



THE BEACON

a moving force in emergency management

May 2025
Issue

WELCOME BACK!

Welcome to the newest edition of the EMAG Beacon! I'm very proud of the return of our newsletter and hope that you find it as a beneficial resource to keep up with the activities of our Association and the Executive Committee. For this initiative to be a success, we depend on you to share items of interest from your areas. You may send newsletter contributions to your Area Chair and/or our Chaplain Scott Cagle, who is managing this project, for review and inclusion in an upcoming edition. I'm looking forward to learning more about the events, trainings, and incidents happening within Emergency Management across our State.

I want to thank you all for your commitment and dedicated service to your respective agencies and EMAG. I look forward to working with you and the accomplishments that we will make together moving Emergency Management forward in Georgia!

Our Spring Conference was a great success following many planning and logistical challenges continuing through the weekend leading up to conference week. I want to thank our Conference Committee and the Board of Directors for their hard work on this project. I also want to express my appreciation for our members and attendee's for keeping an open mind and giving the new venue a chance, this was shown by the number of registrations and attendance during the week. This year marked the first time the EMAG Spring Conference has been held in Jekyll Island. I have heard a lot of positive feedback about the location and conference format. I'm thankful to report that working with the Jekyll Convention Center was also a good experience and feel that we were warmly welcomed to their facility in addition to Jekyll Island and the surrounding communities. The conference committee and the convention center has both taken notes to enhance the conference experience next year.

This year has been very active from the beginning with the challenges of Federal administrative realignments taking place. Our Association, in addition to a number of other organizations nationwide, are experiencing delays with funding and in some cases there are reductions of funding or cancellation of programs, as of this Beacon edition this continues to be a complex situation of unknowns. I'm proud of the work our newly appointed Legislative Chair, Mr. James Westbrook, is doing for our Association and Emergency Management professionals across the State. Mr. Westbrook has shown a dedicated effort providing updates on legislation and representing our interests. The EMAG Board of Directors have placed a priority on legislative advocacy and will continue to advocate on our members behalf. The EMAG Board of Directors and Executive Committee conducted meetings on February 25th and May 7th. Additionally, the Board of Directors has a meeting planned with GEMA/HS Leadership on May 21st to discuss items of interest raised in the recent Executive Committee meeting.

There are a number of challenges currently, however, it is during such time that opportunities exist to improve or enhance and together we will keep moving forward!

In humble service,

Stephen Dooley, President



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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- WSB/NWS personalities answer a few questions...
- Be on the look out for member spotlights!
- Remember to save the dates pg.7

2025 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT/ TRAINING SUMMIT A SUCCESS!



This years emergency management summit and training sessions were a complete success! If you were wondering, here are the numbers from the Jekyll Convention Center.

- 649 total registrations
- 592 total attendees with 110 of those being exhibitor staff.
- 49 exhibit booths

“I have been going to these conferences for over 10 years and this is the best one we've ever had.” ~Attendee

WHAT THE PROS ARE SAYING...



Brad Nitz
Chief Meteorologist
WSBTv

Why did you become a meteorologist?

My interest in weather began as a surfer growing up in Florida. Ultimately, I became a meteorologist because it combined my love of weather, the challenge of forecasting, and the importance of delivering valuable weather information.

What is your most memorable weather moment? (Can be as a meteorologist or before you got into the field)

Several tornado outbreaks come to mind. This is when the job is most important and gratifying.

What would you say to anyone wanting to get into the meteorology field?

Be constantly learning. No matter how much you know, there is always more to learn. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Stay on top of technological advancements.

In weathercasting, what has been the biggest change over the last 10 years?

Media has been changing rapidly. Although there are now many sources for weather information, our ability to reach viewers is greater than ever. The need for trusted sources of information is also greater than ever.

Why did you become a meteorologist?

In a very short simple sentence -- the fascination behind something that is extremely challenging to predict. I've always been intrigued by weather living in the Northeast (New York) the first 6 years of my life, then I started reading historical books about extreme weather phenomena (i.e. the Blizzard of 1888) or the Galveston Hurricane of 1900 and watching The Weather Channel religiously when it first started in the early to mid 80s. That fascination and interest grew into passion and excitement and I guess, the rest is history...

What is your most memorable weather moment? (Can be as a meteorologist or before you got into the field)

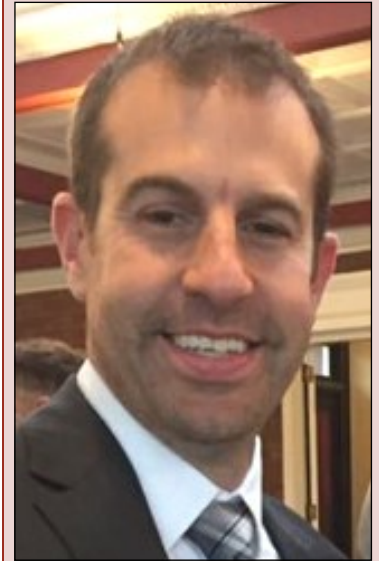
So many, but probably the 2011 Super Tornado Outbreak when I was working at the NWS office in Huntsville, Alabama. The memories are not all good but they are some of the most engrained memories I have...ever!

What would you say to anyone wanting to get into the meteorology field?

Have thick-skin!!

