



Central HAZUS-MH User Group Meeting

December 14, 2009
11:00 am to 12:00 pm EST

Attendees

Jamie Caplan, Jamie Caplan Consulting
Kevin Mickey, The Polis Center
Adam Campbell, The Polis Center
Summer Griffin, PBS&J
Pam Soule, Lagrange County, Indiana
Dean Ervin, Ohio EMA
Kingsley Allen, Illinois Water Survey

Topic: Where do we want to take the user group in 2010? How to access, where we are, and where do we want to go?

Open Discussion

Kevin - HAZUS is structurally sound in a general sense and has seen only a minimum of issues arise with the latest release of the software. None of these issues are major. Looking back over the past year, CDMS has been finalized, Risk Map is reality, and HAZUS is becoming more frequently identified as an important tool that can make Risk Map a success. The value of HAZUS is becoming widely recognized both by FEMA and by organizations at many levels across the nation.

Now how do we improve on HAZUS? What is the best sign of health? How do we redesign it? (or do we need to do so?) More hazards and mitigation questions? Private sector is all over it.

Classes at EMI are filled; flood class in January has a waiting list. How do we continue to grow it?

What will HAZUS look like in 5 years? Perhaps not the same. How is it embraced by the user community? First, directed by the will of the users; CDMS is funded and being used. Second, nationwide and local studies are taking place.

Jamie - HAZUS is here to stay and seems to be being embraced by Risk MAP.

Kingsley - How open is FEMA to recommendations for changes to HAZUS?

Kevin - FEMA develops the HAZUS technology. HAZUS users are encouraged to contact Eric Berman with suggestions. Why past input was not accepted (in the few situations when that has occurred), have no clue. FEMA is normally open to good ideas or suggestions.

Jamie - Provide concrete examples of challenges you run into. Document issues and use the forum as a resource.

Kevin - The best idea for sharing or getting information is through the user groups and the forum.

Jamie - Again, document issues and use the forums; this will assist with requesting funding and justifying expenses.

Kingsley – Would like to see HAZUS become open source.

Kevin - If you want to see re-design from the ground up, state representation is needed. Is there an opportunity for growth? Yes, FEMA can't lobby, but the public can. FEMA would like to see and identify champions (political) for Emergency Management. Indiana – as an example - has made progress by identifying champions.

Jamie - How does this sound to users?

Kingsley - Slow.

Kevin - There's likely to be no quick solutions. Within the coming months (no definite date) changes are likely to be considered and implemented in the design of HAZUS. Presently, we are probably best advised to position ourselves for future visions of HAZUS, by documenting, using forums, groups, etc.

Dean - Cameo was old when it first came out, but helps with planning during a 'fire.' The same thing will go for HAZUS. During the initial development of Ohio's mitigation plans, the State employed contractors, and the contractors were the only ones that had a true 'investment' in the plans. The new approach in Ohio is to get the locals involved in developing the plans, including understanding how to use HAZUS, so that they are more likely to take ownership of the plans.

Kevin – Keep in mind that if locals don't take ownership the plan sits on the shelf. Look at ways to make data accessible, centralized, and dynamic. Take advantage of technology and then we have a living product.

Question, in 2010 what would you like to see the CHUG become?

Jamie – Remember that FEMA will support outreach and user groups. FEMA's goal is to have a group in each state.

Kevin – The National HAZUS Conference is in August. We would like to see each state, but this conference also provides a great opportunity for the users in the CHUG region to have meetings to set objectives for future planning.

In the next few weeks, please think about achievable goals and milestones; define a list of objectives. Send thoughts out to the user group, retrieve feedback, and bring them up at our January 2010 meeting. The goal of that meeting will be to define the agenda for the CHUG in 2010 which promises to be an exciting year for our region.

HAZUS Activity Reports

Illinois

Kingsley reports the University of Illinois is continuing to move along one county at a time. Sally will be presenting at a conference in Chicago this week for Risk Map.

Indiana

Adam Campbell reports they're moving along. Currently, down to a hand full of counties that need to be completed; will be done in the spring. Statewide Risk Assessment kick-off meeting went well in Minnesota.

Kevin Mickey states Minnesota is especially interested in the flood hazard and HAZUS will be a great resource for them.

Kevin reported that he has successfully participated in teams that have installed and run HAZUS-MH MR4 on over 50 machines in two different labs without seeing any significant installation issues. He reminded the group that any problems should be reported to tech support. Also, for those attending the E172: HAZUS for Flood course in January, Kevin suggested bringing local data out to EMI in order to take advantage of the opportunity to get assistance if required.

Minnesota

No Report

Michigan

No Report

Ohio

Dean reported that Ohio is conducting HAZUS runs for each county, which all counties have completed their fresh run; however, 55% of the counties are complete using MR3. There were some issues installing software, but will be installing MR4 today. Dean will be attending the E172 course in January.

Wisconsin

No Report

FEMA Region V Updates

No Report

2010 Meeting Schedule

January 19, 2009
11:30 a.m. to 12:30 pm ET
Phone Number: (317) 278-7008
Participant PIN: To be announced