

# After Action Report

**NAME/DATE OF INCIDENT:** Southeast Colorado Blizzard Response (Blizzard II)

**SITUATION:** Following on the heels of the December 20-22 blizzard, Colorado was subjected to a more severe blizzard starting on December 28<sup>th</sup>. The heaviest concentration of snow occurred within the Southeast region of the state (Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Las Animas, Otero, and Prowers). This was one of the first instances where the emergency exceeded the local jurisdictions' capabilities and state-level assets took the lead in response and recovery operations. The area is home to 345,000 head of cattle and calves, 23,500 head of producing sows and 112,000 head of sheep and lambs, all with an estimated value of \$500 million.





This incident brought together several key local, state and federal assets. Some of the significant activities that occurred during this event were:

As part of the life safety mission of the incident, the Civil Air Patrol was able to fly twelve aircraft (based from Peterson AFB, Colorado Springs) with the primary mission of locating stranded motorists along the road network and those residences that had been cut off due to the weather conditions. This information would then be relayed to the National Guard, who would conduct search and rescue operations and when necessary transport food supplies.

The urgency in getting hay to livestock was an effort not to repeat the devastation that occurred in 1997 when approximately 27,000 cattle died resulting in a loss of \$ 26 millions. Hay was delivered via air (using Colorado National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters and a Wyoming National Guard C-130 aircraft) and ground assets. The State of Colorado purchased \$12,000 dollars of hay for this effort. The actual numbers of loss cattle may not be known for some time; however, the current estimate is 10,000. On January 26<sup>th</sup>, the federal government made available emergency loans for ranchers and farmers in 10 southeast Colorado counties who sustained agriculture and livestock losses in last month's blizzards. Loans are available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture for those in Baca, Bent, Crowley, El Paso, Huerfano, Kiowa, Las Animas, Otero, Prowers and Pueblo counties. In addition, the USDA has named 10 other counties as contiguous disaster areas, and family farmers in those counties may also qualify for Farm Service Agency loans. Those counties are: Alamosa, Cheyenne, Costilla, Custer, Douglas, Elbert, Fremont, Lincoln, Saguache and Teller.





The Colorado Department of Transportation was a critical participant in the southeast region response operations by clearing the road networks. Preliminary estimates for their snow blowing/plowing activities were \$7.1 million.



This incident provided the opportunity to tap into County/Regional Incident Management Teams as part of the statewide mutual aid system. Two Type III teams were requested, approved, and deployed to the Southeast. This incident also bought about a first by bringing in a Type II Incident Management Team for a non-wildfire event.

Due to the nature of the storm, mass feeding also became a major operation. An example of this was the Salvation Army in Baca County, where they provided 1,155 meals over five and one-half days. They were able to transport food from Denver to the region. They also provided 282 meals in the Denver metropolitan area.

As a result of the FEMA declarations, seven Applicant Briefings were scheduled for January 22-24, 2007. These will help eligible applicants begin the process to apply for federal assistance for reimbursement of 75% of the total eligible costs of equipment, contracts, and personnel overtime related to emergency services in dealing with the snow over a 48-hour period of time.

The Governor had requested assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the form of funding to assist the farmers within the Southeast region who were impacted by the Blizzard. This request was denied.

The following state/non-governmental agencies had representatives within the SEOC:

1. American Red Cross
2. ARES/RACES
3. Civil Air Patrol (CAP)
4. Colorado Cattlemen's Association
5. Colorado Department of Agriculture
6. Colorado Department of Human Services
7. Colorado Department of Military & Veteran Affairs
8. Colorado Department of Natural Resources – Division of Wildlife
9. Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment
10. Colorado Department of Transportation
11. Colorado Fire Chief's Association
12. Colorado Livestock Association
13. Colorado State Forest Service
14. Colorado State Patrol
15. Colorado Veterinary Medical Foundation Colorado Farm Bureau
16. Cunningham Fire Protection District
17. Division of Emergency Management
18. Division of Fire Safety
19. DOLA - GIS Office
20. FEMA Region VIII
21. Jefferson County - Incident Management Team
22. Northwest Region - Incident Management Team
23. Parker Fire District
24. Public Utilities Commission
25. Rocky Mountain Coordination Center
26. Rocky Mountain Fire District
27. Salvation Army
28. U.S. Bureau of Land Management
29. U.S. Forest Service

