



# VEM NEWS

## Vermont Yankee investigates radioactive leak

The Vermont Yankee Nuclear power plant in Vernon is looking to determine the source of a leak of the radioactive isotope tritium on its grounds. The leak was discovered in early January and plant officials suspect the tritium is coming from a defective underground pipe.

The plant is digging wells in order to test groundwater for tritium levels; recent tests have indicated levels of tritium well above federal levels for safe drinking water. The contamination, however, is reported by the plant and the Vermont Department of Health to be largely

contained to the grounds of the plant.

In response to this situation, the Health Department has stepped up monitoring at the fence line and other areas surrounding the plant. To date (this article is being written on February 5th), there have been no increased levels of radioactivity outside the plant.

Vermont Emergency Management has been in close contact with the Health Department, the

Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the plant since the discovery was made. VEM remains at a level I activation (Duty Officer and supervisory duty officer only) and has suggested NO protective actions as there is no threat to the public, according to the Health Department.

For more information on the investigation and tritium itself, visit the Vermont Department of Health web site at [www.healthvermont.gov](http://www.healthvermont.gov) and follow the link near the top of the page.

## EMDs asked to look for ice jams

The National Weather Service in Burlington has issued its winter/spring flood outlook for Vermont and the potential for flooding appears to be below normal.

This due to the lack of deep snow cover across our region and below normal snow water equivalent in the snow.

NWS does caution, however, that the outlook could change if significant ice jams develop along rivers and streams. The weather service is aware of a number of small ice jams currently clogging rivers, but would like to know about as many as possible now and as spring nears.

Emergency Management Directors are asked to keep an eye out for ice jams and report any to the NWS at 802-862-8711.



### January flooding

Several areas of Vermont were hit with an array of weather hazards the last week of January. High winds caused trees to tumble over, block roads and knock out power; and warm wet weather caused ice jams and flooding. The picture on the left is River Road in Middlesex, which had to be closed after the Winooski River breached and flooded (story on page 3).

## VEM accepting nominations for EM of the Year

Vermont Emergency Management is seeking nominations for the annual Emergency Manager of the Year Award presented by the Northeast States Emergency Consortium (NESEC). The Emergency Manager of the

Year Award honors an individual who made outstanding contributions in the field of emergency management during 2009. Nominations are encouraged from all levels of emergency management including local,

state, tribal and federal government, as well as non-profits, businesses, private citizens and volunteers. Nominations should be received by March 15, 2010. For more information or to submit your nomination on-line go to [www.vemvt.com](http://www.vemvt.com)

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

<i>Survey Results</i>	2
<i>January Flooding</i>	3
<i>School Grants</i>	3
<i>RPC Wins Grant</i>	4

## SURVEY RESULTS WILL HELP VEM FOCUS ON PRIORITY NEEDS

Vermont Emergency Management recently invited those in emergency response, volunteer organizations, local government, and others to take part in a public satisfaction survey on its web site. VEM would like to thank all of those who took the time to fill out the assessment as it helps us determine where best to focus our resources.

305 people (30% of those asked to participate) responded, with the highest percentage of those serving as volunteers, Emergency Management Directors, and local first responders. Windham was the county with the greatest number of respondents. Other results from the survey:

- 50% of respondents reported receiving training or exercise support from Vermont Emergency Management.

- 55% say they receive sufficient information or training from VEM on preparedness (36% say they do NOT receive enough information on preparedness), 50% say they receive ample weather information, while only 8% say information on pets in disasters is sufficient.

- 80% say local workshops serve as the best training methods, and 55% say regional training is best (percentages do not add to 100% as respondents could answer multiple times.)

- Volunteer involvement was cited as

the subject area where the greatest number of communities need more information on training, recruitment and retention.

- 82% say they receive the electronic VEM Newsletter; 80% find the newsletter useful.

Vermont Emergency Management will use this valuable information to improve its programs; extend programs that are in greater demand; or focus on new programs like special needs populations, animals in disaster planning, and stronger Emergency Management Director emphasis and training.

Feedback from our partners is always welcome, and is a useful tool in developing programs and allocating

### A brief sample of comments received within the survey

The final question of the survey asked "In what specific area(s) could VEM shift its focus in order to further prepare the citizens of Vermont for all hazards?" The following is a sample of answers (compliments of VEM were appreciated, but omitted from this sample).

"Need more involvement by local government officials to get training, especially in NIMS and other required levels of emergency planning."

"More drills involving RACES volunteers."

"Better training Emergency Managers."

"Have more local training workshops."

"Develop, task specific groups of responders and evaluate their equipment and training for response (operational readiness evaluations.)"

"As a physician, I find getting to meetings and drills very difficult. My lack of participation is due to time conflicts, not lack of interest."

"For myself, it's hard to attend daytime meetings and training opportunities because I work full-time. Evenings would be better."

"More regular media outreach so the public understands the likely risks they face."

"More TV ads, workshops, radio ads, anything."

"Address the unique limitations and needs of small towns and villages in EOC development and implementation."

"Continued support to ensure emergency plans are updated and remain in place."

"Have regional VEM reps in place in the four Public Safety Districts"

"Let people of towns know the importance of an EMD!!! And listen to them when needed and take serious!!!"

"Emergency communications across agencies and across state lines."

"More localized training—people don't want to travel too far."

"Financial transparency."

"Incorporating planning for pets in disasters, ie making sure pets are able to be evacuated with owners, sheltered with/near owners, etc."

## JANUARY RAIN/WARM WEATHER LEADS TO CLOSE CALLS BUT LITTLE DAMAGE

Heavy rains and warm weather at the end of January brought great potential for problems. The weather pattern passed through Vermont on January 25th and 26th; and while there were a number of close calls, damage was minimal and localized to specific areas.

