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Floyd (Dennis, Irene...)

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INTERNET-ROUTED INFORMATION SYSTEM PLAYS A KEY ROLE DURING FLOYD

During the response phase of Hurricane Floyd from Sept. 12 to Oct. 4, the database program with web browser interface, known to most of us as the Internet-Routed Information System (IRIS), was used with great success to track messages and requests.

The Internet connection and the systems computer at the S.C. Emergency Preparedness Division worked without interruption and greatly aided the process of passing information and documenting requests for assistance.

Two-hundred-and-seventy-six requests for assistance were documented in IRIS and processed by the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) Operations Tasking Group (OTG). Although some of the requests were precautionary pre-landfall and therefore were placed on hold, many others were tasked out to state agencies and emergency support functions (ESFs) within the SEOC. Each request was closely monitored and follow-up documentation was made to IRIS, which helped preclude something falling through the cracks during the disaster response.

Several requests were entered into IRIS by authorized users at the Horry County EOC, as was the intent of the IRIS design. This data entry was especially helpful for Horry County during the early stages of its flood fight. By entering requests with complete and detailed information at the local level, time was saved and accuracy was maximized. The county user did not have to wait for a phone call to the county desk at the SEOC, and the user did not have to waste time explaining and spelling information to the county desk person.

Also during response to Hurricane Floyd and its effects, IRIS messages detailing situation development were used extensively. Eight-hundred-and-sixteen messages were entered into IRIS from dozens of different users and sites to help relay information

on many subjects, from the status of the evacuation to the location of road blocks caused by storm debris.

Among those 816 messages were:

- Communications from eight county emergency operations centers (Horry, Beaufort, Charleston, Dorchester, Berkeley, Lexington, Florence and York),
- Six state-level sites outside of the SEOC (two Highway Patrol district dispatch centers, the SCEPD Public Information Phone System center, one veterinarian services coordination center, one SLED forward command post and one National Guard EOC),
- More than 60 users at 25 different sites within the SEOC entered information and updates on activity in their areas of responsibility.



All of this information was available to any authorized IRIS user. Many users accessed IRIS to read messages without even needing to enter information.

Overall, the system was praised by the SEOC staff and county personnel for its utility and reliability. Many commented on the IRIS advantage that eliminated the need for time-consuming phone calls to the SEOC for information exchange and requests.

Additional enhancements to the IRIS program are under way. A recently upgraded version of IRIS is soon to be posted on the SCEPD server. Its upgrades and the original system were developed by the University of South Carolina's Advanced Solutions Group and donated to the State of South Carolina. ★

By Tim Murphy
SCEPD Response Manager