Local Emergency Operation Centers (EOC) activated: Adams; Arapahoe; Baca; Bent; Boulder; Broomfield; Clear Creek; Colorado Springs; Denver; Douglas; El Paso; Elbert; Kiowa; Las Animas; Otero; Prowers; Pueblo; and Westminster.

**Shelters were set up at the following locations:**

<b>Shelter</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Occupancy</b>
Baca County Resource Center	100	59
Bent County RASADA Facility	35	25
Calhan Lutheran Church	20	4
Calvary Chapel East Side	100	20
Campo Community Building	100	45

Campo High School	100	120
Falcon Middle School	150	45
First English Lutheran Church	25	12
Georgetown Community Center	50	15
Huerfano County Community Center	100	15
Kit Carson United Methodist Church	50	25
La Junta Senior Citizens Center	50	13
Springfield 1 <sup>st</sup> Baptist Church	50	5
Springfield Assembly of God	35	45
Springfield High School	50	10
Springfield United Methodist Church	50	52
Trinidad Community Center	300	150
Walsh Methodist Church	100	2

### **TIMELINE OF EVENTS:**

Dec 27, 2006	13:23	El Paso County contacts CERT organization for preparations
	13:38	El Paso Red Cross preparing shelter supplies
Dec 28, 2006	09:52	Westminster recreation center activated
	10:18	Snow flurries start in Denver metro area
	10:44	Governor's disaster declaration (D 026 06) received
	12:00	1 <sup>st</sup> State situational report released
	13:26	1 <sup>st</sup> road closures (I-70) are reported
	15:00	Multiple local EOCs are activated
	15:28	DoAg contacts King Soopers and Safeway regarding food supplies
	15:54	Red Cross starts to open multiple shelters
	17:17	CDOT and Sterling start snow removal operations
	20:06	1 <sup>st</sup> request for DMVA support (Weld County)
Dec 29, 2006	22:14	Request by Jefferson County to help clear roads
	23:17	Additional road closures reported to Wyoming & Kansas borders
	01:12	1 <sup>st</sup> DMVA mission departs on Red Cross Supply mission
	02:20	1 <sup>st</sup> fatality reported by Colorado State Patrol
	07:59	CDOT clearing avalanche on Loveland Pass
	09:51	DMVA conducting courtesy patrols in multiple counties
	10:12	Bus stranded between Lamar and Springfield
	11:21	Southeast region starts multiple requests for DMVA support
	11:26	Nearly all roads in southeast region are closed
	14:05	Canadian cattle diverted to feedlot
	15:30	Governor and Governor-elect conduct press conference in SEOC
	18:00	Metro area EOCs deactivating
Dec 30, 2006		Jefferson County Type III IMT requested
	21:40	Reports of non-Red Cross shelters being set up in Southeast region
	23:28	DTR battery re-supply to DMVA
Dec 30, 2006	07:00	Additional CDOT snow blowers en route to southeast region
	09:27	Northeast region EOCs deactivated

