

Emergency Management Administration Council Meeting

Utah State Capitol, Capitol Board Room

January 15, 2025

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

In attendance:

Commissioner Jess Anderson

Lt. Gov Deidre Henderson

Colonel Mike Rapich, DPS/UHP

Kris Hamlet, DPS/DEM

Judy Watanabe, DPS/DEM

Erick Wiedmeier, DPS/DEM

Kim Hammer, DPS/DEM

Angela Lang, DPS/DEM

Tara Behunin, UFA, EM

Brent Everett, DEQ

Lisa Wilson, UDOT

Greg Paras, Workforce Services

Nate Winters, DHHS

Michelle Hale, DHHS

Brian Hunter, DEQ

Annette Newman, Utah Hospital Association

Rich Jorgensen, DPS Legal

Will Lusk, Cache County

Mike McComb, Park City EM

Kathryn McMullin, Summit Co/UEMA

Heidi Lundberg, Uintah Co/UEMA

General Kurt Davis, UTNG

Thayne Mickelson, Dept of Agriculture

Jeff King, Jordan Valley Water

Leisha Nolen, DHHS

Guests:

Glen Merrill (NWS)

Skyler Stratford, DPS/DEM

Jerrilyn Applegate, DPS/SIAC

Tanner Jensen, DPS/SIAC

• **Welcome, Introduction, & Opening Remarks**

Lt. Governor Deidre M. Henderson
DPS Commissioner Jess L. Anderson

Commissioner Anderson welcomed everyone and thanked them for their participation. Expressed appreciation for the teams that have been deployed to California to assist with the fires.

LT. Gov - Thanked everyone for being here during his busy time of year. She asked what are some things that we should be doing, but aren't, to prevent natural disasters. Thanked everyone for the work that they are doing. She would love to hear about anything the group feels should be done.

Membership Updates: None

• **Approval of Minutes - June 25, 2024 Meeting**

Council

Lt Governor motioned to approve the minutes; Will Lusk seconded the motion; Approved by all

• **Presentations:**

➤ **Open and Public Meeting Requirements**
General, DPS

Rich Jorgensen, Asst. Attorney

Outlined the requirements for [Open and Public Meeting Act](#)

Open & transparent

24 Hour Advance Notice - Content of notice (date, time, place and agenda)

Record making and record keeping

Any public body is required to comply with the Act

Consists of more than two individuals

Can attend in person or virtually

Public must have a means to attend and participate

Created under Title 53 of Public Safety Code

[63G-30-102](#)

The minutes include a statement of unforeseen circumstances that made the meeting necessary

Written minutes and a recording

Closed portion kept confidential. Can only be released with court order

Must include date time and location of meeting.

Must have every vote, of every person by name (if vote is NOT unanimous)

Pending minutes must be posted within 30 days of meeting

Approved minutes posted within three days. Recordings should be posted within three days of the meeting

A quorum must be present to close a meeting

Two thirds of the body must vote to close the meeting

During a closed meeting, you can't approve any ordinance, resolution, rule or regulation

Only vote that can be made is to open the meeting back up
Violations - Class B misdemeanor

➤ Utah's Drought and Weather Outlook

**Glen Merrill, Senior Hydrologist,
National Weather Service**

- Glen provided a hydrological outlook for the state
 - Yellow Lake Fire had a significant impact last year
 - Not enough precipitation to assist in putting the fire out until last month
- December, near record breaking temperatures; very dry.
- Last week of December produced some precipitation
- Early January, below normal precipitation
- Southwestern Utah is extremely dry
- Water year, well above normal temperatures, near normal precipitation
- La Nina pattern over the past two months
- Cooler, drier air mass over the next few weeks
- Snow pack distribution in southern Utah (Santa Clara) below 20%
- Northern Utah is much better. Near to above normal
- Reservoirs - hold over has been great. Sitting at 77% currently of capacity (about 20% above typical average).
- Drought status: Warm and dry October. Biggest impact in Washington County. It is very dry, combined with low snow pack.
- Blocking pattern: Rex Block created over the past two years.
- Cold dry air, not much snow forecasted for the next couple of weeks
- 1/10 of an inch of snow water equivalent in the mountains
- Forecast is well below normal
- Two week outlook is similar, but starts to break down
- Northern Utah slightly above normal precipitation
- Southern Utah remains dry - will focus on SW Utah for drought
- Soil moisture below normal
- Above normal snowpack; below normal run off
- The efficiency of the run off won't be as good as it has been the last two years.

