

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

STATEMENT OF

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ON

“Moving Beyond the First Five Years: Ensuring FEMA’s Ability to Respond and Recover in the Wake of a National Catastrophe”

BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS,
PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Dent and Members of the Committee, I am pleased to be here today to discuss the progress the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has made over the past two years and describe that which we expect to accomplish in the years ahead. FEMA today is better able to fulfill our mission, which is to reduce the loss of life and property, and protect the Nation from all hazards, including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and man-made disasters, by leading and supporting the Nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery and mitigation.

The standard operations of FEMA displayed during Hurricane Katrina have been improved. The agency has transformed into a “New FEMA” that reflects the expanded scope of the agency’s missions - a mission supported through building a National Emergency Management System that provides for a more nimble, flexible use of national resources. It strengthens the coordination within FEMA elements and with other DHS components, and will enable FEMA to better coordinate with agencies and departments outside of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). It will also deliver enhanced capabilities to partners at the State and local levels and engage the capabilities of the private sector. Day by day, FEMA is refining its core competencies while becoming an organization that is valued across all jurisdictions as an engaged, agile, responsive, and trusted leader and partner.

FEMA continually employs lessons learned and makes progress towards our vision of becoming the Nation’s preeminent preparedness and emergency management agency. And, we are demonstrating a new ethos as we lean further forward to deliver more effective assistance to communities and disaster victims.

The vision for “New FEMA” was structured around the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA) as well as other legislation. This legislation expanded our ability to meet the preparedness elements of our mission. We have also been shaped by the results of 17 specific internal needs assessments that spanned our business functions, logistics, finance, human resources, information technology and communications. Those self-initiated assessments provided a blueprint for our change efforts. The additional reforms uncovered by the needs assessments and the organizational transition of preparedness components into FEMA on April 1, 2007, completed this important phase of our transformation.

The ultimate direction of FEMA has been mapped out in our new Strategic Plan that establishes five strategic goals, identifies overarching themes, and provides guidance, objectives and implementation strategies. The Strategic Plan has been vital in guiding FEMA’s directorates towards enhancing their program development processes.

As we enter the last year of this Administration, this Strategic Plan will guide a course that will ensure that we leave FEMA in a better position to serve the American people

Over the past two years, FEMA has displayed its leadership in times of national need. That leadership has been evidenced by the timely delivery of assistance during various disasters, most recently the California wildfires, and also the Missouri floods and the tornadoes that overwhelmed Arkansas and Tennessee.

However, new and reengineered processes, policies, and organizational changes will only take FEMA so far. The force multiplier of our success is the hard work and dedication of our people. The FEMA team is purposefully responding to the challenges of achieving a “New FEMA”, whether in the field of logistics, information technology or acquisitions, as operational planners, or as experts able to deliver disaster assistance. These are the people who define FEMA; these are the people who will make the agency the Nation’s preeminent preparedness and emergency management agency. We will continue to professionalize and educate our workforce, making it a world-class operation, in terms of competency, diversity, morale, achievement and opportunity for growth. To compliment this capability, FEMA has made it a priority to hire qualified professionals in emergency management to fill senior leadership positions.

The new vision for FEMA is grounded in partnerships that encompass, yet transcend, the emergency management community to include other communities, such as law enforcement, private sector, and those with disabilities. Even within our longstanding partnerships, we are examining the unique needs of rural communities and small states. To that end, FEMA has stood up a Private Sector Office and has also appointed a Small State and Rural Advocate, a Disability Coordinator, and a Law Enforcement Advisor.

BECOMING THE NATION’S PREEMINENT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND PREPAREDNESS AGENCY

I would like to highlight the major steps that FEMA has taken these past two years, as well as our plans for further refinement and integration, including the establishment of several FEMA directorates and new initiatives.

Improving Provision of Assistance to Victims/Communities

FEMA regards the protection and preservation of life and property as its top priority. Accordingly, the Disaster Assistance Directorate (DAD) is focused on ensuring the timely and effective provision of essential financial and technical assistance to disaster-impacted individuals, households, and communities is available by efficiently leveraging FEMA’s Stafford Act authorities.