	09:40	Red Cross moving supplies from Pueblo to La Junta
	10:32	MRE requests approved
	11:02	Mission priority list generated by southeast region
	11:58	CDOT crews from Durango, Alamosa, and Grand Junction enroute
	13:38	Contract snowcats en route
	16:12	Southeast area command issues incident objectives
	16:43	Las Animas County requesting DMVA support
	20:11	Gall Bladder attack reported near Kim
	22:30	Trinidad radio operational will transmit msg to stranded motorists
Dec 31, 2006	00:22	PIO message released regarding CAP flight later in the day
	07:00	SEOC starts day only shifts
	07:26	Holly nursing home reports out of oxygen
	08:07	Portions of highway 160 open
	08:52	Medical treatment needed for dialysis patient
	09:18	Jefferson County Type III IMT deploying to Lamar
	10:54	Salvation Army requests food re-supply
	12:36	1 <sup>st</sup> CAP report received
	12:46	Eagle County Type III IMT assembled
	12:56	Report of venting oil wells between Campo and Springfield
	15:22	1 <sup>st</sup> report of building collapse, in the City of Walsh
	15:24	ESF 13 standing down
	16:35	I-25 between Pueblo and New Mexico is open
	19:41	Governor approves heavy ground assault to feed livestock
Jan 1, 2007	07:00	SEOC starts day shift only operations
	11:25	CAP continues flights reports abandoned vehicles
	11:27	Governor approved use of CoNG helicopters to feed livestock
	13:34	Pueblo Public Works provides snowplows and graders
	16:15	Rocky Mt Food Industry Assoc reports food supplies low
	17:22	Pharmaceuticals delivered to Lamar
Jan 2, 2007	07:16	Port of Entry allowing overloaded lowboys to go to region
	09:37	Multiple rescues of stranded motorist completed
	11:16	Eagle County IMT deploying to Baca County
	11:19	Type II IMT requested from RMCC
	11:31	CoAg attempting to get extension agent in each County EOC
	12:12	Fuel requests start coming in
	13:01	Baca County reports multiple building collapses
	16:06	Type II IMT request approved
	17:56	EMAC REQ-A submitted for Wyoming C-130 aircraft
	19:21	Building inspector team being assembled
Jan 3, 2007	09:00	FEMA approves emergency funding
	14:23	2 <sup>nd</sup> Governor's Executive Order (D 001 07) signed
	15:19	Rules covering trucker hours-of-service temporarily suspended
	15:41	Rules concerning diesel fuel with red dye suspended
Jan 4, 2007	11:06	Public Utilities Commission working on power outages
	11:55	CVMA will be handling donations
	12:00	New storm may be moving into the region later tonight

	15:51	CAP ending mission due to weather
Jan 5, 2007	11:53	New snowfall starts in Lamar
	19:13	Air Guard EOC deactivated
Jan 6, 2007	15:08	CDPHE releases information on public health issues
Jan 7, 2007	06:57	Avalanche reported on Berthoud Pass
Jan 8, 2007	11:39	Presidential declaration signed (3270 and 3271)
Jan 9, 2007	11:01	ESF 11 stands down
Jan 11, 2007	12:44	CDPHE has contacted all health facilities in region
Jan 12, 2007	07:43	CoAg provides listing of renders and landfill operators Amendment #1 to 3270 and 3271 signed
Jan 15, 2007		FEMA / State agreement signed
Jan 16, 2007		Joint Field Office opened
Jan 19, 2007		Community Relations plan completed
Jan 22, 2007	10:00	First of four Public Assistance meetings held
Feb 5, 2007		US Department of Agriculture declines the Governor's request for assistance to the farmers
Feb 16, 2007		Transition Plan published (tentative)
Feb 21, 2007		Congressional close out calls made (tentative)
Feb 26, 2007		Logistics close out conference call (tentative)

## LESSONS LEARNED:

### 1. **ITEM:** Conference Calls

**DISCUSSION:** It was beneficial to conduct the daily conference calls between Area Command and the State EOC. This provided the opportunity for both to be on the same page regarding situational awareness. The ability to transmit information via PowerPoint also contributed to this information sharing process.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Continue this practice

### 2. **ITEM:** Mission tracking

**DISCUSSION:** Tracking missions was problematic. There was no formal documentation on what missions were approved/disapproved. The only record of approvals/disapprovals were the entries that were made in WebEOC (not all were entered). National Guard operation orders were sent via e-mail and provided a good record of mission assignments, however, these operation orders were not placed in WebEOC. Then, there were the non-National Guard missions that were even less documented at the state level.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Within the draft 2007 version of the State Emergency Operations Plan is a mission assignment form which could alleviate some of these problems. This could also be included as part of the redesign of WebEOC.

