



CITY OF AUSTIN
OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
FY2014 ANNUAL REPORT



WHAT IS HSEM?

The Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) is the emergency and disaster coordinator for the City of Austin. HSEM coordinates training, planning, finance services, disaster response and recovery efforts among City of Austin departments. It works in partnership with the Travis County Office of Emergency Management and other Central Texas agencies, such as schools, the American Red Cross and the Texas Department of Public Safety.

HSEM's director and most of the senior staff are Certified Emergency Managers who cumulatively represent a century of public safety experience in fire, police and medical response and planning. In 2012, HSEM's program was the first in the State of Texas and one of the first large cities in the nation to be fully accredited by the Emergency Management Accreditation Program.

Under the daily leadership of Director Otis J. Latin, Sr., HSEM's 13 full-time team members:

- Co-manage the Austin/Travis County Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- Oversee the City's emergency operations plans and procedures for all hazards
- Provide leadership and support to regional planning and response initiatives
- Educate the public on preparedness and awareness
- Manage and coordinate volunteer programs
- Manage Homeland Security and Emergency Management grant programs and federal reimbursements
- Serve as the central point for communication, coordination and warning during major emergencies and disasters
- Develop hazard mitigation and prevention programs
- Coordinate strategic planning projects
- Conduct training, drills and exercises



The Combined Transportation, Emergency & Communications Center (CTECC) is a secure facility jointly operated among local area governments and agencies. Among the CTECC tenants is HSEM. The CTECC facility also houses 9-1-1 call center operations and the EOC.



MANAGER'S MESSAGE

I would like to extend my personal thanks to HSEM, along with the hundreds of City/County employees and community volunteers who responded to the variety of emergencies and disasters that occurred during the past fiscal year.

While responding to and recovering from any emergency presents challenges, organizations are also afforded the opportunity to take a closer look at their response efforts and identify areas for improvement. This City embraces this and will continue to make strides in improving its emergency response.

Although the past 12 months provided us those opportunities for professional and personal reflection, I truly believe we are well ahead of most communities' emergency collaboration and communication. This is a collective success for all of us, but in no small part also attributable to the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

This was evidenced during the week of Jan. 13, 2014, when I led a delegation of 71 City, County and partner personnel to a program in Emmitsburg, Md. conducted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, better known as FEMA.

The instructors repeatedly noted that one of our City's greatest strengths is our high level of cooperation and coordination among City departments, as well as with Travis County and regional partners. They also complimented us on our recovery plans, which we will continue to develop and revise as we incorporate lessons learned from the past 12 months.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. A. [unclear]". The signature is fluid and cursive.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to present to you the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) annual report for Fiscal 2014.

The preceding 12 months have brought a level of activity for this office that is unprecedented in my more than eight years of service to the City. The pace and expansion of this fast-growing community, coupled with the heartbreaking events of the past year, rival even my busiest periods as a fire chief in Washington, D.C., and Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

The Austin/Travis County Emergency Operations Center activated for more than 60 days during the past 12 months, on top of auxiliary operations to support special events, such as Formula One and the 2014 South by Southwest festival.

Just as I have witnessed communities rally in the face of adversity, I am extremely proud of how the HSEM team and our volunteer partners rallied to support our extended family of public servants, residents and visitors. I am also grateful for the support and leadership provided by the City Manager.

It has been my experience in 45 years of public safety and emergency management that no amount of sweat, no amount of planning and no amount of extra work can “absolutely” prepare a community for the next disaster or emergency. These events always provide ways for us to learn how to do better.

It can feel uncomfortable for us to recognize that tragedy will inevitably strike our residents again, likely in an unpredictable, unexpected way. But I take comfort—having witnessed firsthand the dedication of HSEM in service to the City and in the face of uncertainty—that we will be applying the lessons learned to every future event.

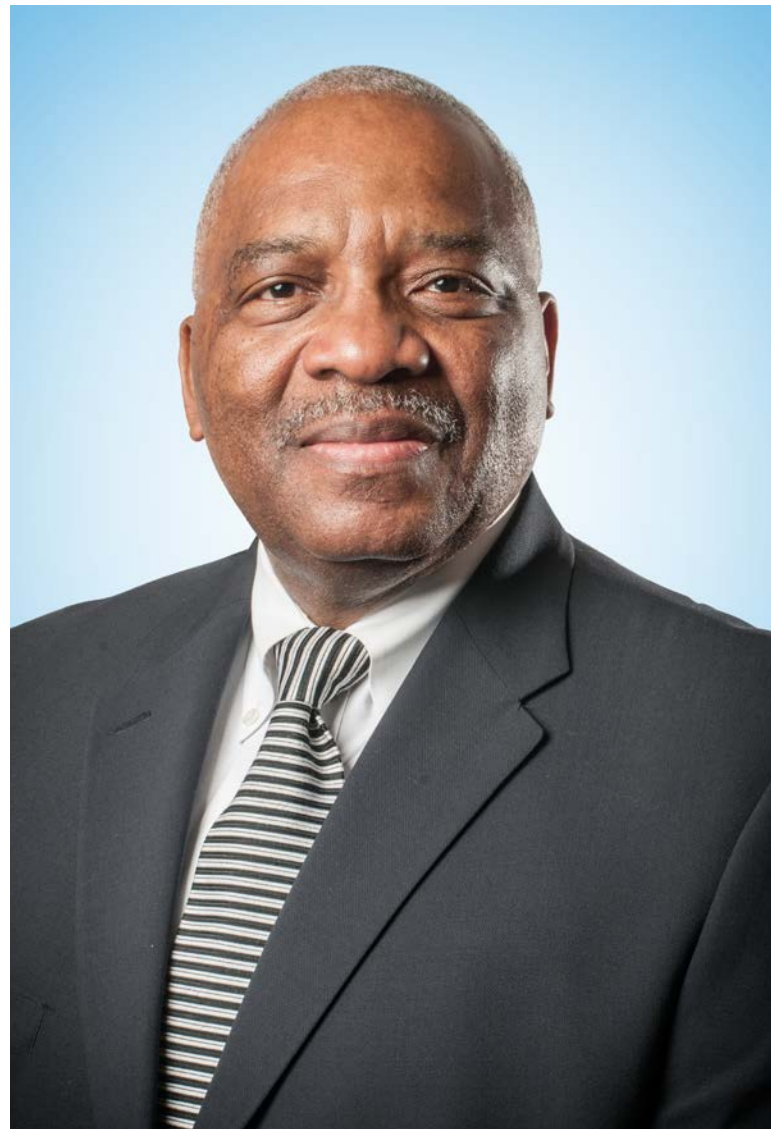






TABLE OF CONTENTS

2013 HALLOWEEN FLOODS	6
FY2014 ACTIVATION TIMELINE	8
PUBLIC SAFETY PARTNERS	10
TRAINING AND EXERCISES	11
MAIN FACILITIES	12
OTHER FACILITIES	13
COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS	14
PLANNING	15
GRANTS	16
LOOKING AHEAD	17
Planning & Grants	18
Building On Success	19
Horizon Issues	20
Maintaining Capabilities	21
Special Events Impact	22

