FORMAT FOR AGENDA COVER MEMO

Memorandum Date: April 17, 2024

TO:	Board of County Commissioners
DEPARTMENT:	Emergency Management
PRESENTED BY:	Tiffany Brown
AGENDA ITEM TITLE:	REPORT: Lane County Ice Storm After-Action Report

I. MOTION

Information only.

II. AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to report an overview of the process and chief findings of an after-action review process regarding the January Ice Storm.

III. BACKGROUND/IMPLICATIONS OF ACTION

A. Board Action and Other History

The Board received general updates throughout the ice storm, convened for the disaster declaration, and took public testimony after it had concluded.

B. Policy Issues

There are no policy issues.

C. Board Goals

This item aligns with the County and Strategic Plan goals as follows:

Strategic Priority #1: Safe, Healthy County.

- *Focus on people at the intersection of behavioral health, homelessness, and public safety to provide crisis/stabilization support and treatment.*

Strategic Priority #3: Robust Infrastructure

- *Advance our ability to access and share data within our organization and between partners in order to support analytics and data-driven decision making without compromising safety and privacy.*
- *Build a culture of preparedness and operational readiness within the organization in coordination with community partners.*
- *Develop disaster recovery plans, policies, and procedures.*

Strategic Priority #4: Our People and Organizational Health

- *Implement opportunities to improve employee well-being and promote a positive workplace culture with purpose and potential.*

D. Financial and/or Resource Considerations

This incident resulted in a presidential declaration and the process for awarding Public Assistance funding to impacted jurisdictions is underway.

E. Health Implications

Employment and Livelihood impacts from this event looked like impact to businesses who were unable to operate, people not able to get to work, and it well understood that people living in poverty or otherwise vulnerable conditions are disproportionately affected by disasters.
Environmental Quality was not a chief concern for this event specifically, however, we apply lessons learned to an all-hazards environment, therefore maintain the lens at all times with respect to sheltering.
Family & Community Structure was the predominant area of impact and areas of improvement were identified in concert with community partners. Particularly with respect to this health determinant, there remains an opportunity to continue leveraging those partnerships to identify solutions.
Food and Nutrition is a key consideration during all disasters. During the ice storm, food safety appeared to be a larger concern than food scarcity.
Housing was impacted insofar as many went without power or services to residences, some residents were temporarily unable to return to their homes, which resulted in the unhoused sheltering system being overburdened. The unhoused system was also pushed beyond the scope of its intended capability.
Safety of citizens and responders is always of paramount concern during a disaster. Regarding agency personnel, there were no significant reported injuries, however, the call volume for agency response increased dramatically due to injuries sustained by the general public.

Transportation was heavily impacted by the event—in some cases, agencies were unable to respond or provide services, public transit was affected, and people were advised not to drive is practically possible.

F. Analysis

The January Ice Storm ranks among the worst winter storms in the southern Willamette Valley based on scale of power outages, impact to roadways, downed trees, and damages to public infrastructure. Though the amount of damage to individual residences was relatively low, many residents were without power and other services for days/weeks, and entire communities were isolated from one another and routine resources.

The County's Emergency Operations Center was activated for 9 days to support the event. During that time, Lane County set up a unified command with the City of Springfield, which resulted in collocation of EOCs to support the City's response efforts; the City of Eugene provided emergency management personnel to support to the County EOC.

On February 5, County staff performed an initial debriefing ("hotwash") of the incident to identify areas of the response that went well and areas in need of improvement related to the emergency response and coordination between affected entities. This first hotwash identified key areas of focus from the County EOC perspective and served as a blueprint for conducting subsequent opportunities to review the response with external partners. In total, County EM hosted 7 hotwashes with agency partners and one public listening session related to impacts that the event had on the sheltering system for unhoused residents.

This presentation provides an overview of the process, participants, and chief areas of improvement identified in the After-Action Report. Primary areas of success included Operational Coordination and Operational Communication: Previous EOC improvements paid off, public communication tools were effective, and state agencies maintained an unprecedented role during activation.

Operational Coordination and Communication also topped the list for areas of improvement: Challenges around providing shelter for county residents highlighted the need to consider the mass care environment more comprehensively, including different sheltering environments and threshold(s) for activating emergency shelter plans. Process improvements related to EOC activation and coordination were identified to address staffing challenges, internal/external communications with agency partners, and adequately developing situational awareness throughout the event in order to develop a common operating picture among those affected.

G. Alternatives/Options

This item is a report provided for discussion only.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

This item is a report provided for discussion only.

V. TIMING/IMPLEMENTATION

The after-action process serves to identify areas of improvement, which result in a list of action items to address identified gaps. In coming months, Emergency Management will address the action items directly as well as reconvene hotwash participants to partner on identifying solutions to address gaps in systems and processes.

VI. FOLLOW-UP

No additional follow-up is anticipated.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

PowerPoint Presentation to follow.