**3. ITEM:** Local Emergency Operation Centers

**DISCUSSION:** Within the Southeast Region there is only one functional EOC. Originally, the opinion was that if the avian flu were to be detected, then a real need for functional EOCs would exist. However, based upon this event and looking at national critical infrastructures located within the region, we foresee the requirement for multiple EOCs (with back-up generators) to deal with large-scale incidents.

**RECOMMENDATION:** This issue is being addressed in the upcoming Homeland Security grant.

**4. ITEM:** DMVA Pre-deployment

**DISCUSSION:** Initially, DMVA staged mobility teams comprised primarily with full-time staff. This was done based upon weather projections and lessons learned from operations during Blizzard I. One change from Blizzard I was to task organize forces by area. Part of this also dealt with embedding Colorado State Patrol troopers with these teams in an effort to facilitate communication networks.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The decision on task organization should be made earlier in the operation.

**5. ITEM:** Shelters

**DISCUSSION:** The American Red Cross (ARC) had three chapters (Centennial, Mile High, and Pikes Peak) actively involved in establishing shelters across the state. This also provided them the opportunity to test the National Sheltering System (NSS) in tracking shelter status, capabilities, and limitations. Currently, the NSS cannot be exported into WebEOC, where there is a sheltering board. However, having access to this system proved a valuable tool for those pre-established shelters. One drawback is that ARC does not have chapters in every region of the state and other organizations have taken up the shelter mission. Specific data on the location (or potential location), its capacity, capability, and limitations are generally unknown.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Continue to work in establishing contacts and shelter standards for spontaneous shelters.

**6. ITEM:** Medical staff

**DISCUSSION:** Blizzard I created conditions where medical staffs (both hospital and private critical care) were physically unable to report for their shifts at these facilities, thus relieving the staff already there. This required assigning assets to pick up



staff and transport them to the facilities. The same occurred during Blizzard II. Even though these staff members provide a critical service to their patients, there are staffs already in place that are equally trained. Having to divert assets from immediate life safety missions may not be the most efficient use of transportation assets.

**RECOMMENDATION:** CDPHE should encourage these facilities to review and update their continuity of operation plans.

7. **ITEM:** Suspension of regulations

**DISCUSSION:**

1. During the blizzard, several truckloads of Canadian cows were en route from their home livestock yards to a processing facility. These truckloads are banded in order to maintain the integrity of the herd and to provide a degree of importation. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) was able to quickly suspend these measures in an effort to preserve the herd.
2. The delivery of fuel was inhibited by the blizzard. The direct impact of this was upon safety, farm animals, and the local economy. The Colorado State Patrol issued a temporary exception to hours-of-service for petroleum carriers only.
3. There are several types of diesel fuel. Diesel fuel with red dye can normally be used under specific circumstances. Because of the limited availability issues of other fuels, the Governor temporarily suspended the rule on where this red dye could be used.

**RECOMMENDATION:** None beyond Departments and Divisions need to stay aware of state and federal rules and regulations that are impacted by such disasters. Decision-making procedures should be reviewed to allow the temporary suspension of appropriate rules / regulations when the need arises.

8. **ITEM:** Type III Incident Management Teams

**DISCUSSION:** The Northeast Region and Jefferson County provided Incident Management Teams for Blizzard II. Short teams were requested as an immediate measure to assist with the incident. However, upon their arrival at the designated command posts, it was determined at a full team should have been deployed. This was the first such deployment of these teams. For subsequent deployments, a clearer decision-making process should include the criteria regarding the size of the Type III teams that are to be deployed. It should be considered that, at least initially, a full team deploys and once they are on site and conduct needs assessment then the team could be scaled back. The drawback is the financial commitment involved. These teams are designed to operate for incidents that should have duration of approximately 72-hours (anything longer than that a Type II team should be called).