➤ Current Health Update

**Dr. Leisha Nolen, Dept. of
Health & Human Services**

Areas of Public Health Concern:

- Respiratory illnesses are high in Utah and throughout the country
- COVID was higher last summer
- Flu rates are currently high, but possibly coming down
- RSV rates are high
- Hospitals are within capacity. This has been a pretty average year
- Bird Flu:

- HPAI or H5N1
 - Mortality rates of 90% within 48 hours (within birds)
- There is potential that this virus could change a bit and start to infect humans
- H5N1 circulated in 2016 and reappeared in 2022
 - Over 1000 outbreaks in the US
 - 90 million birds have died
 - March 2024 cows were affected by H5N1
 - Virus is secreted in milk - it is a live virus
 - Virus is killed by pasteurization
 - As of January 2025, 924 affected farms in 16 states. Utah has its first infection last year in Cache county
 - Has caused sporadic infections in humans since 1997
 - 909 sporadic human infections reported worldwide from 23 countries
 - 52% of human infections have been fatal
- So far most people have very mild illness
 - Runny nose, fever, aches
 - Red eyes
- One person has died
 - This person had the bird strain (not the strain in cattle)
 - Exposed to backyard flock
- No human cases in Utah
- Should we worry? No
- Does not show human-to-human transmission
- Treatment options
 - Antiviral (Tamiflu) is active against the virus
- Flu vaccine is made and modified form could be made rapidly (months) if needed
- What can we do?
 - Monitor animals for infections
 - Prevent movement of animals known to be infected
 - Raw milk
- What is the state doing?
 - UDAF
 - Monitor milk across the state for signs of infection, with follow-up test specific to HPAI
 - Educate farms about signs in cattle
 - DHHS
 - Track number of cases of “influenza like illness” coming to the emergency rooms across the state
 - Sequence any influenza isolate that is unusual flu
 - Salt Lake County is a site for FluServ-NET Performs in-depth investigations and sequences the samples from all influenza hospitalizations

- Thayne Mickelsen indicated that the Department of Agriculture and Food is working with DHHS to collaborate on plans and what actions should be taken.
- Vaccine preventable diseases:
 - Over the past 40 years, for every \$1 spent of vaccines, health payers saved \$3.30
 - Vaccination rates in Utah have decreased since 2014
 - More counties are seeing an increase in vaccine exemption rates
- Impact of an outbreak
 - Severe illness and death
 - Lost days of work and school
 - Doctor and hospital costs
 - Possibly some fatalities

Commissioner Anderson asked if the bird flu is as infectious in wild birds. Dr. Nolen indicated that it is. DWR tracks and monitors this. Thayne said that when poultry farms are impacted, it spreads more quickly due to flocks being condensed.

➤ Targeted Violent Threats to Utah

Jerrilynn Applegate, DPS/SIAC

Overview:

- Summary Analysis
- Threat Actors
- Threat Activities
- Targets
- Facilitation Platforms
- Level of Understanding

Threat of targeted violence in Utah will remain persistent

Current actors:

Lone actors

Homegrown violent extremists

Are most likely to attack in Utah

Domestic Violence Extremists

Most significant threat to government officials, infrastructure etc.

