

Emergency planning a collaborative effort

BY SARAH BZDEGA, STAFF WRITER

Although a near-miss by a tornado is as close as EFCO Corp. has come to a major disaster, the company's good fortune hasn't kept it from preparing for emergencies.

EFCO has been a part of Iowa Contingency

Planners, an organization that provides **emergency planning** and disaster recovery educational and networking opportunities, since its formation in the early 1990s, and the company is in the process of updating its emergency plans.

"People here have had the attitude that says nothing is ever going to happen to us in the Midwest," said Joe Solem, legacy systems manager for EFCO and secretary of Iowa Contingency Planners. "One of these days, that's going to catch up to us."

In addition to dedicating more time and resources to disaster planning, EFCO is one of a growing number of Central Iowa companies that are joining emergency management organizations. In recent years, these groups have focused on collaborating with the public sector, and a new group, called Safeguard Iowa Partnership, is forming this year to work directly on this effort.

A.J. Mumm, director of emergency management for Polk County, believes businesses became proactive about putting some emergency processes in place after witnessing disasters such as the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. More recently, these businesses also have seen a greater need to collaborate with government agencies to ensure a smoother recovery during emergency.

"The biggest thing we're finding out," Mumm said, "is that when a disaster strikes, businesses that are able to reopen sooner help the overall community recover sooner."

He added, "When the private sector owns and operates over 90 percent of the critical infrastructure we depend on, the private sector needs to be at the table with us."



As members of Iowa Contingency Planners, Joe Solem (left) and Thomas Banse have been meeting with A.J. Mumm, director of emergency management for Polk County, once a month to discuss the county's emergency plans. A new group, Safeguard Iowa Partnership, is forming this year.

Photo by Duane Tinkey

Fast growth

As more businesses recognize their need for disaster planning, emergency management groups have received renewed interest.

Last year, Iowa Contingency Planners' membership grew by about 17 percent to 105 members, who represent 49 companies and six government agencies. Metro Emergency Planners, composed of Greater Des Moines businesses, nearly dwindled away after Bob Goldhammer retired as Polk County's emergency management director, but has rebounded to about 70 members.

Iowa Contingency Planners' mission is to learn about and discuss certain issues businesses are facing, during quarterly meetings and an annual conference. With each member paying \$100 in annual dues, Solem said the increase in membership has allowed the organization to bring in better speakers, such as Regina Phelps, an expert on pandemic planning.

"The benefit is that you're able to intermingle with peers and to keep up to date on current movements," said Tom Banse, chairman of the organization's board of directors and assistant director of business continuity planning at Principal Financial Group Inc.

This year, Iowa Contingency Planners' theme is "Making the Connection - Partnering for Performance," which signifies its efforts to strengthen ties with government agencies. One of its major initiatives is working with Polk County emergency management officials to update the county's emergency plans, along with the Metro Emergency Planners.

Although Polk County continually revises its plans, this is one of the first times it has worked closely with the private sector, Mumm said. However, this interaction with businesses beforehand could dispel misunderstandings about what each side will do during a disaster, he said.

"We have policies and procedures in place," said Jeff McClaran, an emergency manager with Wells Fargo & Co. and chairman of the Metro Emergency Planners. "It's important for us to make sure what we have in place is going to work well with the public responders."

Metro Emergency Planners also meets quarterly to discuss different issues, which are then worked on by various committees. The organization started just after the floods of 1993 and initially was composed of downtown businesses, but now its membership has expanded to encompass all of Greater Des Moines. Many of Iowa Contingency Planners' members belong to the organization.

One of its main objectives in working with Polk County is to develop evacuation plans to avoid situations such as traffic jams if businesses let employees leave early because of bad weather.

New organization

A new group hopes to carry these initial collaborative efforts further by focusing specifically on building strong relationships between public and private emergency planners.

Already, the Safeguard Iowa Partnership has had a strong, positive response, said Elliot Smith, executive director of the Iowa Business Council.

"As I understand it, there's been a void in getting key players from both sides together to interact and determine how procedures should be set up effectively when the time comes," Smith said. "We've had a few initial meetings with business security and disaster response experts on both sides, and the reaction has been almost overwhelming from them in terms of how much this sort of collaboration has been needed."

SIP has about 30 to 40 members from the Business Council and government agencies, but the group will formally introduce itself to the community at a Jan. 29 press conference.

