topics such as Ebola, dam failure and contaminated drinking water due to harmful algal blooms.

Safer Ohio, a key initiative of the Ohio Department of Public Safety, enhances preparedness efforts and strives to ensure a coordinated disaster response effort. Designed this year to help support Ohio’s emergency managers, the Emergency Resource Team is a valuable asset to Ohio’s public safety efforts and a key component of a Safer Ohio. If a disaster overwhelms local response capabilities, these Emergency Response Team members can apply the training learned in the classroom and during exercises to give critical support to local emergency managers.

These volunteer Ohio Department of Public Safety employees are going above and beyond the call of duty to prepare so they can help a community in need. Fire safety, light search and rescue, medical operations and volunteer management are just some of the ways this team is trained and ready to deploy, as needed.

“And we’ve done all of this with one goal in mind: Do all we can to make Ohio a safer place to live, work and play,” Merick said.

And what can you do to help? Emergency preparedness starts at home, where a disaster’s impact is felt the most.

“I encourage everyone to take necessary steps to prepare for any emergency – with a basic emergency kit and a communications plan. These are easy, but needed, first steps toward preparedness that a lot of people might overlook,” Merick said.

Merick named Ohio EMA Executive Director

Sima Merick was appointed executive director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (EMA) by Ohio Department of Public Safety Director John Born on June 8, 2015. Prior to her appointment to lead the agency, she had served as Ohio EMA’s assistant director since 2011.

Merick has been an employee of the Department of Public Safety for 27 years. She began her career as a dispatcher for the Ohio State Highway Patrol and held other non-sworn positions within that division until 1996, when she began her career preparing emergency management and mitigation techniques still widely utilized today.

In 2000, Merick served as a grant administrator in the Mitigation Branch. She was promoted to chief of the branch in 2001, and in 2005, she was named director of the Mitigation, Recovery and Preparedness Grants Division. In this capacity, she had oversight of mitigation and recovery program administration and grants, federal homeland security grants and the fiscal section of the agency. Her entire portfolio encompassed management and responsibility for more than half a billion dollars in federal and state funds.

She is an acknowledged leader among her peers in other state emergency management agencies, often sought out for her expertise and knowledge in program and grant administration. Within Ohio EMA she is a sounding board and mentor for junior staff.

Merick has a degree from the University of Akron and resides in northwest Columbus.

It's All About Teamwork: ODPS and OP3 Members Collaborate for Emergency Preparedness

Nothing is more valuable in times of crisis than knowing you have someone to rely on. Ohioans know annual flooding and wind storms are inevitable – but they can rest assured that the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) has streamlined emergency preparedness efforts.

The 4/72 initiative was recently formulated by the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and Ohio Public Private Partnership (OP3) members to generate state and private sector emergency response that is both timely and sustainable.

Within four hours of a crisis, 4/72 outlines how the state will aggregate emergency supplies not only through state resources, but also through participating OP3 members whose capacity to aid in an emergency is accelerated by proximity to communities in need. The aid can be sustained as needed for 72 hours following a crisis.

EMA Executive Director Sima Merick said the initiative fills gaps in providing resources that take longer for the state to mobilize.

“What we want to do is make sure people are going to (private sector businesses) in their areas at their own time to recover – to get the life safety needs they need locally,” she said.

At the 2015 Northern Ohio OP3 Conference, ODPS Director John Born said the 4/72 initiative allows citizens hit by disaster to get food, water and shelter the fastest way possible.

“We’re responding to be ready rather than we’re ready to respond,” Director Born said.

Before 4/72, the state would form a response plan after learning about a crisis event. Now, communities are prepared to handle emergencies faster with help from OP3 members.

The Emergency Partner Credentialing System (EPCS), a component of 4/72, is designed to provide state-issued documentation to OP3 members aiding communities struck by disaster. The documentation expedites access to disaster scenes for personnel of partner organizations – meaning communities will get the help they need faster than ever. At the conference, Born introduced EPCS, which is being developed and managed by Ohio Homeland Security (OHS).

Unlike other states that use credentialing systems, Ohio’s will be available at no cost to OP3 members and credentials will be verifiable through the Law Enforcement Automated Data System (LEADS).

“It’ll be just like a boarding pass,” said Born.

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For more on this story, watch the latest episode of *Contributing to a Safer Ohio* at youtube.com/user/OhioPublicSafety.

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Businesses can participate in EPCS by becoming a partner with OHS through the OP3 program. Business owners will receive authorization to grant employees two different credentials:

- Multi-Emergency Credential – Permits access to regular statewide disaster relief initiatives.
- Emergency-Specific Credential – Permits access to a specific event area but cannot be used for other events.