2013 HALLOWEEN FLOODS

During the evening of Oct. 30, 2013 and into the morning of Oct. 31, 2013 rain fell on the already saturated floodplains of Onion Creek, Walnut Creek, Shoal Creek, Williamson Creek and Bull Creek. Crews safely closed more than 40 low-water crossings across the entire City for the widespread event.

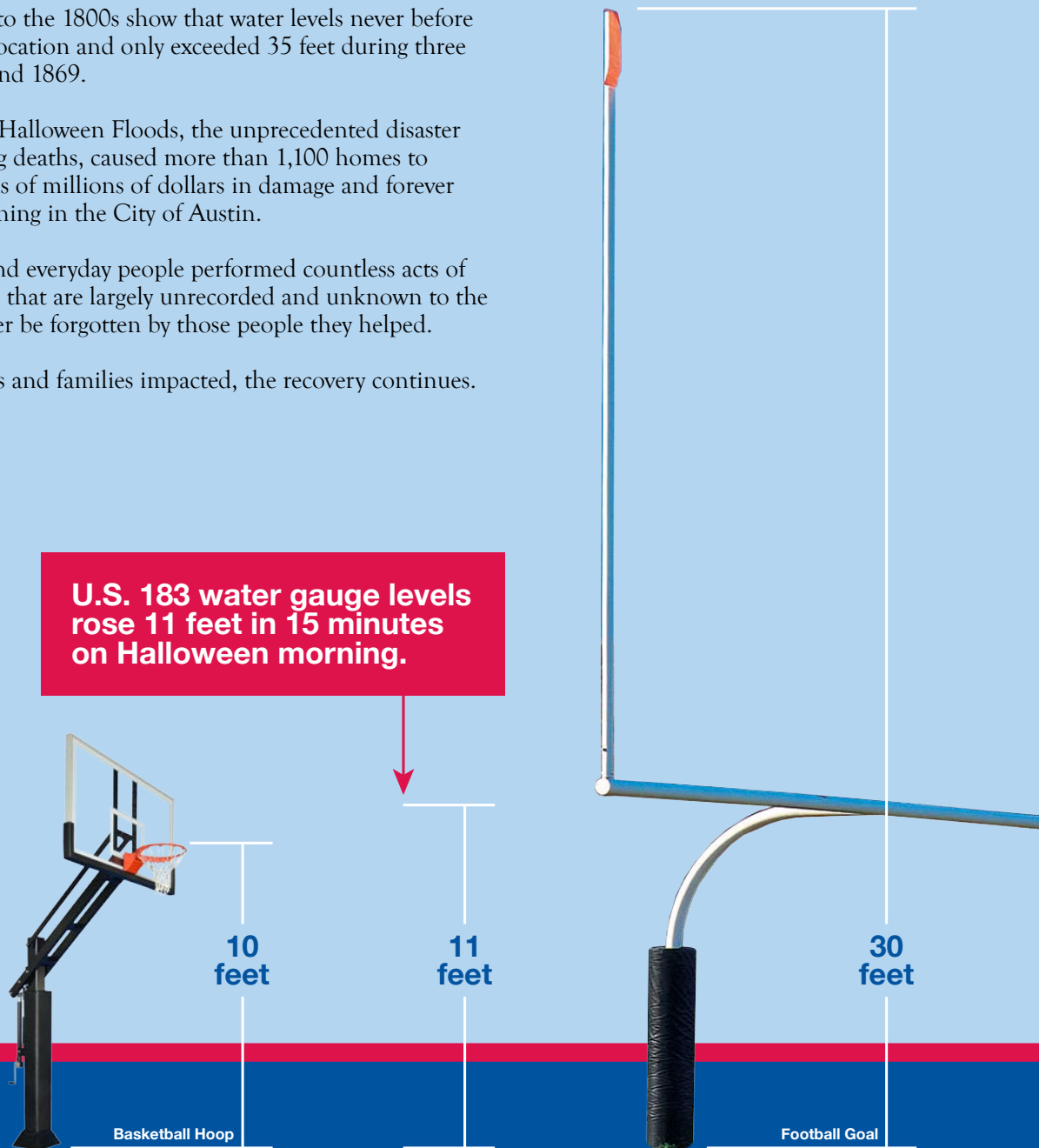
Water gauge levels at Onion Creek and U.S. 183 rose 11 feet—taller than a basketball goal—in 15 minutes. Water reached a record height of 41 feet at that location, more than 10 feet higher than a NFL goal post.