**RECOMMENDATION:** Continue the development of additional Type III teams across the state.

**9. ITEM:** Activation of Emergency Support Functions (ESF)

**DISCUSSION:** As with any incident, the involvement of ESFs is cyclic. During the first couple of days, ESFs 1 (Transportation), 2 (Communications), 4 (Fire Fighting – because this is where the Resource Ordering and Status System is housed), 5 (Emergency), 6 (Mass Care), 9 (Search and Rescue), 13 (Public Safety), and 15 (External Affairs) were critical. As the event evolved, ESF 11 (Agriculture and Natural Resources) became actively involved which was followed by ESF 8 (Public Health), ESF 13 (Energy), and subsequently 14 (Long-Term Recovery and Mitigation). Some events do not provide sufficient reaction time for an assessment and its implications and ramifications, which should and should not be involved at the coordination level.

Even though the National Incident Management System and the Incident Command System stresses that self-deployments should not take place, this applies to those tactical assets who might be directly involved in response activities at the incident itself. This should not be construed as a restriction upon those agency representatives who would be physically working at an Emergency Operations Center-type facility at the local, county, regional, or state levels.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Contact lists need to be constantly updated.

**10. ITEM:** Hay lift Operations

**DISCUSSION:** After visually observing the disaster area, on December 30<sup>th</sup> the Governor authorized the use of state assets to assist in the feeding of herds that had been caught in the pastures when the blizzard hit.

Based upon some preliminary numbers, there were 350 Department of Agriculture registered premises and approximately 1,050 premises by the Brand Industry throughout the region. Due to these registrations, latitude/longitude locations were provided to the National Guard. However, as requests for assistance were received, street addresses or geographic addresses (ie. second field to the left from where the river bends east) were given and it took quite a while to match these two different type locations. One successful work around was to have a local ranchers fly with the National Guard who was familiar with the area. The National Guard air assets would fly one route out and a different route back in order to cover more ground.

Even though this was a very successful operation, the efficiency in which it took place has been questioned. The primary challenge (especially for the Colorado Department of Agriculture) is to track small and medium sized herds so when the next disaster hits and feeding activities are authorized, then there is a foundation of information in which to work. This not only applies to the southeast region, but the other regions of the state as well.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Work with the various livestock organizations/associations to develop a better system of identifying livestock locations.

**11. ITEM:** Agriculture County Agents

**DISCUSSION:** The Colorado Department of Agriculture was partially successful in getting local county agents physically located in the County EOCs to assist in response and recovery operations. This event also clearly demonstrates that incidents cross multiple key sectors which require inclusion of many more participants than just the typical first responders.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Meetings have already been scheduled with the Colorado State University Extension Service to discuss this matter. Expand this first step to the rest of the state.

**12. ITEM:** Public Information

**DISCUSSION:** As with all incidents, you can consider half of all the initial reports to be inaccurate to one degree or another. An active public information system can combat this misinformation. One axiom is that it is better to get some information out immediately, than wait to compile a 100% of the information for later issuance.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Agency Public Information Officers should continue to work together and work through a state-level joint information system.

**13. ITEM:** Disengagement

**DISCUSSION:** Every incident eventually closes. The effects may linger while other response and recovery operations continue. There will always be that one individual who will feel that they are being abandoned by the local, county, or state governments (and the contractors these governments hired). Regardless of the reason for the redeployment (financial, other commitments, scheduling, need, etc) of these assets, a series a talking points should be provided to all participants explaining why the redeployment is going on.

**RECOMMENDATION:** This should be a task within the joint information system.

**14. ITEM:** Finance Section within the SEOC

**DISCUSSION:** Once a state emergency disaster declaration is issued, and especially if a U.S. Agency or Presidential declaration is issued, a finance team should be

embedded with the Logistics Branch to insure proper documentation of all costs is conducted. There is not a clear break between response and recovery operations.

Even though live safety will always be the number one priority for every incident, eventually the decision-makers need to be cognizant of the financial costs that are being incurred (short-term and long-term). Part of this must also be a clear delineation of the chain of command from the incident scene to area command to the state.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Since this was the first incident where the state became the incident lead, a series of procedures should be developed to facilitate the documentation process. These should include: how to obtain cost estimates, approval authority(ies), transmission of approvals, letting of contracts, extensions, collecting receipts, etc.