In August 2006, the President signed Executive Order 13411 entitled *Improving Assistance for Disaster Victims*. This Executive Order directed Federal agencies, led by DHS, with the responsibility to improve and simplify the application process for individuals seeking Federal disaster assistance. FEMA led an interagency task force in

the development and delivery of a Disaster Assistance Improvement Plan (DAIP), which outlines a coordinated, actionable strategy to implement a consolidated and unified disaster application format by December 31, 2008. The President approved this plan in September 2007.

While we are committed to streamlining the process of getting disaster aid to victims, we are also steadfast in our responsibility to be good stewards of the Disaster Relief Fund. To this end, in FY 2007, we implemented new software that maintains data on applicants in mobile homes and communicates real-time data to caseworkers and the auto-determination system. This software prevents duplicate housing payments from being made to applicants already receiving assistance through direct housing.

FEMA has implemented checks in NEMIS that flag “high risk” addresses such as check cashing stores, mail drops, cemeteries, and jails. Applications with high risk addresses require an intensive review prior to the delivery of assistance to prevent potential fraud.

Also in 2007, FEMA partnered with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to create and pilot the new Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP). This new program is a temporary housing rental assistance and case management program for eligible individuals and households displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This new program’s interaction with disaster victims is administered by HUD through its existing national network of Public Housing Agencies (PHAs). Since the partnership began, HUD and FEMA have been working together to ensure that the transition of responsibility from one agency to the other is completed as smoothly as possible.

Additionally, FEMA has undertaken many initiatives to improve implementation of the Public Assistance Program. We have established a Public Assistance Steering Committee composed of senior Public Assistance staff in each of our 10 regions and 10 State representatives. The purpose of the committee is to serve as the Board of Directors for the Public Assistance Program, develop the vision, strategies and policies to ensure efficient, effective and consistent implementation of the program.

FEMA will continue to refine its evacuee hosting guidance and plans to complete five State hosting plans for large numbers of evacuees. These State Hosting Plans will help adjacent States that may host Gulf Coast evacuees. This effort is designed to synchronize separate State evacuation plans to create a more cohesive and unified effort. Teams engaged with each State, identifying requirements and capabilities, and working to develop a plan that integrates shelter planning with transportation planning. The result of these efforts will be more timely, better organized, and better coordinated evacuation by those with their own transportation as well as for those who need assistance in evacuating by bus or air. FEMA also is completing enhancements to systems that support mass care and housing activities following a disaster. We will implement standard protocols and staff training for long-term recovery planning. FEMA will continue to refine plans and procedures for managing disaster assistance operations under the varying conditions of different catastrophic and extraordinary disaster scenarios.

In FY 2009, FEMA will continue to improve its plans and capabilities for managing mass evacuations and the resulting displaced populations, including additional State and local plans and development and expansion of evacuee tracking systems. The agency will also continue to improve, test and exercise its capabilities for all of its Individual Assistance functions (mass care, emergency assistance, housing, and human services).

Improving Disaster Operations

Since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, FEMA has adopted a more forward-leaning posture, engaged in stronger collaboration and partnerships at the local, State, and Federal levels, and augmented its operational focus, resulting in stronger and more agile disaster response capabilities. FEMA demonstrated these improvements throughout the year in response to events such as the California wildfires, Missouri floods, Greensburg tornadoes, and Hurricanes Dean and Flossie, as well as in exercises such as TOPOFF 4 and Ardent Sentry.

Headquarters and Regional Operational Planners

In 2007, FEMA headquarters hired 15 operational planners - the first time FEMA has hired individuals with this skill set - to provide the capability to perform sophisticated operational analyses, analyze trends, and improve planning for the response to ongoing and future events. Planners are currently being hired in each of the FEMA Regions and Area Offices to provide this same capability in the field. To date, more than half the Regional planners are on board. Additional staff will be hired in FY 2008 and FY 2009. There is now greater depth and capability to work with State and Federal partners to prepare operational plans and conduct crisis action planning to ensure that the agency can lead and support a national all-hazard emergency management response. Regional planners will receive program guidance from FEMA headquarters and ensure training objectives and qualification standards are met, but will operate under the authority of the regional administrators. At the Regional level, these planners will coordinate the development of coordinated Federal, State, and local operational plans to guide response activities and help build a national culture of preparedness. The operational planners will also facilitate/conduct regional evacuation planning.