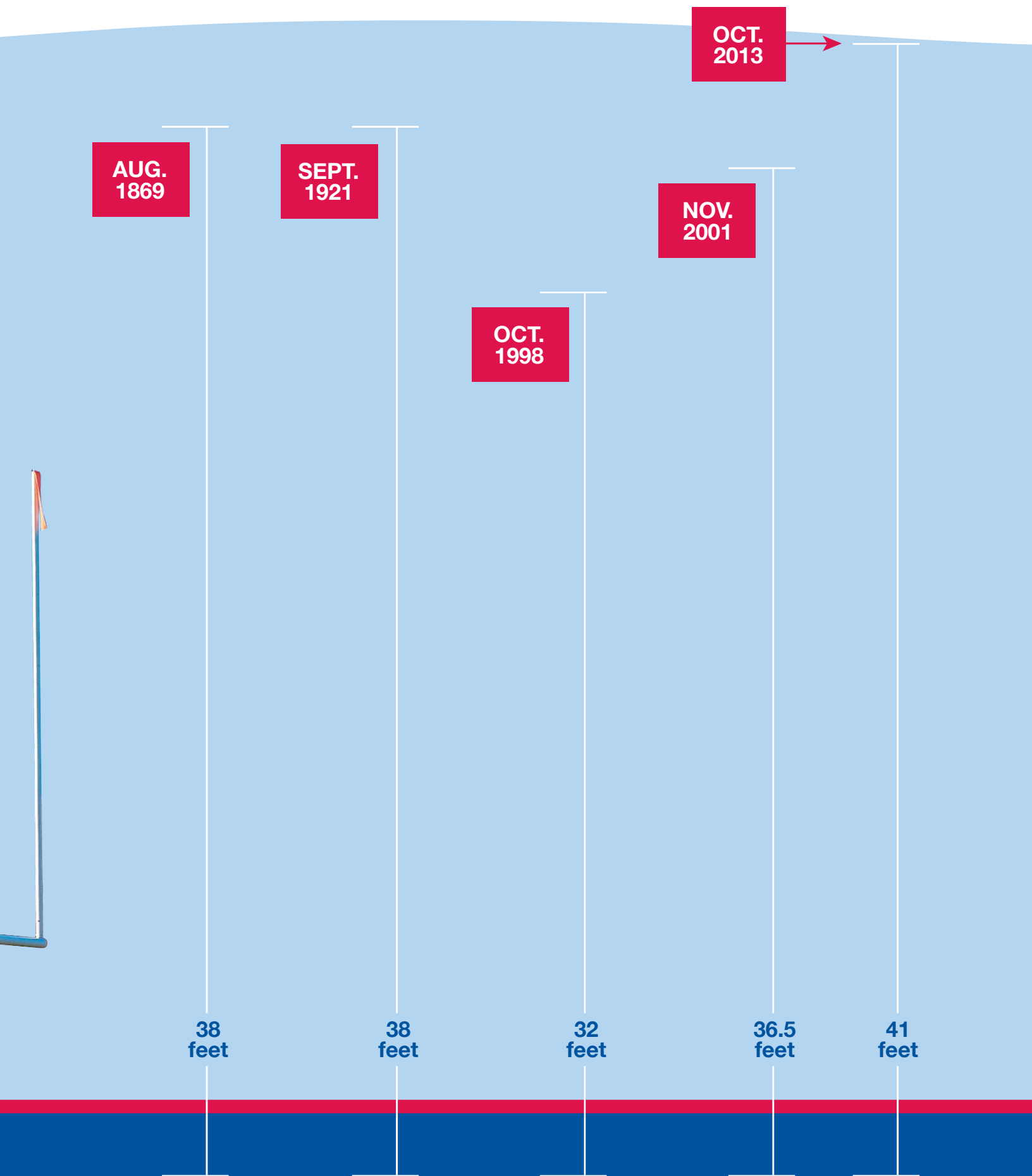
Available records dating to the 1800s show that water levels never before exceeded 40 feet at this location and only exceeded 35 feet during three other years: 2001, 1921 and 1869.

Now known as the 2013 Halloween Floods, the unprecedented disaster resulted in four drowning deaths, caused more than 1,100 homes to be evacuated, created tens of millions of dollars in damage and forever changed emergency planning in the City of Austin.

Emergency responders and everyday people performed countless acts of heroism and self-sacrifice that are largely unrecorded and unknown to the community, but will never be forgotten by those people they helped.

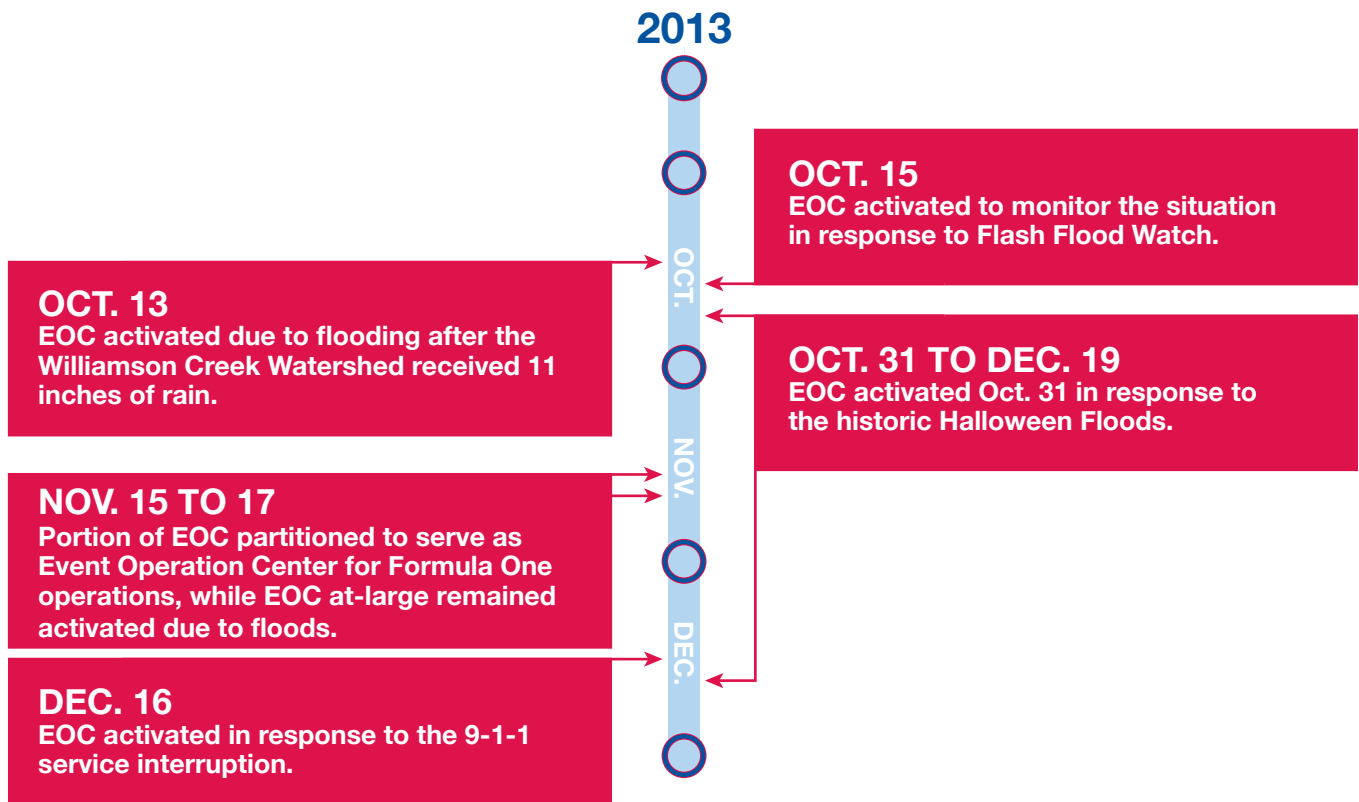
For many of the residents and families impacted, the recovery continues.



