
EMS providers step up when Gustav and Ike come calling

We've devoted quite a few pages to hurricanes Gustav and Ike this issue, mainly because it dominated the months of August and September for many of us in Texas EMS. We cannot say thank you enough to the EMS providers and personnel who responded when the call went out. At the same time, our thoughts go out to all of those in our emergency response community who suffered losses to their homes, businesses and buildings.

I saw a news report yesterday tallying the losses to UTMB at more than \$700 million, a figure almost too big to imagine. But it's a big number and a big institution, so it's going to make the news. What's missing from the news reports are the losses suffered by the smaller EMS providers along the coast. Those losses might not make attention-grabbing headlines, but to these agencies, even a modest loss can mean shuttering the ambulance bays. In this case, government really *can* help. DSHS has grants available from the Extraordinary Emergency Fund, or EEF, for licensed EMS providers, hospitals and registered first responder organizations that suffer events that severely reduce or incapacitate emergency response capability. See page 9 for details.

Meet Jane Guerrero, who took over as unit director of the Office of EMS/Trauma Systems Coordination in September. The job that includes EMS and trauma facility designation requires an unusual skills set, and we're lucky to have someone who fits the bill. You can read an article about her on page 12. And when you see her at the conference, say hello.

We learned in September that Dr. Ed Racht, who has been chair of GETAC since its beginning, will be stepping down to take a position in Georgia (see page 6). Dr. Racht has provided a steady hand at the helm and has worked incredibly hard to build community and to foster consensus. He will be greatly missed by those of us in the GETAC world and I'm sure by those who serve under him at Austin-Travis County EMS. He is also a pretty good chili cook-off judge.

Another change happened in September. Thelma Lemley, tireless EMS advocate and general rabble rouser for the good, passed away suddenly. She had been diagnosed with lung cancer in July, but was told she still had a year or two left before the end came. She didn't. Thelma didn't have any qualms about sidling up next to people (or riding up on her red scooter) and giving them an assignment that would ultimately improve EMS in Texas – whether she knew you or not. Her voice is silent now, but we'll see the effects of her words for years to come. You can read more about this unique person on page 7.

Finally, as I write this in mid-October trying to get the magazine to press, the conference seems far away. However, I have too many conferences under my belt not to realize that after this magazine goes to press, time goes to warp speed. I hope to see you all in November in Fort Worth. I'll be the one in tennis shoes.

FROM THIS SIDE



Kelly Harrell
Editor

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Kelly".