Characteristics

Lone offenders (small cells)

Motivated to violence by grievances

Anti government/Anti Authority - Some have an ideology and work in groups

Racially motivated violent extremists, some white supremists, religious extremists

Homegrown

Primarily based in the US

Adversarial Nation States - including, Iran Russia, China

Increasingly aggressive, running misinformation campaigns

Aim to increase divisiveness in the US

Threat Activities

Some individuals in Utah almost certainly threaten or express a desire to commit targeted acts of violence. Some don't have the means to carry them out. Increase in verbal threats.

Domestic Violent Extremists

- Sovereign Citizen - IRS repossessed home for back taxes - Tax evasion conviction - \$1.2 million loss.
- Multiple demonstrations related to the Israel/Hamas demonstrations. Nationwide demonstrations. Some were violent.
- Utah has quite a few "protected demonstrations". We are grateful for those who keep these demonstrations safe. People have been arrested for unlawful demonstrations during these events.
- Several Utah residents participated in the demonstrations at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2020. The FBI continues to investigate violations of federal law during this event.
- Racially or ethically motivated violent extremists:
 - Aryan Freedom Network (based out of Texas and Arkansas)
Associated with Ku Klux Klan
- Targeted Violence - Lone Actors
 - New Year's Day Tesla Cyber Truck explosion outside Trump Tower in Las Vegas, NV. Only the suspect was killed
- Two prominent attempts to assassinate President Elect Trump (July & September 2024)
- Foreign Terrorist Organizations and Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVE) - active in the U.S. this year.
 - 10/07/24 - Two Oklahoma based Afghan citizens arrested for planning to conduct an attack on election day, on behalf of Isis. The group did an internet search of states that do not require gun permits. Utah was on the "short list".
 - Pakistani National attempted to hire a hitman to assassinate a U.S. government official on U.S. soil
 - New Orleans attack on New Year's Day - proclaimed support for Isis
 - Killed 14 people
 - Injured two by gun fire
 - Two IEDs located nearby
 - Security measures were not deployed for celebration
- Threat Targets
 - Violent extremists continue to target government officials and facilities, religious and minority institutions, law enforcement, large public venues, and critical infrastructure.

- Targeted Violence -Utah hate crimes
See graphic linked in presentation
- Targeting Government Entities
 - Utah Capitol, Utah Courts, and a local Mayor were targeted with emailed bomb threats.
 - A 65-year-old Hawaii man was convicted and sentenced to 70 months in prison for the crimes.
 - A Tooele man was arrested after leaving at least five threatening voicemails at a Palestinian Rights Organization in another state.
- Targeting schools
 - Arson
 - Terroristic Threats
 - Weapons
- Facilitation Platforms
 - AI
 - Encrypted applications
 - Flipper zero device - to override card/badge readers
- Level of Understanding
 - Inconsistent criminal definitions between federal and local agencies, and lack of intelligence reporting via private citizens and law enforcement agencies, leaves a significant gap in understanding the full extent by which lone actors, and violent extremists are operating in Utah.

Annette Newman asked if the slide deck can be shared, and can it be shared with others? Jerrilyn said that the presentation can be shared. SIAC.utah.gov - also has other interesting information.

First Amendment Auditors: groups that are disrupting services at state offices. They are related to first amendment rights. They want to provoke government employees.

Eric Wiedmeier - school groups that are here in the Capitol - are there any restrictions/laws that protect posting photos of the students that are here? Rich Jorgensen said that generally there is no expectation of privacy in public spaces.

Kris Hamlet asked about how fusion centers are working with first responders and emergency management related to causing distrust in government (California fires, Maui fires being intentionally started). Jerrilyn said that this is also causing problems for insurance companies. SIAC is trying to help curb misinformation.

➤ **Governor's Preparedness Initiative**

Kris Hamlet, DEM

Kris Hamlet discussed DEM's involvement with state agencies to increase levels of preparedness. The goal is to get state agencies up and running after a disaster. DEM has been working with state agencies on planning and preparedness, as well as continuity. We have met with Cabinet members to assess their training needs. We continue to provide training and exercise opportunities. Each state agency has been given a personalized binder with resources and actions to take after a disaster. We will also be looking at how to support the Legislative Branch as well.