2024 Ice Storm After-Action Report

Lane County Board of Commissioners

Regular Meeting

April 30, 2024

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

- Timeline of events & incident impacts
- The role of emergency management
- Hotwash defined
- Participants
- What we heard

INCIDENT TIMELINE

Mon	Jan 8	Initial weather briefing
Wed	Jan 10	Low snow forecast
Thu	Jan 11	Directors Call
Fri	Jan 12	Shelters activated/freezing rain forecast
Sat	Jan 13	No forecast change, Egan outages
Sun	Jan 14	Freezing less than expected
Mon	Jan 15	Directors Call
Tue	Jan 16	Freezing rain, emergency shelter, Governor declares
Wed	Jan 17	EOC activated, surge in medical calls
Thu	Jan 18	Wrap up life safety, Springfield requests assistance
Fri	Jan 19	Unified Command (County/Springfield)
Sat	Jan 20	Community Resource Centers & Debris sites open
Mon	Jan 22	Transition out of EOC activation begins
Thu	Jan 25	Springfield EOC setup, County deactivates

IMPACTS

- Severe utility damage
- Large-scale power outages
- Impassable roadways
  - Isolated residents/communities
  - Supply chain disruption
- School/airport closures
- Tree damage & debris removal

Initial estimates $32,434,126 in Public Assistance damages, debris removal, and emergency protective measures costs.

Role of EM

- Preparedness & Continuous Improvement
- Operational & Community Support
- Emergency Operations Center readiness
- Resource Coordination
- Communications & Messaging
- Advanced Planning
- 32 Core Capabilities

HOTWASH

- Debrief & discussion
- Whole community involvement
- Focus on objectives
- No blame environment
- Raise important issues and lessons
- Identify capability gaps & solutions

PARTICIPANTS

- Lane County Sheriff
  - Search & Rescue
  - Dispatch
- Lane County
  - Emergency Management
  - County Administrator
  - Public Works
  - Public Health & Human Services
  - Central Finance
  - Technology Services
  - Assessment & Taxation
  - Human Resources/Risk Management
- University of Oregon
- Cities
- Fire Departments & Districts
- Hospitals
- Central Lane 911
- State Agencies
  - Oregon Health Authority
  - Oregon DHS Resilience Team
- St. Vincent de Paul
- American Red Cross
- Housing & Community Action
- Greenhill/COAD
- Lane Transit District

THE AFTER-ACTION PROCESS

Hotwash Series

• County Staff	February 5
• Damage Assessment Process	February 22
• ESF2 Communications	February 27
• ESF8 Public Health/Medical	March 19
• ESF6 Mass Care	March 20
• General EOC I	March 26
• General EOC II	March 28
• Egan Listening Session	April 16

HOTWASH/FEEDBACK SESSIONS

What went well?

Where were there opportunities for improvement?

What does “right” look like?

WHAT WE HEARD

…SUCCESSES

- **Operational Communication**
  - Public Call Center, Social Media & Website
  - Cooperators Calls
- **Operational Coordination**
  - EOC Improvements
- **Partnerships**
  - Seasoned relationships
  - State Agency presence

WHAT WE HEARD…

LESS SUCCESSFUL

- **Communications & Alerting**
  - Missed opportunities to alert the public and communicate with employees using Lane Alerts.
  - Better public messaging coordination & situational awareness sharing needed across agencies.
- **Operational Coordination**
  - Staffing Challenges – *Everyone Has Them!*
    - Lack of preparedness
    - Agency expectation & support
    - Training programs & planning needed to support
    - Inconsistent response/activation across agencies
- **Mass Care & Human Services**
  - Insufficient all-hazard emergency shelter resources (e.g. facilities, personnel, equipment) exist countywide
  - Roles/responsibilities around evacuation shelters and community shelters once an emergency has occurred are unclear

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT & NEXT STEPS

Programs, Procedures & Policies

- Emergency Preparedness
  - Personal Preparedness
  - **Employee Readiness & Support**
  - Citizen Outreach
- Mass Care, Housing & Human Service
  - Clarify roles/responsibilities during emergencies
  - Establish emergency thresholds for response & activation
  - Perform assessment & gap analysis of emergency mass care resources
  - **Continued support of unhoused, emergency mass care, and resilience hub resources**
- Operational Communication
  - Expand use of Lane Alerts with internal/external partners
  - Establish thresholds for call center & alerting activations
  - Perform public outreach regarding the alert system
- Operational Coordination
  - Build out EOC planning & positions to train/exercise
  - **Identify funding source/process for emergency response at the outset of an incident regardless of formal declaration**
  - **Explore/support initiatives to bolster County EM/EOC staffing**
  - **Provide training programs, procedures & policies that support employee response**

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Whole Community Connection
  - Foster existing and cultivate new relationships
  - Ensure whole community participation
- Strategic & Solution-Focused
  - Collective impact
  - Equity
  - Stewardship of Resources
- Accountability
  - Measured impacts
  - Continuous Improvement

FINAL DISCUSSION