A bearer's credential will be personalized with driver license information and home state. Credentials will be distributed through the Communication and Information Management System (CIMS), a web-based portal administered by OHS.

Bruce Hennes, managing partner of a Cleveland-based crisis communication firm, said this new credentialing system can put Ohio's emergency communication and management ahead of the curve.

“The need to speed our crisis communication professionals to an emergency location that may be behind a security perimeter...this is a godsend,” said Hennes.

ODPS, law enforcement and members of the private sector are working together to develop policies for EPCS.

“The neat thing is that it's not a small-group atmosphere working on this,” said Ted Noah of Contingency Planners of Northeast Ohio, which is bringing together companies interested in participating in EPCS. “It's a very collaborative approach and it's going to help create a bond between public and private.”

Full implementation of EPCS is set for January 1, 2016.

Photos: Ohio EMA Executive Director Sima Merick (top) and External Affairs Chief Jay Carey discussed the benefits of the 4/72 Initiative and the Emergency Partner Credentialing System at the 2015 Northern Ohio OP3 Conference.



Passing of Ohio Homeland Security Executive Director Richard Baron

Ohio Homeland Security Executive Director Richard Baron passed away after an honorable battle with cancer on July 28, 2015.

Executive Director Baron had a total of 31 years of service in public safety and emergency services. He was named executive director of Ohio Homeland Security in September 2011.

He was instrumental in the development and implementation of Ohio Homeland Security's fusion center and was the center's first chief of operations.

Previously, he served as a captain with the Ohio State Highway Patrol, retiring in April 2012 after 25 years of service. During his tenure, he worked in various capacities including homeland security and investigative services, with primary assignments in northeast and central Ohio. He commanded investigatory and intelligence operations in the Patrol's Warren District and later in criminal intelligence and computer crimes units.

Prior to joining the Patrol, Baron was a police officer

with the Hubbard Township Police Department in northeastern Ohio, as well as a firefighter and emergency medical technician in Cocoa Beach, Florida.

"He was an inspirational leader...a good man in every sense," said Ohio Department of Public Safety Director John Born. "Rick was always thinking about how we could work with other agencies in Ohio. Rick lost his battle, but his contributions to a safer Ohio, safer country and safer world will continue."

Governor John Kasich posted

a tweet honoring Executive Director Baron, saying "Ohio has lost a great public servant ...Prayers for him and his family"

Governor Kasich ordered flags at the Ohio Statehouse and Ohio Department of Public Safety headquarters flown at half-staff on August 4, 2015, in honor of Executive Director Baron's contributions to Ohio.

Executive Director Baron will be greatly missed by his many colleagues within and outside the Ohio Department of Public Safety.

Richard L. Zwyer II Named New Ohio Homeland Security Executive Director

Ohio Department of Public Safety Director John Born appointed Richard L. Zwyer II executive director of Ohio Homeland Security on July 28, 2015. Zwyer takes charge of a division that has made significant progress in preparing and protecting the citizens of Ohio since its inception.

"Along with the great staff at Ohio Homeland Security, I look forward to working with our partners throughout the

state to advance the mission of preventing, preparing and protecting against acts of terrorism and other threats to public safety," Zwyer said.

Zwyer had served as acting director of Ohio Homeland Security since May 19, 2015. He graduated from the Fusion Center Leadership Program at the Naval Post Graduate School in Monterey, California, and is a graduate of the Southern Police Institute Administrative Officer's Course at

the University of Louisville.

Zwyer joined the Ohio State Highway Patrol in 1993 and moved through the ranks, serving at various posts and positions including assistant Academy commandant, post commander and spokesperson.

A native of Hilliard, Ohio, Zwyer studied natural resources at Hocking College. He resides in Union County with his wife and children.



PISGS Dedicated to Serving Our Communities

The private security industry is the eyes and ears of our communities and often the first responders to crime. There are nearly 21,000 registered security guards and private investigators and more than 800 licensed companies in Ohio. They provide security everywhere – malls, entertainment venues, schools, government buildings and critical infrastructure, among many others.

Private Investigator Security Guard Services (PISGS), a component of the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS), licenses and regulates companies that provide investigation or security services. PISGS promotes public safety by verifying companies are insured and operated by people with appropriate experience and training.

“Licensed security providers are a huge asset for public safety in Ohio, but unlicensed security is a huge liability,” said Geoff Dutton, PISGS Executive Director. “The PISGS licensing process ensures security providers are insured, that they are run by people with appropriate professional experience and by people without dangerous criminal backgrounds.”

PISGS Investigators

PISGS ensures security companies are staffed with guards who do not have criminal backgrounds that would prohibit them from working as guards. PISGS investigators conduct compliance checks at places with security guards, and often join the Ohio Investigative Unit and local law enforcement in investigating unlicensed activity.