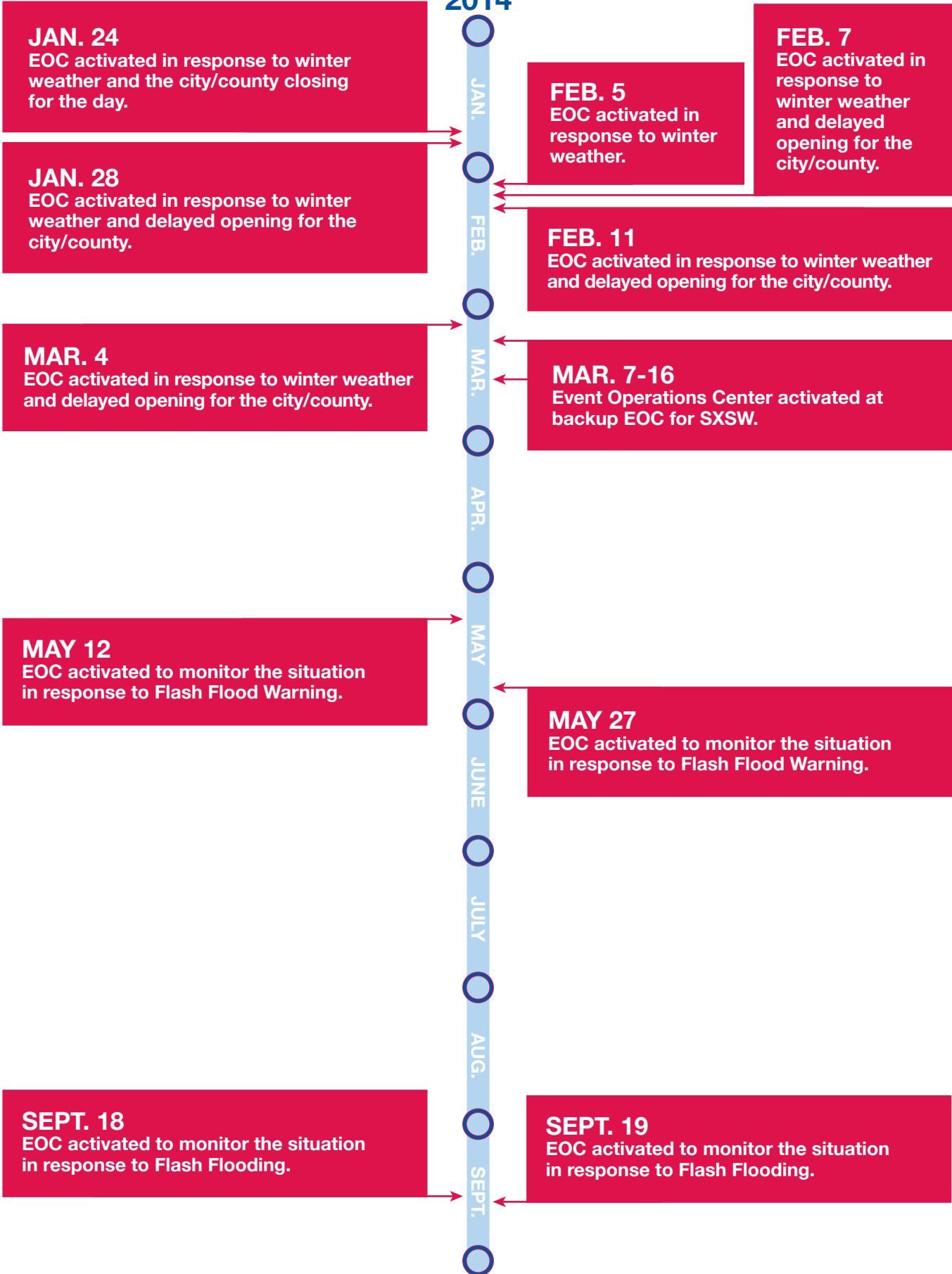


FY2014 ACTIVATION TIMELINE

The Austin/Travis County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activated 16 times in Fiscal 2014, resulting in more than 60 days of operation on top of auxiliary operation for major special events.