In weathercasting, what has been the biggest change over the last 10 years?

The way we message weather threats/risks and impacts to people (partners and the general public). We've come a long way since the early 2010s.



Dave Nadler
Meteorologist
NWS

WHY ARE EMERGENCY MANAGERS SO IMPORTANT?

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING...

“The work of emergency managers is so crucial to our local communities. I appreciate our partnership serving our neighbors. Reports and information from an emergency manager are often the first reliable “ground truth” I get in a weather emergency. I know it’s trustworthy and helps me communicate weather threats to my viewers with more accuracy and urgency. Thank you!”
~ Brad Nitz, WSBTV

“Emergency Management is one of those often “thankless” jobs and I feel such a close connection to the EM community, who often come from public safety (i.e. police/fire/EMT backgrounds), because of the passion and determination they have to do whatever it takes to protect people and save lives. Heroic efforts that often go unnoticed, working 24/7 at times to meet the needs of the communities in which they live. Connecting with people on so many different levels and always problem-solving and/or multitasking ways to determine the best course of action in often very tense/stressful situations. Truly wonderful people.”

~ Dave Nadler, NOAA

LEGISLATIVE RE-CAP

This year's session of the Georgia General Assembly proved to be a busy one in the wake of several major emergency incidents across the state. Hurricane Helene and the Apalachee High School shooting led to many bills focused on school safety and resilience being placed in the hopper. There were two major bills and one other bill that passed both houses of the Georgia General Assembly that pertains to emergency management. The first one is House Bill 423, which expands the responsibilities of GECA and provides support for the move to NextGen 911 capabilities in Georgia. The second bill is House Bill 268, which is a major school safety measure focused on improving emergency alert systems and threat assessment of potential student issues in schools. The bill has a significant focus on the mental health side of school safety, as well. Both of these bills have been signed by the Governor. The last bill, which has not been signed by the Governor yet, is Senate Bill 96. This bill updated a bunch of board membership rules. This bill dissolves the Homeland Security Council, which has had a very difficult time gaining a quorum in the last few years for any meetings.

There were also other bills of interest that came up during the session and were eventually defeated. One involved the banning of Chinese-made drone purchases for public agencies. This bill was extremely problematic for a large swath of public agencies that utilize drones in Georgia, including several emergency management agencies with extensive drone programs. There was a great response from the EMAG membership to take steps to defeat this bill, including having several members testify during a Senate Committee hearing on this bill. Another bill that was defeated was one that would have created an Office of Resilience within GEMA with a similar structure to GECA. This office would have been focused on recovery and mitigation and was a reaction to some of the issues exhibited during the Hurricane Helene response and recovery efforts. Good conversations were had with this bill's author and it is expected that other less drastic resilience-related bills will be in the hopper in the coming session.



If there is anything you want me to address more clearly, please let me know.

~ James Westbrook, Legislative Chair

STRATEGIC PLAN

We are excited to announce the EMAG strategic plan for 2025. A few of the topics covered within the plan are **advocacy, EMAT/training, membership, internal/external communication, and member participation** within the association. To view the entire strategic plan be sure to look at the appendix, which is being sent as a separate attachment with this edition of The Beacon newsletter!



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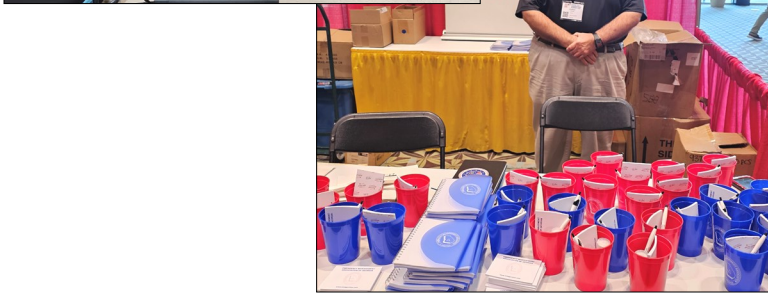
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Summit Pics



Happy Retirement!

William Wright began his public safety career in 1987 and also served EMAG for many years on the executive team. William retired as Barrow County's 911 Director on May 5, 2025.

Thank you for your service Sir! We hope you enjoy your well deserved retirement!



EMAG

The Emergency Management Association of Georgia (EMAG) is an association of professionals serving its members by promoting professional development, providing networking opportunities, and serving as an advocate for the profession of Emergency Management.

EMAG has three primary goals:

To assist members in their efforts to save lives and protect property from the effects of disasters.

To provide a forum for professionals to discuss current issues in the emergency management field.

To serve as a policy advisory board to local emergency management agencies as well as to the Georgia Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security.

RESOURCES

(CLICK ON LOGOS)



FEMA



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AROUND THE STATE

Georgia School Safety/Homeland Security Conference—June 16-18, 2025

Georgia Fire Safety Symposium—June 23-27, 2025

Georgia Assoc. Chiefs of Police Fall Training—September 15-18, 2025

Georgia Fire Service Conference—September 30 - October 04, 2025

Georgia EMS Association Conference—October 13-16, 2025

Georgia Sheriffs' Fall Training—October 20-22, 2025

EMAG Annual Business & Training Meeting—November 17-19, 2025

SAVE THE DATE

Emergency Management & Training Summit
March 31 - April 3, 2026
Jekyll Island Convention Center