Gap Analysis Initiative

One of the major planning accomplishments in 2007 was the GAP Analysis Initiative, which was developed in coordination with the State of New York Emergency Management Office/New York City Office of Emergency Management, and implemented in spring 2007. This project provided FEMA and its partners, at both the State and local levels in the hurricane-prone regions of the country, with shared visibility of asset and capability gaps to determine the level of Federal support potentially needed in responding to a Category 3 hurricane. This information would better ensure FEMA and federal support to States exactly as they needed it.

During 2007, FEMA worked closely with each of the 18 State emergency management communities in hurricane-prone areas, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, using a consistent set of measures and tools to evaluate

strengths and vulnerabilities. We incorporated seven critical areas in the initial application of the GAP tool for review: debris removal, commodity distribution, evacuation, sheltering, interim housing, medical needs and fuel capacity along evacuation routes. Our initial use of the GAP concept, which proved to be successful in the 2007 hurricane season, will be expanded to cover all hazards and applied nationwide in FY 2008.

In FY 2009, FEMA's Disaster Operations Directorate (DOPS) will continue to work within FEMA and with State partners to develop local, State, and regional operational plans, including incident-specific catastrophic plans that cover the range of prevention, protection, response, and recovery activities for that incident. It will support the development of operational planning capabilities at all levels of emergency management, and operational planning for the National Planning Scenarios. We will also continue to increase national readiness for site-specific catastrophic events, using scenario-driven plan development processes and supporting the development of vertically and horizontally integrated Catastrophic Response Plans using NIMS and the NRF construct.

Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMAT)

In accordance with PKEMRA, FEMA is developing Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMAT), a next generation of rapidly deployable interagency national and regional emergency response teams. These new teams will eventually replace existing Emergency Response Teams (ERT) at the national and regional level and the Federal Incident Response Support Teams (FIRSTs). The IMATs are designed to provide a forward Federal presence to better manage and coordinate the national response for catastrophic incidents.

The national teams will have the capability to establish an effective Federal presence that can support the State within 12-hours of notification, coordinate Federal activities and provide initial situational awareness. Teams will be self sufficient for a minimum of 48 hours to augment potentially scarce local resources. They will be staffed with a core of permanent full-time employees, unlike the ERTs, which are staffed on a collateral duty basis. The teams will be fully compliant with NIMS and Incident Command System (ICS) principles and will train and exercise as a unit. When not deployed, the teams will train with Federal partners and provide a planning, training, and exercise capability to help improve State and local emergency management capabilities. The teams will also engage in consistent and coordinated relationship-building with State, local, tribal, and other stakeholders.

Currently, one National IMAT is operational and ready to respond to any disaster. Three Regional IMATs are planned to be operational by June 2008, the official start of the hurricane season.

Emergency Communications

FEMA is also improving disaster emergency communications and interoperability capabilities. FEMA will be ready to rapidly and effectively respond to protect people and property, to ensure the adequacy of the Agency's own emergency communications

capabilities, and to help our State, local, and tribal partners develop or sustain their capabilities.

Under the new FEMA re-organization, DOPS has also created a Disaster Emergency Communications Division. The new division will improve the agency's tactical disaster emergency communications and interoperability capabilities to support all-hazards disaster response and national security emergency requirements. We are in the process of advertising and filling new positions to stand up this new division.

Improving Management of Logistics

Delivering the right material, to the right place, at the right time is one of the most critical missions FEMA coordinates and performs. In April 2007, FEMA elevated its logistics function to create a Logistics Management Division (LMD), and is developing logistics as a core competency. This realignment will transform FEMA's logistics operating capability and enhance logistics management using as a model the Department of Defense strategic level logistics organization.