15. **ITEM:** Finance

**DISCUSSION:** As mentioned in other Items within this Report, documentation is key during both the response and recovery phases of any incident. In order for this particular activity to be successful, prior planning must take place. The first step should be to create a training program / orientation that are directed towards finance issues.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- a. Provide a comprehensive briefing to incoming IMTs, other state responders, and contractors. Include 24/7 contacts for questions in each functional area such as National Guard, state agencies, purchasing and acquisition, information, and logistics.
- b. Anticipate acquisition and contracting needs and make personnel available to travel to remote locations to support this function. The ability to make local purchases and contractual commitments is critical to support incident operations.
- c. Provide simple data collection forms for cities and counties to use to capture local costs and other information.
- d. Establish a system to track equipment for documentation purposes and for opportunities to place equipment where there are the most critical needs. Consider methods that include inspection and use records.
- e. Provide incoming support groups (such as IMTs) copies of any tracking devices the state wants to use. Examples may include purchase logs, equipment lists, and equipment fueling.

16. **ITEM:** Non-exempt Staff

**DISCUSSION:** Currently, there is no formal program within the Department of Local Affairs that addresses compensation for non-exempt individuals. These individuals are hourly employees who are paid for 40-hours of work per week maximum. If the SEOC is activated, shifts are twelve hours in duration (in reality, with turnover briefings, it becomes 13-14 hours). Theoretically, the SEOC was operational for eleven days. If a non-exempt employee worked one shift each day, they would have worked 132 hours versus 88 hours over the same period of time if they did their normal day-to-day activity.

Most recognize that working extra hours during an emergency is part of the job; however, they should not be financially penalized. The current policy outlines an individual may be rewarded time-and-a half in days off. However, most cannot take this time off because their other responsibilities have been temporarily placed on hold.

**RECOMMENDATION:** At the Executive Director level, develop a Departmental policy that deals with financial compensation issued for non-exempt staff who work twelve hour shifts during an emergency. One state agency that has such a policy in place is the Colorado Forest Service.

**17. ITEM: WebEOC**

**DISCUSSION:** During Blizzard I, 18 positions used this emergency management software program for 305 entries. During Blizzard II, that number increased to 111 positions entering data totaling 958 entries in the duty officer log. This does not count entries made on the resources, shelters, or public information boards. It provided a rough operational picture of the activities at the Springfield Command Post, Lamar Area Command, and at the SEOC. The overall comments were positive, with caveats. Between these two blizzards, this was the first true operational test of the program, which the state has owned for two years. Even though a few tweaks have been made, the system has not been tailored to meet the needs for a major disaster. It should be noted that Adams County has independently purchased this program and was using it during both blizzards.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Continue the refinement of the systems capabilities and then conduct additional training for all users. An additional recommendation is that for each jurisdiction or EOCs that is using the program during a disaster, a dedicated scribe be identified for making entries.

**18. ITEM: GIS**

**DISCUSSION:** Geographic Information Systems can provide a vital tool to the decision-maker. The GIS Team was not getting information about the scenario from the field. This is due to two issues: (1) the availability of the data (e.g., what was the status of the roads at a particular point), (2) communication with the field or regional EOC. GIS did a fair job in communicating with the regional EOC and vice-versa, but in general we had no idea what maps were being made or what was required.

The major drawback is having the appropriate data available in a timely manner. During this incident, the major time factor was entering the data so that it could be graphically represented on a map.

Another limiting issue for GIS to contend with is the electronic size of the maps. Different agencies and different regions of the state vary in its connectivity levels. Some

jurisdictions have no data limitations; some have restrictions, while others still may not be wired. GIS can be used more analytically for mission planning, etc.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- a. In the long term, we need to develop the technologies and protocols to collect information from the field to maintain a situational awareness of the incident. These technologies may include GPS receivers with field data collection software, GPS enabled cameras, airborne video techniques, etc. These technologies may be owned by one agency (e.g., DEM) but used by others (e.g., National Guard.). The protocols include the ability to use the technologies, when and where the information will be reported, how it will be displayed, etc.
- b. We need to develop the protocols for sharing information with the ICP or Area Command. This is a technology question but also a procedural question. For example, the MACC would mostly receive data at the end of an operational period. Is that adequate; when data should be transmitted; can these procedures be outlined in the designation if a Type II or Type III team is in place.
- c. Resources could have been put in place at the state to assist in developing GIS data at the area command. However, the way that this is done needs to be developed and perhaps exercised.