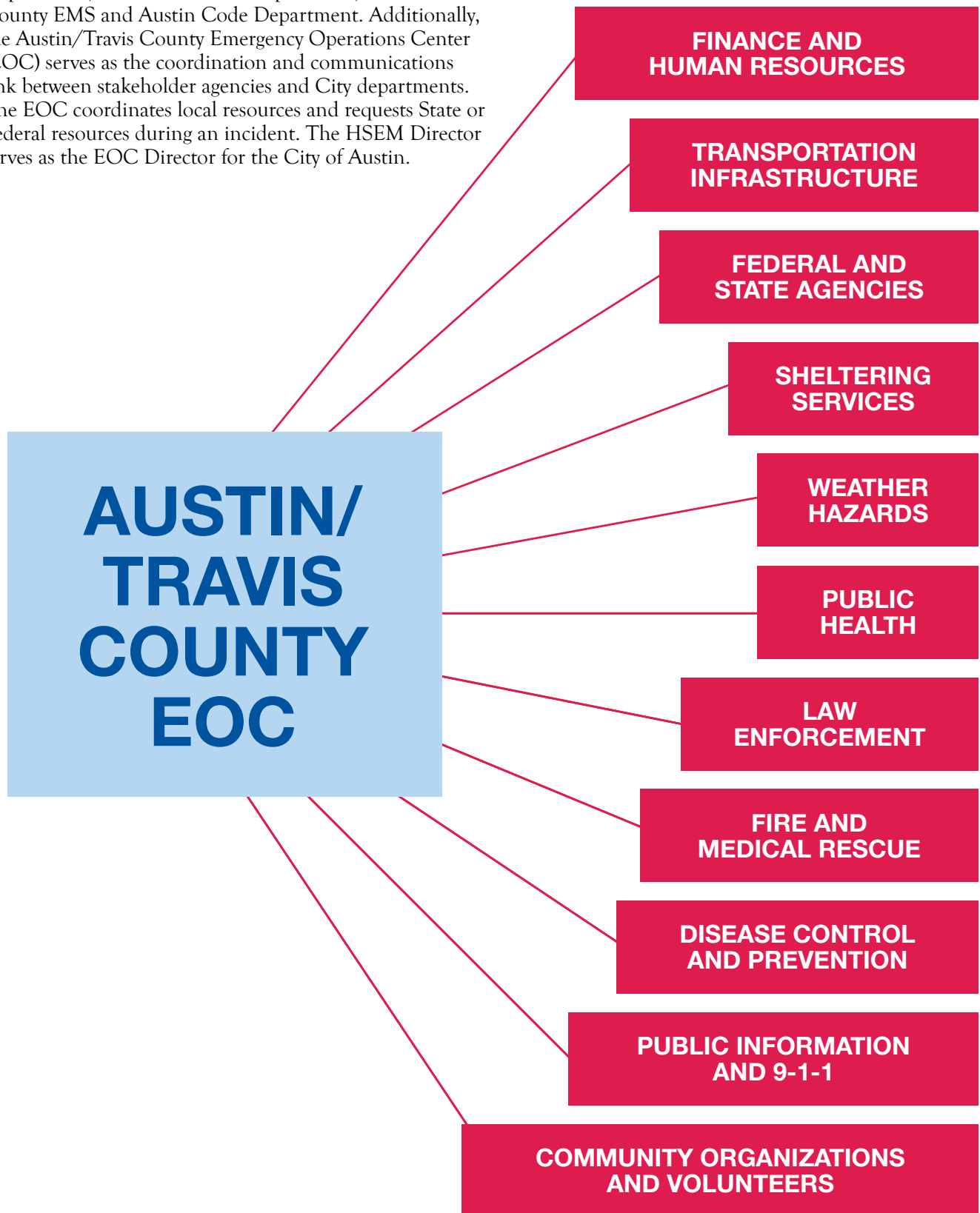


2014



PUBLIC SAFETY PARTNERS

The Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) is a member of the City of Austin's public safety service group, along with the Austin Fire Department, the Austin Police Department, Austin-Travis County EMS and Austin Code Department. Additionally, the Austin/Travis County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) serves as the coordination and communications link between stakeholder agencies and City departments. The EOC coordinates local resources and requests State or Federal resources during an incident. The HSEM Director serves as the EOC Director for the City of Austin.



TRAINING AND EXERCISES

The Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) conducts, plans and takes part in a number of training activities and exercises each year with internal and external emergency responders. The types of exercises vary and can range from table-top discussions to full-scale, multi-jurisdictional exercises in response to a staged incident with volunteers role-playing victims.

FEMA'S EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE TRAINING

In March 2013, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) selected the City of Austin from a pool of applicant communities to attend a weeklong Integrated Emergency Management Course at FEMA's National Emergency Training Center in Maryland.

This opportunity provided a unique emergency management training opportunity, requiring HSEM to coordinate the logistics for more than 70 local participants and partners for training in January 2014. The delegation was led by City Manager Marc Ott and included key personnel from the City, Travis County, the State, the University of Texas, the American Red Cross, area hospitals and more.

AUSTIN-BERGSTROM EXERCISE

City of Austin first responders, HSEM, the Aviation Department and local partner agencies conducted a full-scale exercise in April 2014 for a plane crash at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. The exercise, evaluated by the Federal Aviation Administration, provided critical training and evaluation at a time when Austin is seeing unprecedented annual passenger traffic increases.



MAIN FACILITIES

The Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) is housed at a secured facility with restricted access called the Combined Transportation, Emergency & Communications Center (CTECC).

CTECC has been in service for more than a decade, and like many operational facilities that employ enhanced technological tools for public safety, CTECC requires constant re-investment to maintain operational excellence.

The three primary functions of CTECC (public safety dispatch, transportation management, and emergency management) are each operated independently, by the respective departments or agencies.

CTECC tenants and functions include:

9-1-1, call-taking and dispatch

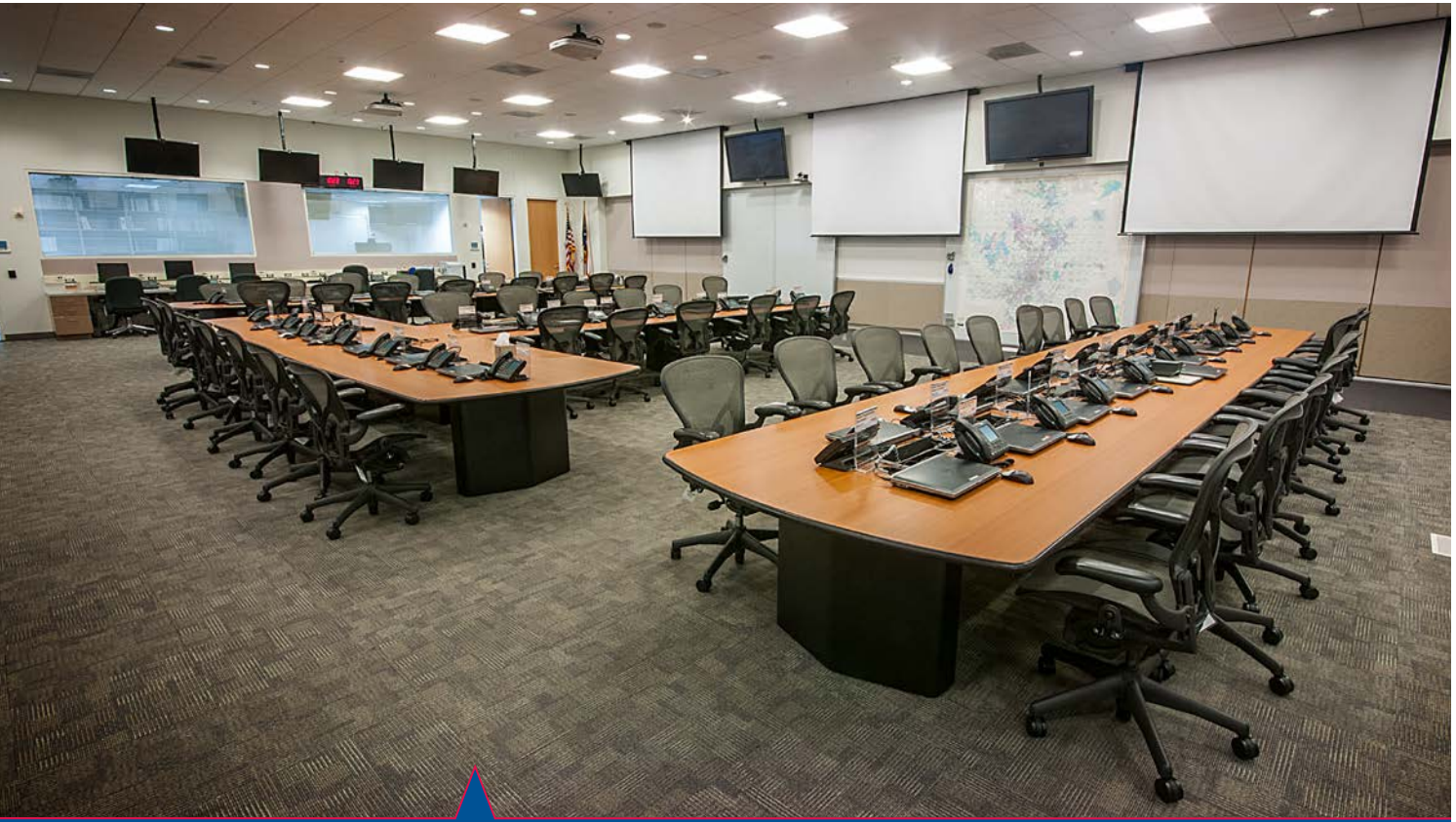
- Austin Fire Department
- Austin-Travis County EMS
- Austin Police Department
- Travis County Sheriff's Office