The National Weather Service issued Flood and Flash Flood Warnings for the entire state of Vermont for that Monday and Tuesday that included warm weather, moist air, heavy rain, possible ice, and strong winds. Each condition creates risks for Vermont in the month of January as snow and ice melt adds to

water flows in rivers and streams. Melting ice also had the potential to create ice jams, and in fact did create several.

Those ice jams occurred in small rivers and streams, plugging culverts and flooding local roads in towns like Chester, where one family had to leave their home after floodwaters cut off access to their home. River Road in Middlesex also resembled a river and had to be closed when an ice jam along the Winooski River sent water through fields and over the roadway.

Larger jams stopped up river flows in Johnson, Cambridge, and Montpelier. Montpelier

saw some flooding across Lower State Street and in parking lots along the Winooski River, but just as the river was threatening more areas the ice jam gave way and the water subsided. Johnson and Cambridge also monitored ice jams along the Lamoille River but where there was flooding, it was contained to unoccupied fields.

Wind gusts of over 50 miles-per-hour were also recorded throughout the state, generally along the western slopes of the Green Mountains. A number of roads were closed due to trees over travel lanes.

### Training Opportunities

#### ICS 200—ICS for Single Resources and Initial Actions

When: February 9,11,16,23 from 1830-2130 each day  
Where: New Haven Public Safety building, Route 7, New Haven, VT

Who: Should include local Emergency Managers, Police, Fire, EMS and Highway Department Supervisors, local officials, and CERT members

Cost: None

Contact/Registration: Tim Bouton—802-388-3141 or [tbouton@sover.net](mailto:tbouton@sover.net)

#### Animal Disaster Summit

Those involved in emergency preparedness in Vermont who are interested in disaster animal response are encouraged to attend the Animal Disaster Summit being offered in Lebanon, NH during the afternoon of Friday, March 19th and Saturday, March 20th. An agenda is in the process of being developed and will be e-mailed to Vermont Emergency Management partners along with a formal letter of invitation. Please coordinate participation at this conference directly with Christine Brown at Vermont Emergency Management at 800-347-0488 or [brownc@dps.state.vt.us](mailto:brownc@dps.state.vt.us) prior to registering.

## SCHOOL READINESS GRANTS AVAILABLE

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools has recently released the FY 2010 Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) grant application.

The REMS program provides funds to local educational agencies (LEAs, which are typically public school districts) to establish an emergency management process that focuses on reviewing and strengthening emergency management plans, within the framework of the four phases of emergency management (Prevention-Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery).

The program also provides resources to LEAs to provide training for staff on emergency management procedures and requires that LEAs develop comprehensive all-hazards emergency management plans in collaboration with community partners

including local law enforcement; public safety, public health, and mental health agencies; and local government.

The REMS grant is a competitive grant program. As emergency managers, you can assist LEAs in your area by alerting them to this resource and sharing your expertise with them in developing their applications. The REMS grant application package may be accessed at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/dvpemergencyresponse/applicant.html>.

The application submission deadline is February 26, 2010. Funds may be requested for up to 24 months.

For additional information, please contact the REMS Competition Manager, Sara Strizzi via email at [sara.strizzi@ed.gov](mailto:sara.strizzi@ed.gov) or via telephone at (303) 346-0924.



## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SPOTLIGHT: SUCCESS STORY: TWO RIVERS-OTTAUQUECHEE REGIONAL COMMISSION RECEIVES GRANT

The Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) was recently awarded a \$235,000 economic development grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) to support the region's businesses in minimizing economic dislocations resulting in natural or man-made disasters.

In 2008, towns within the TRORC area were impacted by severe flooding and Congress appropriated funding to EDA to assist businesses in disaster recovery efforts by conducting proper planning in advance of disasters. TRORC sought this nationally competitive funding to meet with the region's businesses and conduct "business continuity of operations planning". This effort will identify the vulnerability of a business to disruptions in raw materials and supplies, finished product transportation, employee movement and other factors.

"Whether the disruption is caused by a flash flood or the sudden failure of infrastructure like the Crown Point Bridge in western Vermont, our region's businesses must be prepared with contingency plans to mitigate the effects of these sudden events" says Peter Gregory, Executive Director of TRORC. "The impact on our economy can be severe so we were pleased to apply for this important funding and look forward to investing in our collective readiness."

"Natural disasters and catastrophic events like transportation infrastructure failures can devastate even the most financially viable business," said Sen. Patrick Leahy, who worked with representatives of the EDA and the Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Commission to secure the funding. "The federal government made these funds available after disasters across the country cost both the private and public sectors millions of dollars in lost time and lost business."

This grant will help Vermont businesses weather even the worst disaster."

TRORC will be working with the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission, the Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation and the Springfield Regional Development Corporation on this effort. Work will commence shortly and area businesses are encouraged to contact TRORC if they wish to participate in this planning.

TRORC serves 30 towns primarily in Windsor and Orange counties providing local technical assistance and conducting regional land use, economic development, natural resource, transportation and emergency management planning for all levels of government.

*This article was submitted by the Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Commission*

## Ferry service begins at site of Champlain Bridge

The long awaited ferry service between Chimney Point, Vermont and Crown Point, New York opened on February 1st. The free service will run 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The three minute crossing will run while a new bridge is built.



*Left: The newly constructed ferry dock in Crown Point, NY with the ferry boat and Chimney Point, VT in the background.*

*Right: The first voyage of the new ferry service on Monday February 1st.*