**19. ITEM:           Declarations**

**DISCUSSION:**       It was/is an arduous process attempting to obtain the appropriate federal declarations. The snow emergency, through the Federal Emergency Management Agency channels, did come through; however the U.S. Department of Agriculture declaration has not. There are restrictions on what each can and cannot do for those local jurisdictions impacted by the disaster. As it should be, there is no cross leveling of funds between these agencies. The disaster occurred along state political boundaries; however, one of the restrictions is that weather data collected by a neighboring state cannot be used to assist a county in qualifying for financial relief, even though it was the same storm that caused the disaster on both sides of that boundary.

**RECOMMENDATION:**   To enjoin with other states (Kansas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico) who were hit by the same blizzards

**20. ITEM:           SEOC Shifts**

**DISCUSSION:**       During Blizzard I, there was an orderly staffing plan for the State Emergency Operations Center. Briefings were conducted on a scheduled basis, done in a logical process, and the organizational structure was graphically represented. The same was true for the first couple of days during Blizzard II, however that degenerated starting around December 30<sup>th</sup>.

After December 30<sup>th</sup>, operational briefings no longer were held and DEM staffing changes were constant. Some DEM staff members were called in only to be told to come

back in a few hours to start their shift. Other members were reassigned to different teams as the incident continued. No explanations for any of these changes were provided.

**RECOMMENDATION:** A coherent staffing plan for the SEOC needs to be developed and effectively communicated to all participants.

**21. ITEM:** Public Assistance

**DISCUSSION:** As the situation became more apparent in the southeast region, discussions started to occur as to whether or not the State could qualify for a presidential declaration. If so, documentation would become the main effort. It has been several years since the state has qualified for public assistance funding and the rules regarding what documentation is required has changed.

**RECOMMENDATION:** On a yearly basis, FEMA and other federal agencies who can provide emergency disaster-related funds publish a document outlining documentation requirements, what can and cannot be covered for each type of federal declaration (major disaster, snow removal, etc), and other requirements. Still recognizing that changes in legislation may adjust some of these factors, document like this will assist both state and local governments as well as fulfilling the mission requirements of the Admin/Finance Section outlined in NIMS.

**22. ITEM:** Local Declarations

**DISCUSSION:** Pursuant to 24-32-2109, Colorado Revised Statutes, local jurisdictions are empowered to declare a local disaster within their political boundaries. Besides activating response and recovery elements within their governments, the issuance of such a declaration also provides access to their emergency TABOR funding. The duration of these declarations vary with each jurisdiction's ordinances and regulations.

The inclusion of a local declaration will strengthen DEM's case when the Director goes to the Governor's office requesting a State declaration be issued. It is a demonstration that the local government has taken all necessary steps, within their capabilities, to deal with the disaster. It may also provide that local government with additional authorities and capabilities (streamlined purchasing authority, emergency contracting, access to additional funding, etc depending on the local government's regulations) that are not available on a day-to-day basis. Conversely, if the event is not significant enough that the local entity deems a declaration necessary, it may appear they do not need state assistance.

If a state or federal disaster declaration is signed, there is the potential for some or all expenses incurred by these entities to be reimbursed. This is dependent upon the type of declaration that is issued. The key to reimbursements is the disaster documentation. One item that is not mentioned as a required document is a copy of the local declaration.

During Blizzard I (December 20-22, 2006) 38 local declarations were received and during Blizzard II (December 28, 2006-January 9, 2007) 47 declarations were received.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Local declarations submissions to DEM should be a requirement prior to requesting assistance from the state.