Following the realignment, LMD has worked diligently to strengthen its business processes and leverage the best practices by enhancing relationships with both the public and private sector through various initiatives for a more coordinated logistics response operation. One such initiative was the Loaned Executive Program. The Loaned Executive Program was launched as a pilot program for DHS and FEMA. Organized through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the United Parcel Service's (UPS) Foundation, the program was designed to bring a seasoned UPS executive into the LMD to share private-sector expertise. The valuable knowledge and input from the loaned executive will help the directorate adopt the best business practices of private-sector logistics companies. LMD also developed and launched the new "National Logistics Coordinator" concept, which favorably enhanced coordination and execution during the preparations for Hurricane Dean, and responses to the California wildfires, Midwest ice storms and the West Coast winter storms.

Overall, LMD has contributed significantly to FEMA's forward leaning posture by putting in place contracts and interagency agreements (IAA) that provide an enhanced logistics capability such as:

- Logistics Management Transformation Initiative
- Total Asset Visibility to track supplies in transit
- National bus evacuation readiness
- Ready meals and water (IAA with the Defense Logistics Agency)
- Base camp support contracts
- Single point ordering and tracking for Regions
- Supplies and services (IAA with the General Services Administration)
- Vehicle drivers and fleet management
- Vehicle maintenance

Moving forward, in FY 2009, the LMD will upgrade National Distribution Centers (DCs), which are at the core of FEMA's Supply Chain Transformation effort and are essential to FEMA's fundamental readiness mission. Strategic positioning of national-level assets at DCs enables a proactive readiness approach that relies on stocking the most critical disaster support life-saving and life-sustaining assets at levels required for immediate distribution to disaster victims. The "new FEMA" warehousing strategy will provide the capacity and flexibility to respond effectively and efficiently to the full set of disaster scenarios.

Moreover, in FY 2008\9, LMD plans to pilot test the transformation of logistics management of supplies and services by further engaging the private sector and incorporating industry best practices. In an effort to improve business practices, the LMD has spearheaded a Distribution Management Strategy Working Group, with our Federal, private and NGO logistics partners, to conduct a comprehensive analysis to develop an approved distribution and supply chain management policy. Current contributing members include the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), General Services Administration (GSA), Health and Human Services (HHS), United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), United States Army Core of Engineers (USACE), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and Forest Service within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the American Red Cross (ARC).

The analysis includes rightsizing inventory levels and determining the most effective strategic supply and service locations in order to transition into a regional support strategy. The Working Group is considering all critical distribution and supply chain management criteria in developing and executing a coordinated Plan of Action to establish an integrated distribution management strategy for the National Response Framework. Until this analysis is complete, there are no plans to develop additional permanent distribution centers

Improving the Nation's Alert and Warning Systems

The National Continuity Programs Directorate (NCP), FEMA's arm for building and sustaining the national continuity of operations programs, including national alerts and warnings, has made significant progress in providing continuity guidance and support to Federal, State, and local governments nationwide over the past few years. The NCP is focusing on efforts to augment the existing Emergency Alert System (EAS) with the Integrated Public Alert Warning System (IPAWS), to leverage newer communication technologies to improve the nation's ability to provide warnings and alerts.

EAS was put in place in 1994 to replace the Emergency Broadcast System (EBS), which launched in 1963. In June, 2006, President Bush issued Executive Order 13407 ("Public Alert and Warning System"), establishing the U.S. Government's alert and warning policy and directing a series of actions meant to improve and modernize the Government's ability to communicate rapidly with the American people. The EAS will allow the President to transmit a national alert to citizens within 10 minutes, and it allows

State and local government officials to send messages during non-Federal emergencies. IPAWS will leverage digital and satellite technology to expand alerts and warnings from audio to new communication mediums, including text and video available over radio, television, telephones, cell phones, and e-mail.

Preparing the Nation For All Hazards

On April 1, 2007, FEMA renewed its focus on building a culture of preparedness through its integration of the National Preparedness Directorate (NPD), an expanded Citizen Corps Program and coordinated activities with Ready.gov and the Department of Homeland Security. NPD has played an integral role in coordinating several major preparedness initiatives, such as Top Officials 4 (TOPOFF 4), hiring the newly created Federal Preparedness Coordinators (FPC), and the development of national preparedness and response documents.