The Commissioner said that Governor Cox has made this a priority. DEM has done a great job with this project. All of the state cabinet members have a copy of this binder.

➤ **Threat Hazards Risk Identification Assessment (THIRA)**

Skyler Stratford, DEM

Skyler distributed a copy of the state THIRA report

Stateholder Preparedness Review

THIRA - three year cycle

 Focused on FEMA's 32 Core Capabilities

 Gaps based on POETE (Plans, Organization, Equipment, Training, Exercise)

Culmination of data that has been collected from around the state. Sent to FEMA annually. Helps to identify national gaps and to celebrate progress

Progress Made:

20 organizations participated

Improvements made in all 32 core capabilities

Community Resilience

Critical Transportation

Cybersecurity

Intelligence and Information Sharing

Operational Communications

Physical Protective Measures

Planning updates made across many capabilities

State EOP update

Areas for Improvement:

Training & Exercise shortfalls

Funding gaps

Plans have been updated - need to be trained on and exercised

Limited staff for preparedness activities

Fiscal uncertainties

Core disaster response specific training (Incident Command training - prior to the Olympics)

Need for updated equipment and adequate facility to manage disaster response

➤ **Update from the Utah Fire Teams**

Angela Lang, DEM

Deployed to California

Through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)

EMAC is a national state-to-state mutual aid system where one state can share resources with another during governor-declared disasters. The terms of the resource sharing agreement, including any financial obligations, are documented pre-deployment and are legally binding.

It is nationally managed by the National Emergency Management Association, and at the state level it is managed by state emergency management agencies and individually managed at a state level

2024 busy year for EMAC deployments:

UTNG/UHP deployed to Texas for border support (Governor to Governor)

Sent two (2) fire service task forces to Oregon; those teams were later moved to California to support their fires.

Two more fire service task forces (again) to California

1 floodplain manager to florida

1 first ever receipt of an EMAC resource for Public Assistance (PA) from Florida.

2025 will probably be equally as busy. So far we have deployed:

3 fire service task forces

64 personnel

15 engines

17 local fire agencies

All deployed in under 24 hours

All personnel are safe

State EOC is currently at a Level 4

One firefighter had a minor injury

No request for an extension

Current requests are more recovery focused

• **Roundtable Discussion**

Council

-**Kathryn McMullin** - actively preparing for Sundance

-**Mike McComb** - just announced that Main Street in Park City will be closed to all traffic during Sundance (in response to the incident in New Orleans). Expecting pro Gaza protest on possibly the first Saturday of the event. Hosted Lt. Randy Richey's final 10-42 last week.

-**Will Lusk** - thanked the Lt Gov for the great work on Election Security Training prior to the elections. Training and exercises were provided and were very beneficial. Will also thanked the Department of Agriculture for their assistance with Avian flu in Cache county.

-**Annette Newman** - Utah Hospital Association just finished their Strategic Plan

-**Kris Hamlet** - The Statewide Mutual Aid Committee was sunset last year. Their responsibilities were moved under this group if there are any mutual aid issues. There is an annual report due each year. The report included mutual aid within the state as well as EMAC.

-**Michelle Hale** - Supplies of IV solution @ hospitals are still an issue.

-**Angela Lang**- Our activation plan for Inauguration Day will remain at the Level 4: On stand-by

-**Commissioner - State support for Inaugurations** - sending 40 state troopers to assist with crowd control.

-**Glen Merrill** - Kevin Barenbruch retired and they are on-boarding his replacement - Alex Smith.

• **Action Items / Initiatives**

Council

None

• **Closing Remarks and Adjournment**

Lt. Governor Deidre M. Henderson

DPS Commissioner Jess L. Anderson

Commissioner Anderson thanked everyone for their participation in this group.

Legislative session begins next Tuesday.

Motion to adjourn Mike McComb, Second by Will Lusk, approved by all.

Meeting adjourned at 2:50