



2008 HAZUS-MH ANNUAL USER CONFERENCE

AWARDS

Eric Berman, HAZUS Program Manager for the FEMA Mitigation Division was pleased to present HAZUS User Awards at the 2008 HAZUS-MH Annual User Conference in San Diego, California. The awards are utilized to exemplify the outstanding work of organizations and individuals who have accelerated the awareness and use of the HAZUS program. The awards were presented at a special Awards Presentation in conjunction with the Closing Luncheon on August 7, 2008. The recipients were from the private sector, FEMA, the Emergency Management Institute, government, as well as a HAZUS User Group.

INNOVATIVE APPLICATIONS OF HAZUS AWARD

Recipient: Watershed Concepts (Shanna Michael)

For individuals that have worked within the National Flood Program, the significant, ongoing challenges have been how to systematically digitize flood data and to fill in the gaps where DFIRM or Q3 data does not exist. This data is fundamental to accurate flood analysis, but very time consuming to digitize.

The first award went to a nationally recognized firm that entered into a partnership with FEMA Region I to use HAZUS to complete the digitization of flood data in a total of 67 counties. This effort was an integral task in the creation of a Situational Awareness Tool for Region I, which will greatly simplify flood risk assessment and mitigation planning.

For this project, HAZUS was used to create the flood boundaries in counties where this data did not exist. For six months, Watershed Concepts dedicated a total of 30 computers to run a Level 1 analysis to create seamless digital flood data where Q3 or DFIRM data was not available. The results of this effort were presented at a conference session on the use of HAZUS-MH for State and Local Flood Loss Reduction Strategies.



The FEMA HAZUS-MH Program was pleased to recognize Watershed Concepts for their voluntary effort, which demonstrates the best features of a public – private partnership.

Accepting the HAZUS Innovation Practices Award on behalf of Watershed was Shanna Michael, who took an active technical role in the implementation of this important project and was also a presenter at the conference.

HAZUS USER GROUP LEADERSHIP AWARD

Recipient: SoCal HUG (Liz Wojdak)



As we all know, HAZUS User Groups or HUGS play a critical role in promoting the use of HAZUS-MH. Partnerships have been formed in all FEMA regions with a total of 22 HUGs currently formed.

During this past year, one HUG stood out from the others in terms of the energy and interest that was generated; and the range of expertise that was brought together to share research and HAZUS-MH success stories.

The Southern California HAZUS User Group – or SoCal HUG – made great strides this year in promoting HAZUS-MH throughout southern California. The SoCal HUG got off to a great start in 2008 at their January 18, 2008 meeting, which featured four presentations from regional leaders – including a presentation by Hope Seligson, MMI Engineering on the Use of HAZUS-MH for Essential Facilities Risk Assessments, a project that has garnered national attention.

Under the leadership of Liz Wojdak, the Southern California HUG has given priority in 2008 to HAZUS-MH outreach and training in an ongoing effort to build interest in HAZUS-MH, increase the

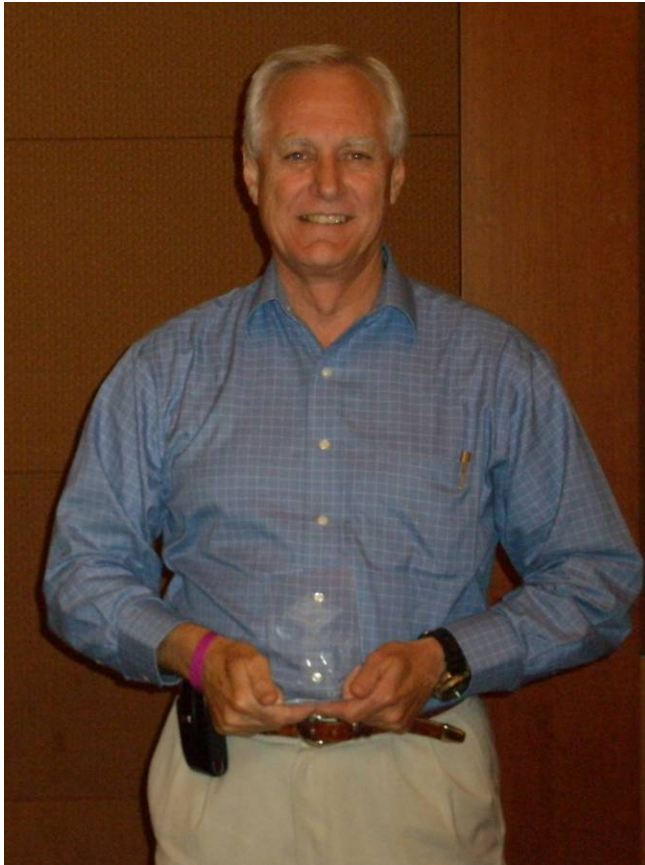
membership of the HUG, and facilitate training opportunities for interested professionals throughout Southern California. One of the goals of the HUG this year has been to establish a database of HAZUS-MH users in Southern California, increase their level of training, and establish their role in local government and the private sector. Information on HAZUS-MH users is important to all HUGS and FEMA; and this effort is applauded.

Eric Berman was pleased to give this year's HAZUS HUG Leadership Award to Liz Wojdak, who has personally devoted many, many hours of her time to promoting HAZUS-MH and the SoCal HUG. Southern California is home to many federal, state and university-based organizations that can play important roles

in the use of HAZUS-MH. An instigator was needed to pull these groups together and Liz has risen to the occasion, and for this we are pleased to recognize her efforts.

INNOVATIVE APPLICATIONS OF HAZUS-MH

Recipient: FEMA Region IX (Ray Lenaburg)



One of the lessons we have learned in the past several years in the use of HAZUS-MH is that the most successful applications are invariably the product of wide ranging partnerships.