Already, though, the group's members have identified some initiatives it may work on. Those include establishing an Iowa business resource registry to inventory the assets companies and state government groups have available during a crisis. It also would like to formalize representation of businesses in state emergency operations, develop better communication between the state and businesses and work on "tabletop exercises," where businesses and government entities are given a situation and together work to develop a course of action.

Coordinated response

The group began when former Gov. Tom Vilsack met retired Air Force Gen. Charles Boyd, CEO of Business Executives for National Security, at a conference. BENS often establishes partnerships in urban areas; Smith said this is one of its first statewide programs.

The partnership is a joint effort by the Iowa Business Council and BENS. The Business Council will cover Safeguard Iowa Partnership's personnel costs up to two years, or until the organization is able to support itself. BENS is handling training and similar tasks.

Smith expects the new organization will work closely with other emergency planning groups. "We're not out to reinvent the wheel here or take the place of any existing organization," he said. "It's truly an effort to fill holes described to us by people who are experts in the area.

"It's bringing a lot of groups together and developing a coordinated and effective response at all levels."

Although larger companies, such as Principal and Wells Fargo, are leading emergency planning efforts, many smaller companies are starting to jump on board, too.

"For the past couple of decades," Mumm said, "some businesses have been able to dedicate staff and time to a specific area of continuity planning, where other small businesses can't afford to dedicate the time and personnel to do that."

However, he added, larger companies are encouraging smaller businesses that provide them with supplies and services to have emergency plans that will assure bigger companies that those resources will be there after a disaster.

Mumm said the county has tried to make the process easier by providing some basic models of emergency plans for businesses to follow.

Solem of EFCO believes it is important for every company to have some kind of emergency plan.

"We want to make sure in case of a disaster that we're able to be in business tomorrow," he said. Statistically, "the majority of companies that do not have a plan after a substantial disaster, within a couple of years are out of business."

Radio Iowa News - Des Moines, IA, USA

Large companies make agreement with state on disaster plan

By O.Kay Henderson

Iowa's 20 largest companies have inked an agreement with state officials and a national group that draws up disaster-preparedness plans. Max Phillips, the president of Qwest's Iowa operations, is also president of the Iowa Business Council which represents Iowa's largest employers. Phillips says the job of a business leader has changed significantly during the past few years.

"Today, much time and many resources are devoted to making sure the operations of the business -- its products or services and its employees -- are safe," Phillips says. "These are lessons that floods and tornadoes and terrorists have taught us and such preparations are vital. Preparations in isolation are weak." The non-profit "**Business Executives for National Security**" is headed by retired General Charles Boyd, who happens to be a native of Rockwell City, Iowa. The "Safeguard Iowa" project will be similar to efforts in Kansas City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Georgia and Massachusetts and Boyd says he's extremely optimistic about Iowa joining that list.

"I believe this state is a critical state in the overall security of the nation -- the protection of your food supply here," Boyd says. "...The whole concept of agroterrorism is one that bothers me greatly as it does I think everyone who seriously thinks about homeland security."

Iowa Lieutenant Governor Patty Judge says it's all about being prepared for natural or man-made disasters.

"These businesses in the partnership will help the state by sharing their expertise and giving us resources and capabilities to manage disasters that may occur," Judge says. The security chiefs at Rockwell Collins in Cedar Rapids and Principal Financial in Des Moines will lead the initiative.

Former Governor Tom Vilsack set the ball rolling about a year ago. He says the private sector has an important role to play in security issues. "Iowans have to understand that there's a lot going on in our state that requires us to be very vigilant," Vilsack says. "...We have some of the largest financial institutions in not just the nation but in the world headquartered and located in our state... We have a significant role to play in providing not just the food supply for our nation but for the world."

State officials say they are working through concerns from business leaders worried about sharing proprietary information and keeping it confidential.

Iowa firms launch disaster response team

DES MOINES, Iowa

Some of Iowa's largest businesses have formed an organization to help the state prevent and recover from catastrophic events.

The Safeguard Iowa Partnership is a voluntary coalition intended to integrate resources from businesses and government agencies during all phases of disaster management.

"We've needed this kind of partnership," said Lt. Gov. Patty Judge, noting that Iowa's business community has resources beyond what the state could provide during a crisis.

First-year efforts will focus on improving communication during crises, cataloging business resources and expertise that could be used during a disaster, and exercising capabilities between business and agency partners.

The Iowa Business Council will provide initial sponsorship.

"By working across industry sectors, and with our government partners, we can help protect Iowa's future, its economy, and the quality of life Iowans enjoy," said Iowa Business Council Chairman Max Phillips, president of Qwest Iowa.