PISGS Investigator James Borntreger recently conducted an investigation into a former security company owner who, among other crimes, was providing unlicensed security service to a Trumbull County school. The case later expanded to include felony charges for forgery and failing to pay Bureau of Workers’ Compensation (BWC) fees and taxes.

Borntreger collaborated with BWC, the Ohio State Highway Patrol and the Ohio Department of Taxation to uncover key evidence. In April, Gregory Oakes pleaded guilty, was sentenced to 90 days in jail and paid more than \$200,000 in restitution.

OPISSC

ODPS encourages partnerships and cooperation among law enforcement, private citizens and private investigative and security professionals. The Ohio Private Investigation and Security Service Commission (OPISSC), facilitated by PISGS, connects the private and public sectors of the industry.

The commission consists of 12 members representing the industry, law enforcement and the public, and advises the ODPS director on matters related to the industry. The training committee of the commission is in the early stages of developing a general online training program for private security officers.

In February, PISGS partnered with a private security provider, Ohio Homeland Security, the Ohio Emergency Management Agency and local and federal first responders for an active shooter tabletop exercise at a shopping mall. Based on the exercise, PISGS is building an “active shooter exercise toolkit” to support future exercises at other malls around the state.

Private Investigator Security Guard Services (PISGS) licenses and regulates companies that provide investigation or security services. Opposite page: PISGS Investigator Tiffany Gehrlich-Orr conducts a compliance check.



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Ohio Fights Heroin Crisis through Multi-Platform Partnership

In July, the Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) awarded \$100,000 to a partnership fighting heroin addiction.

The Heroin Partnership Project brings together addiction professionals, law enforcement officials and the courts and provides funding for technical assistance, law enforcement support, treatment, providers and prevention specialists to combat the heroin drug problem in Ross County.

“This project is a comprehensive, collaborative effort of local, state and federal agencies aimed

at reducing overdose deaths as a result of heroin and opiate abuse,” said OCJS Executive Director Karhlton Moore.

According to the Ohio Department of Health, one Ohioan died of unintentional drug overdose every four hours in 2013, equating to 2,911 deaths. More than 980 of those deaths were due to heroin overdose.

“After reviewing data from nearly a dozen counties, Ross County was selected as the pilot location based upon the progress the county has already made and the potential it has to make a bigger impact,” said Executive Director Moore.



From left: Michele Worobiec from the Ohio Supreme Court, OCJS Executive Director Karhlton Moore, Ross County Common Pleas Court Judge Michael Ater, and ODPS Director John Born.

OIU Provides Free Training

Liquor permit holders and their employees can participate in a free Alcohol Server Knowledge (ASK) program, offered by the Ohio Investigative Unit, a component of the Ohio State Highway Patrol. Enforcement agents provide instruction on laws pertaining to the sale and/or the consumption of alcohol and tobacco, false identification and employment of minors as well as penalties for violations.

In 2014, agents trained 4,431 students in 287 sessions throughout Ohio. Liquor permit holders interested in hosting an ASK program should call (614) 644-2415.



A Component of the Ohio State Highway Patrol

Ohio EMS and the State Fire Marshal Office Honor Ohio Fire Service

The 35th Annual Ohio Fire Service Hall of Fame and Awards was hosted by the Ohio Division of EMS and the State Fire Marshal Office Sept. 16, 2015.

Fire departments and firefighters were recognized for exemplary acts above and beyond basic duties and responsibilities, and for embodying the finest traditions of the fire service. Follow Ohio EMS on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for photos from the awards.



Ohio University Students Fight Human Trafficking

Usually switching majors does not equate to trying to save lives – but in the case of one Ohio University student, it was the main outcome. Katherine Morua, a junior at Ohio University (OU), became involved in Athens’ first human trafficking coalition after switching her major from nursing to social work. Morua partnered with fellow advocate, Kaorin Marshall, a senior at OU, to host a human trafficking awareness event on campus in April.

“This is the only way to solve this problem, through public awareness,” said Morua. Marshall and Morua stood outside for 10 hours and informed passers-by of the realities of human trafficking. Through their event, dubbed Stand4Freedom, Morua and Marshall collected over 200 signatures petitioning a change in laws for the treatment of human trafficking victims.

Stand4Freedom is a nationwide movement sponsored by the International Justice Mission which serves to rescue, represent and protect victims of violence around the world.

Morua hopes her efforts will open a conversation about human trafficking to a generation that is concerned with civil rights and freedom. “I know that once people start seeing this crime for what it is, once they start seeing how many people are being killed by this crime, there will be change,” Morua said.

Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force

Since Ohio’s Human Trafficking Task Force was established in March 2012, 11 state agencies have implemented the Task Force’s 26 recommendations to improve the ability to identify and rescue victims of trafficking, better equip law enforcement to investigate and prosecute crimes of human trafficking and provide the services and treatment necessary for victims to regain control of their lives. The Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force provides a more cohesive, informed state response to the crime of human trafficking, and as a result, they are helping more trafficked and exploited children, women and men in our state.



For information on anti-human trafficking efforts in Ohio or to download the 2015 Human Trafficking Task Force Report, please visit publicsafety.ohio.gov/ht/index.html.

Changes to the Process of Establishing an Organizational License Plate

As of September 28, 2015, new guidelines for establishing an organizational license plate require only 150 signatures from registrants who intend to purchase the new plate. Additionally, if the number of registrations involving a nonstandard license plate is less than 25 during any calendar year, the plate will be terminated. In each instance, the previous threshold was 500.

Other changes require the sponsor of a nonstandard license plate to verify contact information annually. Failure to do so will result in the BMV transmitting the contribution for each registration involving the plate to the state treasurer for deposit into the general revenue fund instead of for deposit in the license plate contribution fund until the contact information is verified.

BMV Precision Plate System

Ohio is the first state to employ the Raptor Digital License Plate Printer System to make flat license plates. The Raptor is a state-of-the-art ink jet printing system that prints license plates three times faster than the thermal print system and with improved graphics. Installation of this printer also will enable Ohio BMV to manufacture motorcycle license plates with logos for the first time.



Safer Driving for Safer Roadways

Sergeant Erika Englund was outside of her cruiser at a crash scene on a snowy night in November 2013 when she was hit by a vehicle traveling too fast for icy road conditions. An oncoming motorist lost control, slid through the median and slammed Englund's cruiser into her.

Englund's left leg was amputated because of injuries she sustained that night, forcing her to retire from the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP). The prosthetic leg below her left knee, decorated with an orange and yellow sunset, is both a bright counter to the scene of her crash and a stark reminder of the dangers highway workers face every day on the job.

Because of such high stakes, OSHP launched an educational campaign this summer that reached thousands of Ohioans and beyond.

Englund said revisiting that night is worth it if she can prevent crashes like her own. "The most important thing to remember is when you see flashing lights, to slow down," she said. "We're people. We have families. We want to come home every day."

Englund's story has been shared in numerous ways to show motorists the devastating consequences of driving without caution. A striking portrait of her in her Patrol uniform with her left pant leg stopping just above her knee was displayed at the 12-day Ohio State Fair in Columbus. Her story was shared on social media and featured on WBNS-10TV in Columbus.

Englund is a mother of two – a role she credits for her

ability to persist through the long road to recovery. She underwent 13 surgeries within one year and is currently in physical therapy.

Her story ties in with the #moveover campaign, which has brought attention to move over laws nationwide. Ohio's Move Over Law requires motorists to move over one lane when passing any vehicle with flashing or rotating lights parked on the highway. If moving over isn't possible because of traffic or weather conditions, motorists need to slow down and proceed with caution. Motorists who break this law can be ticketed.

A Patrol cruiser damaged in a move over crash this year was also on display at the Ohio State Fair. A trooper was making a traffic stop when an impaired driver drifted to the right onto the shoulder, striking the cruiser. The crash, like all move over crashes, was completely avoidable. The motorist made two mistakes: driving impaired and not moving over.

From 2010 to 2014, move over crashes involving OSHP vehicles resulted in one civilian death, 22 injured officers and 34 injured civilians.

"Every single move over crash is preventable," said Colonel Paul A. Pride, OSHP superintendent. "We're using both enforcement and education to reach as many people as possible. If we save one life, it's worth it, but we want to save them all."

For more information on Ohio's Move Over Law and the national #moveover campaign, visit statepatrol.ohio.gov/moveover.stm or search #moveover on Twitter.

Left: Erika Englund served as an instructor at the OSHP Academy from 2008-2011. Opposite page: In July, Englund was interviewed by WBNS-10TV in Columbus about the Move Over campaign.



"We're people. We have families. We want to come home every day."



England knows slowing down for emergency vehicles is so important. She was outside of her home when the scene on a snowy day. She was hit by a vehicle from the opposite direction. The motorist was driving too fast and lost control on the slick pavement. It meant England's leg was severed because of injuries she sustained when the out-of-control vehicle slammed into her. She was forced to retire from the Highway Patrol because of the injury. After several major surgeries, she is now undergoing physical therapy.

Message is clear. When you see flashing lights, slow down. If roads are icy, slow down! If you see a police officer, slow down!



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