In January 2008, NPD coordinated the release of the National Response Framework (NRF), the successor to the National Response Plan (NRP). The NRF establishes a comprehensive, national, all-hazards approach to domestic incident response and incorporates many NRP elements and lessons learned. Incorporating input from hundreds of individuals, organizations, and governmental partners, the NRF provides clear guidance on the integration of community, State, tribal, and Federal response efforts.

Moving into FY 2009, NPD will improve coordination of national exercises with State exercises, and will implement - for the first time - a national planning system that will bring consistency to contingency plans at the local, State and Federal level. By focusing on planning, exercising and evaluations, and more focused applications of grant funding, NPD will measurably lead the Nation to a higher level of preparedness.

With the realignment of the Department mandated by PKEMRA, FEMA is now responsible for managing billions of dollars in grants that build the Nation's homeland security capability. To support this new responsibility, FEMA created a new directorate. FEMA's new Grants Program Directorate (GPD) is working within the greater emergency management framework to make sure we are getting the best value for the investment. In FY2006, GPD awarded approximately \$3 billion in total grant funds. Since 2003, the Department of Homeland Security has invested over \$23.7 billion in critical funding to our Nation's homeland security community.

During the same time period, GPD was able to improve and build upon relationships with subject matter experts on grant guidance; including TSA, USCG, Infrastructure Protection, and the intelligence community. As a result, in FY 2008, FEMA was able to narrow the focus of grant guidance to better target the application of grant dollars to align with National Priorities and target capabilities established by the National Preparedness Guidelines, approved by the President September 2007.

In FY 2009, FEMA will update the Homeland Security State/Urban Areas Strategies, as necessary, and refine and implement the funding allocation methodology based on risk analysis and anticipated return on investment. The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program will begin to collect and use performance measure data to improve program effectiveness. GPD will continue to track State and local grant administration and spending at the State and local level and add additional grant programs to the Grants Reporting Tool as necessary.

By working with States and major urban areas, refining grant guidance, and focusing more directly on the expected return grant investment, these grant programs will continue to increase our nation's capability to prevent, protect against and if necessary respond to and recover from acts of terrorism.

Strengthening FEMA's Regions

One of FEMA's primary reforms made and implemented during 2007, was empowering and increasing the capability and capacity of its regions. As the point of interface with States strengthened, FEMA Regions are essential to deliver on the promise of New FEMA.

One of the most significant initiatives that gives us tremendous value added, is the new package of blended capability in the form of: Federal Preparedness Coordinators (FPC), Regional IMATs, and enhanced Regional Response Coordination Centers (RRCC). Moreover, FEMA has stood up Grants Management Branches in all 10 Regional offices and has embedded 20 new Grant Management Specialists in the Regions to manage EMPG, MMRS, and Real ID grants. The Regions are also strengthening their ties to partners by the establishment of a Regional Advisory Committee and Regional Emergency Communications Working Group. Both of these new entities greatly expand the opportunity to communicate and exchange ideas with key constituency groups.

The following are just a few highlights of FEMA Regional Offices accomplishments and initiatives:

- In 2007, Regions I, V, VI, IX, and X provided extensive support to their respective Federal Executive Boards. Solid partnerships have been created with leadership from the boards in Hawaii, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, as well as across New England, Texas, the Mid-west and Northwest. Each board has established active Continuity of Operations Planning Working Groups supported by membership from representative department and agencies.
- The regional Pacific Area Office, in coordination with the FEMA Logistics Division and Hawaii State and County Civil Defense, successfully completed deployment of the DHS Pre-Positioned Disaster Supplies Program. Regional actions resulted in the pre-positioning of the 500-person containers and home recovery kit containers on Oahu, Kauai, Maui, and the Big Island.