The Iowa Business Council teamed up with several state agencies and the nonprofit Business Executives for National Security, a national nonprofit organization, which has helped organize similar partnerships in New Jersey, Georgia, Massachusetts, California and Missouri.

Founding business partners include Alliant Energy Corp., Deere & Co., Hy-Vee Inc., Iowa Health System, MidAmerican Energy Co., Pella Corp., Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc., Principal Financial Group Inc., Rockwell Collins Inc., Ruan Transportation Management Systems, Vermeer Manufacturing Co., Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa

The three state-run universities and the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics also are partners.

Public agencies supporting the partnership include the Iowa Department of Public Defense, Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the Iowa Department of Public Health, the Iowa Department of Public Safety, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

An executive director for the Safeguard Iowa Partnership is expected to be named in February.

<http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D8MVMSPG1.htm>

Iowa businesses launch partnership to help recover from disaster

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January 30, 2007

DesMoinesRegister.com

Leaders team for disaster readiness: Iowa government, businesses officials to work with security group

By *DONNELLE ELLER, REGISTER BUSINESS WRITER*

State government and business leaders said Monday they will cooperate better to help Iowa prevent, respond and recover from disaster - whether its floods, tornadoes or terrorists.

The Iowa Business Council, state leaders and a national security group called Business Executives for National Security announced at the state Capitol Monday a new partnership called Safeguard Iowa. The initiative is designed to coordinate state and business resources and plans to respond to catastrophe.

Max Phillips, president of Qwest Iowa, said business and government "share a commitment" to protect the state, its residents and assets. "If we work in isolation, we're guaranteed a weak response," said Phillips, chairman of the Iowa Business Council, a group of 20 of Iowa's largest employers.

The council will provide \$250,000 over two years to support the partnership. The businesses on the council employ about 180,000 Iowans and have about \$25 billion in capital - offices, factories and equipment - invested in the state.

Phillips said the council became involved after former Gov. Tom Vilsack asked if Iowa was doing enough to prepare for and prevent a disaster.

Vilsack recommended the council meet with the nonprofit national security group to discuss whether improvements could be made.

"Business has an integral and important role," said Vilsack, who appeared at the news conference with the business group, Lt. Gov. Patty Judge and other state leaders. "It can't just rely on government."

Vilsack said he saw firsthand in hurricane-ravaged New Orleans what happens "when you don't get it right. ... The pain and suffering is much greater than it needs to be."

Retired Gen. Charles Boyd, chief executive of the Washington, D.C., security group, said Iowa is key to the nation's defense - from its food supplies to financial institutions. Better coordination of private and public responses and resources helps to better protect the nation, Boyd said.

Phillips said some businesses - such as his telecommunications company - have had a role in local and state emergency response plans. But, he said, the response needs to be broader, from transportation to financial services.

For example, he said, during the floods of 1993, Qwest relied on truckers from an Atlantic farmers' cooperative to keep diesel flowing to the company. It needed the Des Moines Fire Department to pump water to cool equipment that otherwise would have melted. "It shows how important coordination is," Phillips said.

January, 30, 2007



Iowa businesses launch partnership to help recover from disaster

DES MOINES, Iowa - Some of Iowa's largest businesses have formed a group to help the state prevent and recover from catastrophic events.

The voluntary coalition is called the Safeguard Iowa Partnership. It includes several businesses and government agencies.

Lieutenant Governor Patty Judge says the partnership is needed. She says Iowa's business community has resources beyond what the state could provide during a crisis.

First-year efforts will focus on improving communication during crises and cataloging how both sides can help each other.

The Iowa Business Council will provide initial sponsorship. An executive director for the partnership is expected to be named in February.

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Subcommittee considers adding language to state civil rights code

By Todd Dorman | Tuesday, January 30, 2007

A Senate subcommittee considered a bill Monday that would add the terms “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” to the state civil rights code alongside race, gender and other protected classes.

Backers of the measure say the change would give gays and lesbians across the state protection from various forms of discrimination in the workplace and elsewhere. Those protections currently are in place in a handful of Iowa cities.

Similar bills were shelved in recent years while Republicans held control or partial control of the Legislature. The bill could see action now that Democrats control the House, Senate and governor’s office.

Election cleaning —Dozens of Iowa activists and a group of Democratic lawmakers rallied at the Capitol Monday for a new “clean elections” law meant to limit the influence of money in politics.

