Emergency Management Institute Launches the National Emergency Management Executive Academy

By Stephen M. Borth, FEMA Emergency Management Institute

The Emergency Management Institute (EMI) conducted the first class in the new National Emergency Management Executive Academy (EMEA) from May 14-18 at EMI.

EMI partnered with Harvard University’s School of Public Health and the Harvard Kennedy School to bring three Harvard faculty members to EMI to teach “Emergency Management – A Leadership Challenge” Thirty-four participants were selected for the EMEA from the State, local, Federal, Tribal and private sector emergency management community. Professors Barry Dorn, M.D., Leonard Marcus, Ph.D., and Isaac Ashkenazi, M.D., provided the participants with extensive information, activities, feedback and case studies from their years of work in the field of emergency management and homeland security executive leadership.

This first in a series of four resident education courses in the program focused application of the five dimensions of meta-leadership in the emergency management work environment. The five dimensions are: self awareness (especially in crisis situations), situational awareness, leading your “base” internally, leading up in the organization and leading across organizations to establish and maintain connectivity. Executive leadership of the whole community was emphasized throughout the week by the Harvard Professors.

Participants were intrigued by this course since it was a departure from the usual EMI program specific training courses. Numerous participants provided their reactions to the week at EMI:

“An inspirational week spent with extraordinary people gaining invaluable experience.” Glenn Yorks, Emergency Manager, Nooksack Indian Tribe, WA.

“The partnership at EMI with Harvard takes emergency management leadership studies to a whole new level.” Mark Landry, FEMA Region I Federal Coordinating Officer.

“This was an excellent course where you are provided the opportunity to better understand yourself, learn from others, grow as a leader, and utilize tools so you can empower and lead others.” Teri Smith, Emergency Manager, Douglas County, KS.

“I expected the course to be good, I was wrong, it was great! Thank you for opening my eyes, mind, and heart to new ways to effectively lead and mentor others.” Carolyn Harshman, International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM).

“What a wonderful program! This subject matter is right on target regarding what emergency management needs to become more effective and to enhance professionalism in our field.” Lyn Gross, Emergency Manage and IAEM Representative, Brier, WA.
“Finally a course that teaches and encourages people to lead instead of manage. The information is 180 degrees different from common practice. This has been a breath of fresh air which encourages all who attend to continue moving emergency management into heightened levels of practice.” Chuck Wallace, Emergency Manager, Gray’s Harbor County, WA.

I am honored to have been selected to attend this program and I am excited to bring back what I learned to my organization. The course concepts will help me be a better person, better employee, better emergency manager, and better leader – a meta-leader.” Randy Agerton, Assistant Chief, Florida Department of Corrections.

“The inaugural class of the National Emergency Management Executive Academy gave me a whole new perspective on leadership, one that will help me lead better in times of need.” Andrea Davis, External Affairs Director, FEMA Louisiana Recovery Office.

FEMA Deputy Administrator Richard Serino, a graduate of Harvard’s meta-leadership program, addressed the participants and engaged in a lengthy discussion during the course about his personal experiences using the Meta-Leadership model and this Academy’s goal of educating current and future senior emergency management leadership.

The next class in July will use FEMA’s Strategic Foresight Initiative as the basis for studying “Emergency Management in the 21st Century.” The 34 participants will go thru the EMEA using the cohort model with readings, projects, and webinars scheduled periodically between the four resident course offerings.