Transportation Management

- Capital Metro Fixed Route Operations
- Texas Department of Transportation Roadside Assistance
- Texas Department of Transportation Traffic Cameras

Austin/Travis County Emergency Operations Center

- HSEM
- Travis County Office of Emergency Management



AUSTIN/TRAVIS COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC)

During area-wide emergencies, the EOC serves as the command center for the City of Austin and Travis County response and recovery operations. A variety of communications tools and backup systems are installed in the EOC to aid in the receipt and release of vital information. The Watershed Protection Department's Flood Early Warning System (FEWS) also has a seat within the EOC to monitor weather conditions.

OTHER FACILITIES

In addition to maintaining the Austin/Travis County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) maintains alternate locations for joint operations for emergencies or large-scale events.

HSEM is responsible for operational mobilization and demobilization at the alternate locations. During mobilization, HSEM designs a command structure that strategically places the right people and agencies next to complementary resources, such as radio dispatchers, video monitoring and video communications.

A number of other technologies are included and maintained by HSEM for the City of Austin for a variety of operations:

AUSTIN WARNING AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM (AWACS) – System used to notify responding personnel to emergency activations and to send alerts to media.

WEBEOC – Interactive Web-based incident management software that plays a significant role in providing instantaneous information to all agencies.

VIDEO CONFERENCING (VIDYO) – System allowing regional emergency operation centers to video conference with each other and mobile command units.

GREATER AUSTIN/TRAVIS REGIONAL RADIO SYSTEM (GATRRS) – Interoperable radio communication system between most public safety agencies in Central Texas. Most City of Austin non-public safety agencies are also on the system.

REAL-TIME TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT TOOLS – Integrated camera feeds provide real-time intelligence to monitor situations and allocate street and bridge or emergency resources effectively.

REGIONAL NOTIFICATION SYSTEM (FIRSTCALL) – Utilized to push out public safety alerts to landline and cell phones, plus send emails and texts to residents who register.

TELECOMMUNICATION – Secure phone and computer stations, along with other technologies, to support special operations. HSEM coordinates the installation, transporting and maintaining of these systems.



COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS

The Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) continues to foster programs and partnerships to prepare individuals and their families for emergencies and disasters.

OUTREACH

HSEM staff members are active with internal and external stakeholders through training and presentations that educate on basic preparedness and inform about specific hazards, such as floods or wildfires.

In partnership with other City departments, HSEM sponsors workshops, visits school classrooms and attends community events.

HSEM strives to be inclusive of all communities in Austin and made significant progress in the past fiscal year to expand its partnership and offerings to reflect Austin's rich cultural diversity.

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT)

One of the primary outreach and education programs is the CERT program. CERT is a national program, administered in Austin by HSEM, to train residents to be prepared to respond to disaster for themselves, for loved ones and for their community. More than 400 community members are enrolled.

The CERT program remains a vibrant and active program more than a decade after it started. The program continues to build on its achievements, including being recognized in 2013 as an Individual and Community Preparedness Award recipient by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Training covers basic emergency preparedness, response capabilities, first aid, fire suppression and more. Upon graduation from an eight-week course, CERT volunteers receive equipment to aid in disasters or emergencies.

Once an individual completes the training, he/she can participate in monthly membership meetings that offer advanced training, volunteer opportunities for non-emergency projects and preparedness information.



Ready Freddie
Youth Preparedness Mascot

PLANNING

The Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) leads the creation and maintenance of more than 90 emergency plans and procedures, in concert with other departments and agencies. Chief among the plans is the Emergency Operations Plan “Basic Plan” for the City of Austin, updated and reviewed annually. Major revisions and recertification must be signed by the Mayor of the City of Austin.

The State of Texas also requires that key plans be revised and updated on a five-year schedule.

Additionally, HSEM coordinates production of After Action Reports examining the effectiveness of actions taken and procedures of every emergency activation, drill or exercise. After Action Reports include all pertinent City departments, in addition to County, State and Federal agencies and also private organizations that are involved in an incident.

HSEM provides assistance to other City departments and area stakeholders, when requested, on plan development and emergency management best practices. This includes, but is not limited to, public information specialist operations, regional radio configuration and continuity of operations planning.