- In July 2007, FEMA Region X successfully established an Alaska Area Office, as required in PKEMRA. The office is integrated into the Regional operation and provides for situational awareness in Alaska and enhanced capability to conduct effective pre- and post-disaster response activities.
- Region IV Operational Planners participated in the launch of several catastrophic planning initiatives, including the Florida Catastrophic Planning scenario, the New Madrid Seismic Zone, 2007 hurricanes, critical transportation needs planning for Gulf Coast mass evacuation, and pandemic influenza.

Improving Our Core Capacities

FEMA's mission and the expectations of performance and need for 21st century business practices for the Agency have substantially changed in the Post-Katrina environment. In response to PKEMRA and post –Katrina lessons learned, FEMA has institutionalized various organizational and functional reforms. To ensure FEMA's mission success, the Agency immediately began to set the ground work to implement the suggested and mandated reforms. One major step taken was to realign its administrative functional areas to better hone its business practices, enhance its customer services and improve its processes and informational services infrastructure and professionalize and grow the permanent workforce.

In FY 2007, FEMA stood up its Office of Management (OM) to unify and integrate several disparate internal service providers to synchronize their efforts and increase overall administrative program effectiveness, efficiency and cohesiveness, while preserving and advancing service delivery. The new Office of Management oversees FEMA primary administrative functions, including: Acquisitions Management, Disaster Reserve Workforce, Human Capital, Information Technology, Facilities Management, Records Management, and Security. The following are some of the measures OM has taken since Hurricane Katrina to address issues internal to the agency that needed to be improved:

The Office of Acquisition Management is strengthening our capacity to contract for goods and services.

FEMA's Office of Acquisition Management (OAM) has made considerable strides in improving the contract management and oversight aspects of its acquisition duties. FEMA has implemented new policies and requirements on its acquisition workforce, such as improved advanced planning, accurate documentation, workforce training, increased emphasis on market research and greater consideration of small business goals. FEMA can boast that during FY 2007 about 81 percent of its acquisition dollars were competed. This represents a 45 percent increase over FY 2006, when only about 35 percent of FEMA's acquisition dollars were competed. There were three main areas of improvement which led to the above success.

Institutionalized the use of Contract Administration Plans (CAPs) to facilitate efficient and effective contract administration and improve the agency's post-award contract execution. CAPS also promoted task order competition while ensuring that services are available expeditiously to meet critical disaster response needs, while establishing consistent enterprise-wide contract administration processes for the Contracting Officer's Technical Representatives (COTR) in various regions. It also documented the agreements between program offices and OAM and serves as a guide for continual actions related to a contract administration.

Established a Contract Officer's Technical Representative (COTR) Program Office to ensure COTRs have the training, support, and tools needed for effective contract administration. This included the implementation of a tiered COTR certification program to better match COTR competencies to contract complexity and ensuring COTR compliance with DHS and Federal regulations and policy while leveraging best practices.

Published the Emergency Acquisition Field Guide, which will ensure that non-1102 (contract specialist) personnel can effectively and appropriately contract for goods and services in an emergency situation. The guide defines the critical elements of an emergency acquisition in plain language so that any member of the disaster support team can understand and apply proper procedures. It includes information on purchase cards, program management, and contracting.

The Human Capital Division is ensuring that FEMA has the right staff.

In 2007, FEMA's Human Capital Division (HCD) took on the daunting challenge overcoming previous staffing and retention impediments, optimizing its workforce, improving professional development and training programs, and streamlining HCD processes through technology solutions. At the close of FY 2007, FEMA had filled 96.5 percent of its authorized PFT positions. The FEMA Hiring Team was honored with the Secretary's Award for DHS Excellence for its outstanding contributions toward achieving FEMA's 95 percent hiring goal by June 2007.

Before Hurricane Katrina, FEMA had an authorized permanent full-time staff of 2,200, however, the number of employees actually on board had dropped, in the aftermath of Katrina the approximate number of permanent full-time employees dropped to 1,500. Currently, FEMA has approximately 3,200 employees with an expected total of approximately 4,300 permanent full-time employees by the end of FY 2009. FEMA's goal is to meet or exceed 95 percent of its FY 2008 authorized staffing level by the end of fiscal year. To do so, FEMA has chosen to employ some new recruitment techniques to bring in the best and the brightest to our agency. We are also using staffing services to hire some specialized positions.

