# Communicating with Community

What We've Learned

## **EMERGENCY MANAGER:** "I expect that most citizens will follow instructions as they are given. The challenge is getting the information out."

### **COMMUNITY:**

"I thought we would be given days to evacuate. We weren't even given hours. I didn't realize we would have no time to

## **COMMUNITY:**

**EMERGENCY MAN** "The shelter locati are well publicized all should be acces for everyone, rega of mobility."

"I know where the shelter is, but I cant get to it because my wheelchair requires special transportation."

### **COMMUNITY:**

"I got all the information in IERGENCY MANAGER: the days before the storm, but after we lost power I had no idea what was going on for almost a week.."

Ve use our web site, cial channels and of urse all media outlets to t the information out to tne public about expectations."

## **COMMUNITY:**

"I knew where the evacuation route was, I would be no place to get

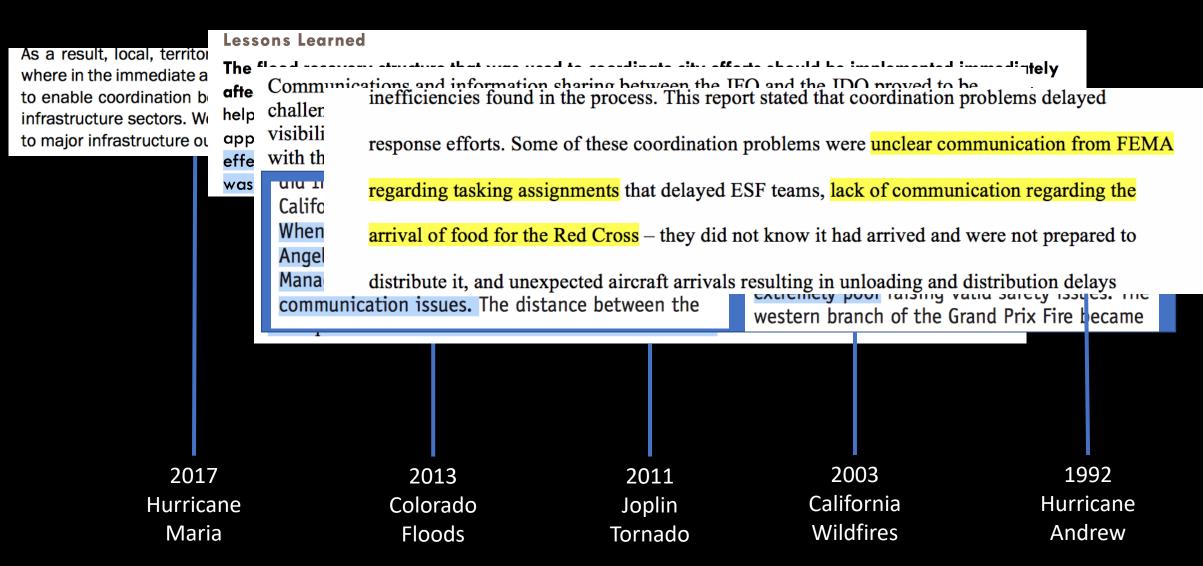
MERGENCY MANAGER: We increased the gnage on the vacuation routes since ne last hurricane.

The single biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

-- George Bernard Shaw



# Lessons Learned



# Gaps

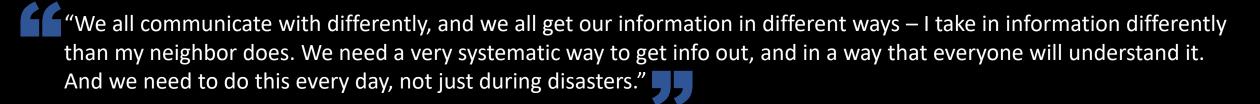
- Expectations
- Common Language
- Lessons Learned

"The thing I see in most incidents, there is a lot of inaccurate info that comes out. Then policy makers — and all of us really — get hammered by it later...Because of election cycles, local elected have not likely been through these things before. We really need local advocacy for our politicos so that the citizens get the right actionable info."

-- Lori Hodges, Director of Emergency Management 416 Wildfire Activation, Colorado 2018

## RECCOMENDATIONS

- Engaging Elected in daily/operational briefings this is where the community gets their information
- Open QnA at end of briefings that ensure everyone is on the same page with the language and messaging



-- Chris Donegan, Financial Analyst Hurricane Irma Deployment, Florida 2017

## RECCOMENDATIONS

- Use common language wherever possible even in briefings, and especially when speaking with the community
- Effective communication is a practice we need to do it every day, not just during disasters. This is why it keeps ending up in the back of our AARs

"...communicating effectively is imperative. Then when we say its time to go, or we need to do a thing, they don't push back, they follow you because they trust you — that trust is only a result of the effective communications up to that point. Communication has to start early so that you have that trust when you need it."

-- Doug Bainton, FDNY DART Team Hurricane Irma/Maria Deployment, US Virgin Islands 2017

## RECCOMENDATIONS

- Communication needs to be as clear as possible even before the disaster this means training
  opportunities. We need communications training just like we need all the other training
- Every communication is an opportunity to build trust without trust there can be no effective response

## What Can You Do?

**Self-evaluation** – are you being clear? Did this work the last time you did it? What can you do better?

**Organizationally** – is everyone on the same page? Have you engaged all of the stakeholders that will be messaging expectations?

**Community** – have we given as much information as possible? How many acronyms were in it? Are we applying the lessons we learned from the community last time?

**Education** – what are the training opportunities available and how can we get them? Are we practicing good communication every day?



**Thank You** 

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