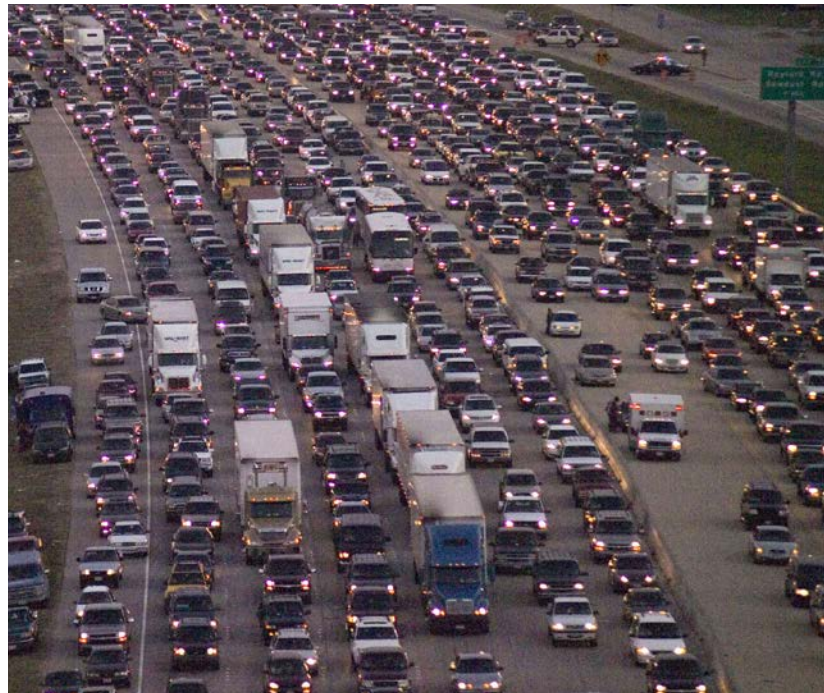
SHELTERING

The City of Austin continues to serve as a key partner in a regional system called the “Capital Area Shelter Hub” to shelter hurricane evacuees from the Gulf Coast. During major hurricanes, evacuees flee inland. HSEM maintains a carefully rehearsed system to get these evacuees to shelters located in high schools and middle schools in Travis, Williamson and Hays counties.

In extreme conditions, the region can house as many as 25,000 coastal evacuees in 75 shelters, 30 percent of which would be in the City of Austin.

Additionally, HSEM maintains an agreement to accept evacuees from the City of Galveston and Galveston County who do not have their own transportation.

It is inevitable that the City will be called upon to host coastal evacuees. Hurricane season in the Atlantic begins June 1 and ends Nov. 30.



GRANTS

The Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) manages critical grants on behalf of the City of Austin. HSEM coordinates grant and critical infrastructure programs with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the State of Texas Administrative Agency, the Capital Area Planning Council of Governments and regional partners.

HSEM works with regional and statewide partners to assess risk, and it annually assesses planning, response and recovery capability gaps to identify funding priorities. Additionally, HSEM oversees grant application submissions, manages awarded funds and ensures expenditures meet audit requirements. HSEM also oversees the federally mandated audit of the City's Homeland Security grant-funded equipment inventory, which consists of thousands of items spread throughout the city.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) PUBLIC ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM

Under the Public Assistance Program, FEMA provides supplemental aid to communities and states to aid recovery efforts after a declared disaster. The program provides funds to reimburse for debris removal, emergency protective measures and permanent restoration of infrastructure. The program is separate from residential-related FEMA programs, such as floodplain buyouts.

Following the 2013 Halloween Floods—when waters rose to an unprecedented level—HSEM has managed the City's participation in the Public Assistance Program. HSEM's finance team has allocated more than 2,500 work hours, managing about 40 projects for infrastructure, emergency protective measures and debris removal submitted for federal reimbursement through the program.



LOOKING AHEAD

Planning & Grants
Building On Success
Horizon Issues
Maintaining Capabilities
Special Events Impact

LOOKING AHEAD: PLANNING & GRANTS

The growing international status of the City of Austin, along with evolving policy local, state and federal directives requires the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) to adapt to an increasing administrative workload during non-emergency periods but with limited resources and shrinking grant funds.

During the past fiscal year, HSEM undertook a series of long-term projects, which will continue to take a toll on staff resources. Key major initiatives include:

- Work with the federal and state government, along with nearly all City departments, on financial reimbursement, progress reports and audits for the Halloween Floods or other disasters
- Manage the Halloween Floods After Action Reports and Corrective Action Plans, which are the most comprehensive in recent memory
- Partner with the Office of Sustainability to assess the impacts of climate change, including risks of more frequent natural disasters
- Manage the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and Critical Infrastructure programs to enable the Central Texas community to understand its vulnerabilities and estimate capability requirements
- Maintain up to 90 policies and procedures to exhibit best practices and full accreditation designation status in the national Emergency Management Accreditation Program
- Continue public awareness partnership with local government to build resident enrollment in FirstCall, an enhanced regional notification system
- Develop solutions and programs to engage residents with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs, such as non-English speaking populations



LOOKING AHEAD: BUILDING ON SUCCESS

The expanded scope of the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management's (HSEM) operations creates new challenges. From those challenges, opportunities to improve emerged. Through a combination of progressive thinking, technical innovations and collaborative planning, HSEM is helping its partners receive situational awareness like never before.

HSEM has taken tremendous strides to enhance the Four Cs of emergency management—coordination, collaboration, cooperation and communication—among public safety agencies regionwide.

HSEM has joined with Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG) to adopt cross-agency, Web-based tools to share information and notifications. HSEM has conducted immersive training to create redundant “super-users” to make the most of the technological offerings and provide applied-education workshops to internal and external partners.



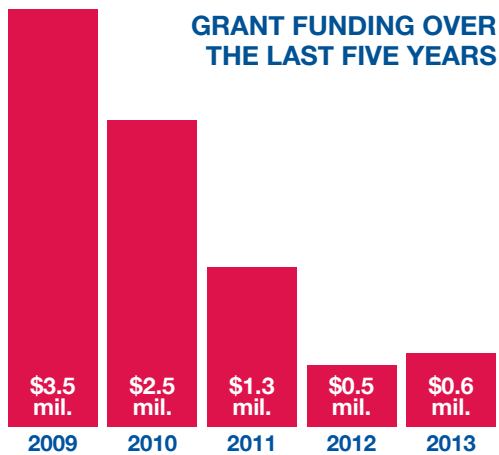
HSEM continues to expand and reinforce the use of WebEOC to allow for information sharing across departments during incidents and events. This tool was used to great effect during the past fiscal year for Austin/Travis County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activations, Presidential visits and joint public safety operations, such as Formula One.

HSEM has also supported the adoption of FirstCall, an enhanced regional notification system available to users throughout the CAPCOG region to alert response personnel or the public to emergency and non-emergency situations. HSEM is partnering with agencies to not only implement FirstCall within the City, but also create public awareness across the region for residents to enroll in the database to accept voice, email or text message emergency notifications.