FEMA will also improve and develop steps to measure on-boarding, talent management, and developing a corporate footprint on all employees. With these new processes, FEMA

will be able to hire faster, have employees trained and ready to perform, and will have an ongoing snapshot of its talent and workforce needs.

To support our hiring efforts, in mid-2007 Congress gave approval to FEMA to convert approximately 110 of our Cadre of On-Call Response Employees (CORE) positions to Permanent Full Time (PFT) positions. Another 390 will be converted in FY 2008 with the remainder converted in FY09. As a result of this and other efforts, FEMA has been able to achieve a steadily increasing net gain in Permanent Full-Time (PFT) employees since FY 2005. In FY 2007 alone, FEMA acquired 398 new PFTs, resulting in a net gain in 100 PFT employees for FY 2007. This was a drastic improvement from the net loss of 97 PFTs in FY 2005.

The Information Technology Services Division is bringing FEMA systems into the 21st Century.

FEMA's information systems are the tools that enable every mission and business process for the Agency and serve as the primary building blocks for New FEMA. To this end, FEMA is developing and plans to deploy a consistent architecture that will support information integration for the Agency. By employing new technologies to enhance capabilities and efficiencies of service, FEMA will strengthen and unify its operations and management.

FEMA's Information Technology and Services Division (ITSD) has begun the process of modernization and upgrades to improve information sharing and functionality between six of FEMA's critical systems: National Emergency Management Information System (NEMIS), Logistics Information Management System (LIMS-III), Automated Deployment Database (ADD), Total Asset Visibility (TAV), Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS), and the Acquisition Management System (PRISM).

In addition, the complete transition of preparedness programs into the FEMA IT system is currently underway, and, to date, we have successfully migrated the legacy Grants & Training IFMIS and Payment & Reporting System (PARS) from the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) to FEMA. A plan has been recently completed that will support and guide critical IT improvements with the following strategic goals in mind: (1) to stabilize and integrate IT assets across the agency, (2) to secure the IT environment, (3) to network the agency, (4) to evolve to a "service-forward" organization, and (5) to establish supporting IT policy and governance structure. Once the goals of this plan have been reached the FEMA IT systems will be more robust and allow for more advanced business practices that will gain efficiencies in program offices across the agency.

In FY 2009, FEMA will begin a transition of IT systems and financial resources to the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) and continue initiatives such as deployment of a fully compliant electronic records management system; improve help desk efficiency by monitoring both workflow and management escalation; begin

Advanced Computer Technology Integration (CTI) system deployment for the Advanced Contact Center Network; and improve the Disaster Housing Inspection Management System security to overcome the vulnerability and risks of using tablet computers in the field that carry personal identification information.

CONCLUSION

Today, I have been able to give you a glimpse into the “New FEMA”, and to highlight a handful of examples of the sea of change that is post-Katrina, post-Rita FEMA. The public has increasingly seen a FEMA that is more able to respond, and a FEMA that better promotes and coordinates continued enhancement of preparedness in the United States. Our objective is to regain the trust and confidence of the public and our partners through consistently excellent service

For the remainder of my tenure, I will work to ensure FEMA continues to be an empowered agency. Each day FEMA will be better able to meet the needs of the American people, both as we heighten preparedness, respond more capably, and lead effectively during the recovery and mitigation phases. This agency has already improved tremendously since my first day on the job. With the support of the skilled and resolutely dedicated FEMA team, I am confident FEMA will continue to improve. My successors and America will be in a far better position because of their work.

In the past year, FEMA has been able to respond rapidly and effectively to the disasters we have encountered. We are more nimble and responsive than we were last year when I appeared before the Full Committee. While we have not faced another catastrophic disaster, I am confident in saying that we are ready to perform effectively and efficiently during whatever circumstance we may face, catastrophic or otherwise. I appreciated the opportunity to appear before you today. Thank you.