This is certainly the case in FEMA Region IX, which includes California, Nevada, and Arizona. Under the leadership of Ray Lenaburg, FEMA Region IX has aggressively partnered with state and local emergency management agencies, HAZUS User Groups, researchers and the private sector to carry out several HAZUS-MH projects.

In one FEMA supported project, HAZUS-MH was used to support a vulnerability analysis of over 1,300 hospitals that were built in California before 1973. This major study – which used the Advanced Earthquake Building Model – provided the California Building Standards Commission with a valuable assessment of seismic safety of hospitals throughout the state.

FEMA Region IX has also collaborated with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CA OES) in the use of HAZUS-MH to support catastrophic planning for earthquakes. In fact, California's use of HAZUS-MH for earthquake planning dates back to the late 1990's – and since then, Region IX, USGS and California OES have teamed together to link HAZUS-MH with ShakeMAP to provide a real-time assessment of earthquake damages, a practice that is being expanded to other seismically vulnerable states.

On the risk assessment and mitigation front, FEMA Region IX has worked closely with three California counties and the state in three pilot projects that incorporate DFIRM data into HAZUS-MH and in the process demonstrate the synergies between FEMA's Map Modernization Project and HAZUS-MH. These pilot projects, which were featured during a conference session, have great potential for replication in other regions and states.

Accepting this award on behalf of FEMA Region IX was Ray Lenaburg, Risk Analysis Branch Chief, who has taken a leadership role in promoting the use of HAZUS in California and Region IX.

INNOVATIVE APPLICATIONS OF HAZUS-MH

Recipient: State of New York (Lynn Seirup)

While California and Florida have been getting the majority of the attention in recent years in innovative uses of HAZUS-MH, another state – New York – has in its own way been quietly excelling for years, particularly in the use of the HAZUS-MH earthquake model to assess the vulnerability of the New York City metropolitan area to seismic hazards.

A unique partnership has been formed in New York to coordinate seismic research and the use of HAZUS-MH. In 1998, the New York City Area Consortium for Earthquake Loss Mitigation was formed to conduct loss estimation studies. Charter members include FEMA, the State Emergency Management Office – led by Dan O’Brien, the New York City Office of Emergency Management – led by Lynn Seirup, and two key research institutes – the Multidisciplinary Center for Earthquake Engineering Research (MCEER), and Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory.



Among the products of this partnership is a comprehensive loss estimation study of New York City that includes a modified and enhanced soil and building inventory that greatly improves the accuracy of the analysis. This is among the most advanced studies of its kind using the earthquake model.

In the meantime, the State Emergency Management Office, under Dan O’Brien, has rigorously applied and tested HAZUS MR1, MR2 and MR3 to earthquake loss estimates for New York – and in the process Dan and his staff have become a critically important part of the HAZUS earthquake model testing process.

This past year, HAZUS-MH analyses from New York include the annualized earthquake losses which have been incorporated into the State Hazard Mitigation Plan.

And finally, New York State recently conducted a major hurricane preparedness functional exercise – known as the *Empire Express* which was co-sponsored by the New York State Emergency Management Office (SEMO), New York State Department of Health (DOH), U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Over 300 personnel from thirty Federal, State, and local agencies participated in the four day exercise, held from May 29 to June 4, 2008. This was a major undertaking, which took months of hard work to prepare for, and represents a major success in the use of HAZUS for multi-jurisdictional hurricane preparedness.

Representing the New York coalition, Lynn Seirup, New York Office of Emergency Management, accepted this award for her work as a leader in the use of HAZUS-MH to support earthquake risk assessment in New York City, and in working with other members of the New York partnership.

HAZUS-MH EXCELLENCE IN TRAINING

Recipient: FEMA Emergency Management Institute (Phillip Moore, far left)



One of the themes of this conference is that the HAZUS-MH software and its applications have undergone a significant transformation during the past fifteen years, as noted by Michael Buckley, FEMA, in his opening comments.

One of the constants during the fifteen year span is the important if not pivotal role that FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) has played in sponsoring and hosting HAZUS-MH training for thousands of students from across the U.S. – including the Basic HAZUS courses, the Advanced courses, Comprehensive Data Management, and a growing number of specialized courses that incorporate risk assessment, disaster operations, and mitigation. In the process, the computer lab at EMI has become synonymous with HAZUS-MH training, where the best instructors get to spend time with emergency management practitioners from all regions of the country.

During this past year, EMI successfully incorporated HAZUS-MH into what is arguably its most popular offering – the Integrated Emergency Management Course, which brings together the leadership of local governments for three days of exercised-based training. This course plays to the strength of HAZUS-MH, and will continue to provide wonderful exposure for HAZUS-MH and its applications.

In addition to taking a leadership role in hosting HAZUS-MH training, EMI has become an important partner with FEMA Mitigation in the development of the HAZUS-MH curriculum and strategies for recruiting the right students. As Kevin Mickey, The Polis Center, highlighted in the opening session, FEMA is launching a new initiative that recognizes emergency managers, GIS professionals, and others who complete a structured HAZUS curriculum that has two tracks: **HAZUS Trained Professional** – that provides a foundation of basic HAZUS-MH skills plus focused instruction on at least one hazard; and

HAZUS Practitioner Track – that expands on the HAZUS-MH Trained Professional Track by incorporating specialized training.

Accepting the HAZUS-MH Excellence in Training Award on behalf of EMI was Phillip Moore, who has been instrumental in making EMI a great destination for HAZUS-MH training for many years – from curriculum development to ensuring comfortable surroundings for the wide range of students who take advantage of the EMI course offerings.

Information on the 3rd Annual HAZUS User Conference will be posted on the FEMA website at <http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/hazus/>. Please make plans to attend this educational and informative conference.