**23. ITEM:** Field Support Contingency Plan

**DISCUSSION:** In the event that commercial or alternative resources need to be employed to support State Emergency Response Team (SERT) out of a Forward Operations Base (FOB) typically supported by the Colorado National Guard, the following taskings could be implemented.

a. Communications Support:

- (1) Tasking to ESF 4/9 for use of a VHF or 800 DTR communications cache with support personnel. 100' portable tower and 50 handheld radios (10 mile local talk capability)
- (2) Mission tasking to ESF-2 for cellular phones, assuming that cellular network support is still operational.
- (3) Augment Team with the following State of Colorado, Division of Emergency Management organic equipment
  - (a) Satellite Radio Telephone portables (long range communications capability)
  - (b) 800 MHz. Portable Repeater (10 mile local talk capability)
  - (c) 800 MHz. Portable Base Station (2-5 mile local talk capability)
  - (d) Tactical Communications Packages (TAC-PAC's) (network capability through POTS dial-up lines)

b. Office Facility Support:

- (1) Mutual Aid Agreement with South Metro Fire or other local or state entity for use of their mobile command post.
  - (a) Provides a mobile self-contained capability for the team.
- (2) Commercial contract to GE Capital or other vendor for a mobile office.
  - (a) Provides for a fixed base facility.
  - (b) Package comes with generator set and HVAC system.

c. Billeting and Food Service Support:

- (1) Commercial contract to North American Catastrophe Services (NACS) other vendor for use of two to three Class "A" or Class "C" motor homes. (Currently working with 137<sup>th</sup> for mutual aid agreement)
  - (a) Each sleep 6-8 persons and have kitchen, restroom and shower systems self-contained.
  - (b) Provides a mobile capability for the team.
  - (c) Team would need to provide their own food to prepare on site.

d. Transportation Assets:

Commercial contract to either Avis and/or National rental cars for four-wheel drive



vehicles.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Agreements need to be in place and executed on a short-notice basis to adequately equip of state led forward operating base.

**24. ITEM:** Essential personnel

**DISCUSSION:** When the Governor authorized the closure of all state offices due to the impending blizzard, he designated that this applied to non-essential personnel. Within DEM, a clear definition of essential vs. non-essential employees must be established and a consensus reached by all staff. (This should also be addressed by all Departments/Divisions within state government.)

**RECOMMENDATION:** The DEM Management Team identify, by position, which are essential and non-essential.

**25. ITEM:** Critical Infrastructure

**DISCUSSION:** Over the past several years, Homeland Security grants have required the identification of critical infrastructures and key resources (CI/KR) across the state. Databases have been built. During this incident, the owners of these databases did not relay what key sectors were adversely affected beyond agriculture.

**RECOMMEND:** The holders of this CI/KR information need to pro-actively provide data on those items within geographical proximity of the incident. This will assist in the decision-making process for response and recovery operations.

**26. ITEM:**

**DISCUSSION:**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. List of Jurisdictions declaring emergency / disaster
2. Division of Emergency Management Situation Reports
3. CDEM Duty Officer Position Log, December 28, 2006 – February xxxx, 2007
4. Governor's declarations

Attachment 1

List of Jurisdictions declaring emergency / disaster

Arapahoe County  
Arvada  
Aurora  
Baca County  
Bent County  
Boulder  
Brighton  
Camp  
Castle Rock  
Cheyenne County  
Cheyenne Wells  
Clear Creek County  
Crowley County  
Custer County  
Douglas County  
Eads  
Evans  
Ft Collins  
Ft Morgan  
Haswell  
Holyoke  
Kiowa County  
Kit Carson County

Larimer County  
Lincoln County  
Logan County  
Loveland  
Morgan County  
Northglenn  
Otero County  
Park County  
Phillips County  
Pritchett  
Prowers County  
Sheridan City  
Springfield  
State of Colorado  
Sterling  
Superior  
Teller County  
Thornton  
Two Buttes  
Vilas  
Walsh  
Westminster  
Yuma County