The legislation is being promoted by Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement and a coalition of other groups.

Former Democratic U.S. Rep. Berkley Bedell traveled from his winter home in Florida to attend the rally. Bedell said he saw the influence of money in Congress and thinks new controls should be put in place.

Rep. Elesha Gayman, D-Davenport, is supportive of a clean elections law.

“I don’t necessarily think there’s a silver bullet, but it’s definitely something we need to discuss,” Gayman said.

Costly leak— Renovations at the Iowa State Capitol suffered a setback after a water pipe on the House side leaked into meeting rooms, staff offices and the chief clerk’s office Monday.

The leak was less severe than the extensive damage caused by a broken water pipe close to two years ago. So far, the cause has not been

determined, but House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, D-Des Moines, said freezing temperatures may have contributed.

“It looked like a heavy rain,” McCarthy said of the leaking water.

Safeguard Iowa —Some of Iowa’s top business and government leaders announced a plan Monday to work together to prepare for natural and man-made disasters.

The initiative, called the Safeguard Iowa Partnership, is the result of planning begun during the tenure of former Gov. Tom Vilsack. Iowa leaders will work with a national nonprofit security group.

“The private sector has a pivotal role to play,” Vilsack said at a Statehouse news conference.

The private sector’s role is being organized by the Iowa Business Council, a group that includes the executives of the state’s 20 largest companies.

Lt. Gov. Patty Judge said the disruption caused by the Gulf Coast hurricanes two years ago shows the need for thorough disaster planning.

‘Fair share’ filed — A proposal introduced Monday would require nonunion workers to pay a fee for union services.

This so-called “fair share” plan is at the top of the wish list for Iowa unions, while pro-business groups say the plan is an attempt to undermine the state’s right-to-work law.

The sides have been readying for a fight for weeks over the plan. Now the measure will head to a three-person subcommittee of the Senate Labor and Business Relations Committee.

Sen. Dick Dearden, D-Des Moines, the committee chairman, made light of the expected controversy.

“We mainly wanted to get the bill out there and get our e-mail boxes full,” he said.

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<http://www.wcfcourier.com/articles/2007/01/30/business/local/9f8302b8d8a13d7586257273004ad458.txt>



IOWA BUSINESS COUNCIL

Iowa Business Council 21st Annual Partnership Program



Retired Gen. Charles Boyd and Iowa State University President Gregory Geoffroy chat before listening to Gov. Chet Culver and other Iowa Business Council members speak in Des Moines on Monday, Jan. 29. Boyd addressed the council at its annual meeting about the Safeguard Iowa Partnership. The program is designed to bring the state government and business together in the event of a disaster.

Photo by [Eric Rowley](#)



“Businesses must continually reinvent themselves,” said Iowa Business Council Chairman Max Phillips during an address at council's annual partnership meeting in Des Moines on Monday, Jan. 29. Phillips encouraged business leaders to recruit and retain their work forces. He said Iowa will need 200,000 more workers by the end of the decade if current trends continue.

Photo by [Eric Rowley](#)



It's time to try a new approach," said Gov. Chet Culver to the Iowa Business Council during its annual partnership program in Des Moines on Monday, Jan. 29. Culver outlined his proposed \$5 billion state budget. "We must have a willingness to come together and agree on doing something together," he said. Photo by Eric Rowley



Gov. Chet Culver introduces himself to retired Gen. Charles G. Boyd at the Iowa Business Council's annual partnership program at Hotel Fort Des Moines on Monday, Jan. 29. Culver addressed the council about his new state budget and his strategies for the upcoming term. Photo by Eric Rowley



Retired Gen. Charles Boyd, left, and Iowa Business Council Chairman Max Phillips share their thoughts about Gov. Chet Culver's remarks to the Iowa Business Council in Des Moines on Monday, Jan. 29. About 300 people attended the event. Photo by Eric Rowley



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<http://www.siouxcityjournal.com/articles/2007/01/30/news/legislature/bb00160451561ec2862572730011b533.txt>

Story in U.S. politics of 02/01/2007 (requires subscription) <http://uspolitics.einnews.com/news/patty-judge>

[Iowa businesses launch partnership to help recover from disaster](#) 30 Jan 2007 02:31 GMT

... is called the Safeguard Iowa Partnership. It includes several businesses and government agencies. Lieutenant **Governor Patty Judge** says the partnership is needed. She says Iowa's business community has resources beyond.

[Large companies make agreement with state on disaster plan](#) 30 Jan 2007 00:10 GMT

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