LOOKING AHEAD: HORIZON ISSUES

Following the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, policy makers and the emergency management community shifted efforts substantially to preventing disasters and emergencies. In the decade following, a broader awareness materialized to shift away from prevention and toward anticipating, absorbing and recovering from an event in a timely and efficient manner.

Separately, Central Texas has seen a dramatic decrease in federal homeland security grant funds flowing to the local level for equipment, training and staff acquisition. This translates into pressure across the public safety spectrum.



The Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) is increasingly being requested to help remedy this shortfall by researching and pursuing grant funding opportunities on behalf of the City, and in some cases the region, for non-homeland security grants. HSEM does not have the resources to participate in coordinated research of other non-homeland security grants that could be used for infrastructure resistant to natural disasters.

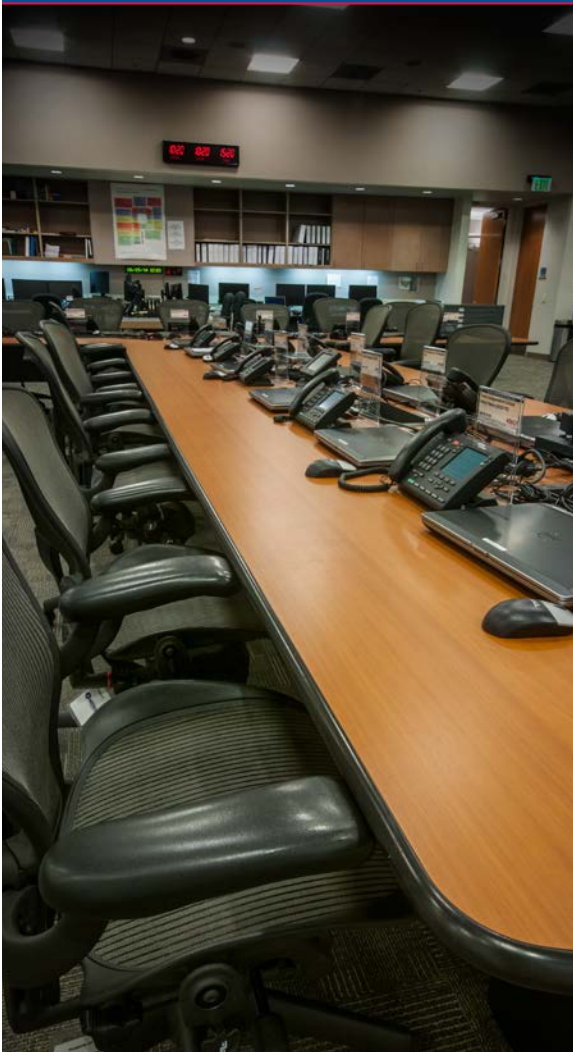
Further, HSEM is also impacted by reduced grant funding. For years, federal grant funds have provided critical employees to maintain baseline operations and maintain equipment. This is coinciding with a time when the demands placed on HSEM are more robust than ever.

LOOKING AHEAD: MAINTAINING CAPABILITIES

Although the Austin/Travis County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) looks like a modern facility, the existing information technology systems do not support disaster response activities effectively.

The Combined Transportation, Emergency & Communications Center, which houses the EOC, began operating in 2003, but started construction in 2001 – when “flip phones” were cutting-edge.

Due to rapid technology advances of the past decade, the EOC is struggling to maintain operational reliability amid huge streams of data required for modern operations. Much of the hardware that enables data mobility and visualization are now at end-of-life and/or end-of-service.



In many cases, manufacturers of systems installed in the EOC infrastructure no longer provide maintenance, troubleshooting or other support. As a result, spare components must be specially purchased, at the expense of cost and time, and technical assistance does not meet best practice standards.

HSEM continues to work in partnership with the CTECC Operating Board to evaluate reinvestment opportunities for modernizing the EOC. The Austin City Council has also allocated funds in the 2015 Budget to assist in the modernization of the EOC.

LOOKING AHEAD: SPECIAL EVENTS IMPACT

Like a coastal city's emergency management staff that annually mobilizes for hurricane season, the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) is annually mobilizing for major, international special events.

When added to the demands created by spontaneous natural disasters and other emergencies, atop core organizational and program functions, special events are pushing HSEM to its limits.



For the second year in a row, HSEM successfully established and managed the incident command structure for the Formula One race in November 2013.

At the direction of the Deputy City Manager, HSEM also developed an Incident Command System (ICS) structure for the 2014 South by Southwest festival and mobilized one of the backup Emergency Operations Centers to serve as the Event Operations Center (EvOC). The EvOC served as the command post for all public safety, code enforcement and transportation issues associated with the event.

HSEM's effort to set up and manage the EvOC was credited by its public safety partners with enabling the exemplary response to the mass casualty event, which occurred shortly after midnight on March 12, 2014. This tragic event, resulting in four fatalities and 21 injuries, likely cemented the expectation for HSEM to establish an ICS structure for future events.

From an emergency management perspective, HSEM's coordinating and staffing operations for these major events—regardless if there are public safety emergencies or declared disasters during the events—is as taxing on its staffing and financial resources as a natural disaster.

HSEM Directory

Emergency Management and Community Preparedness

Otis J. Latin, Sr. | HSEM Director

Scott Swearingin | HSEM Assistant Director

Executive Assistant

Mary Ann Ramirez | Executive Assistant

Disaster Recovery

Sean Shepard | Disaster Recovery Officer

Emergency Management Programs

Scott Hawkins | Chief Emergency Plans Officer

Billy Atkins | Senior Emergency Plans Officer

Bill Wilson | Senior Emergency Plans Officer

Donny Cummings | Emergency Plans Officer

Tanner Hunt | Emergency Plans Officer

Community Preparedness Programs

Jacob Dirr | Public Information and Marketing Manager

Angel Flores | Public Information Specialist

Sonia Goodman | Community Preparedness Program Coordinator

Administration and Finance Programs

Aoife Longmore | Administration, Finance, and Risk Manager

Rudy Rodriguez | Financial Specialist

Bing Chen | Account Associate



austinhsem.com
[@austinhsem](https://twitter.com/austinhsem)



The Emergency Management Program of the City of Austin, Texas has met the national emergency standards and is accredited by the Emergency Management Accreditation Program.

April 2012-2017