

# 2009

REPORT TO THE  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

## Rebuild Iowa Office Quarterly Performance Report 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter

State of Iowa

4/30/2009

A summary of RIO activities, actions, and progress toward the completion of the statewide economic recovery strategy.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rebuild Iowa Office  
April 2009 Quarterly Report

## Introduction

*As the anniversaries of 2008 tornado's and floods approach, the Rebuild Iowa Office vision of a safer, stronger and smarter Iowa is coming into sharper focus. While much more remains to be done, hundreds of displaced Iowans and businesses are on the road to recovery and the building blocks for communities coming together. While recovery is a marathon and not a sprint, the work done so far couldn't have been accomplished without an extensive recovery planning effort and an unprecedented level of cooperation among local, state and federal governments, private citizens, businesses and non-profit organizations, there is a rebirth and recovery underway in Iowa.*

This quarterly EDA report is intended to provide specific actions and activities of members of the Rebuild Iowa Office staff who are working towards creating and executing a comprehensive economic recovery strategy for the State of Iowa that is ever-changing and ongoing.

Assisting businesses impacted by the disaster to rebuild, reopen, stay open and maintain employees is critical to Iowa's recovery and there are many elements that impact this goal.

Rebuilding Iowa's infrastructure has been a high priority and this report provides insight into various infrastructure initiatives and RIO working groups towards a comprehensive look at Iowa's infrastructure needs and plans.

Mitigating future disaster damage requires flood management systems not only be rebuilt stronger but strategically planned to make certain damage from inevitable future disasters is dramatically reduced or eliminated. The report discusses floodplain mapping, storm water management and other innovative ideas that are critical to economic recovery.

Our quality of life and our cultural heritage in Iowa must be protected and in this report we review progress through several programs that will achieve protection never before realized and rebuild Iowa in a way that makes it an ever more attractive place to live, work and do business.

Assisting local governments through outreach programs is another priority reviewed in this report that provides insight on RIO guidance and direction to communities in need of financial assistance, long-term planning, sustainable and smart growth policies, funding, coordination and communications.



# Rebuild Iowa Office

Governor Chester J. Culver  
Lt. Governor Patty Judge  
Lieutenant General Ron Dardis, RIO Executive Director

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## **1. Activities and actions to support and manage the efforts to solicit public, community and expert input on economic recovery issues:**

- a. Collected common questions from local governments and individuals and posted those in a Frequently Asked Questions page on our web site.
- b. Solicited input from local administrators of Community Development Block Grant funds on the operations of business and housing programs through a one-day conference. This input was used to make programmatic changes, communications improvements and find new solutions to challenging problems.
- c. Held monthly meetings of state and federal agency experts to discuss recovery issues broadly and projects and activities specifically such as the Waverly Inflatable Dam, housing salvage and the Emergency Public Jobs Program.
- d. Solicited input from the Cedar Rapids Business Recovery Task Force for improvements to existing business assistance programs and additional programs that would help business open and remain open

## **2. Activities and actions toward identifying and quantifying disaster impacts on Iowa's economic sectors, including pursuit of academic economic impact study:**

- a. After much discussion regarding the Memorandum of Understanding between the Rebuild Iowa Office and the economics department at Iowa State University, it was agreed upon and signed by on April 15, 2009. While the MOU was being discussed, the RIO Economic Recovery Specialist and the economist from Iowa State University agreed upon the most efficient process for gathering more significant and related information. To this point, the Rebuild Iowa Office with the assistance of other state agencies was able to send data regarding:
  - Unemployment numbers including disaster specific unemployment numbers
  - FEMA public assistance applications received and the number of FEMA public assistance applications approved for funding
  - Non-profit organizations' assistance provide
  - SBA applications and awards listed by county
  - Department of Natural Resources estimates by county on damages caused by the disasters

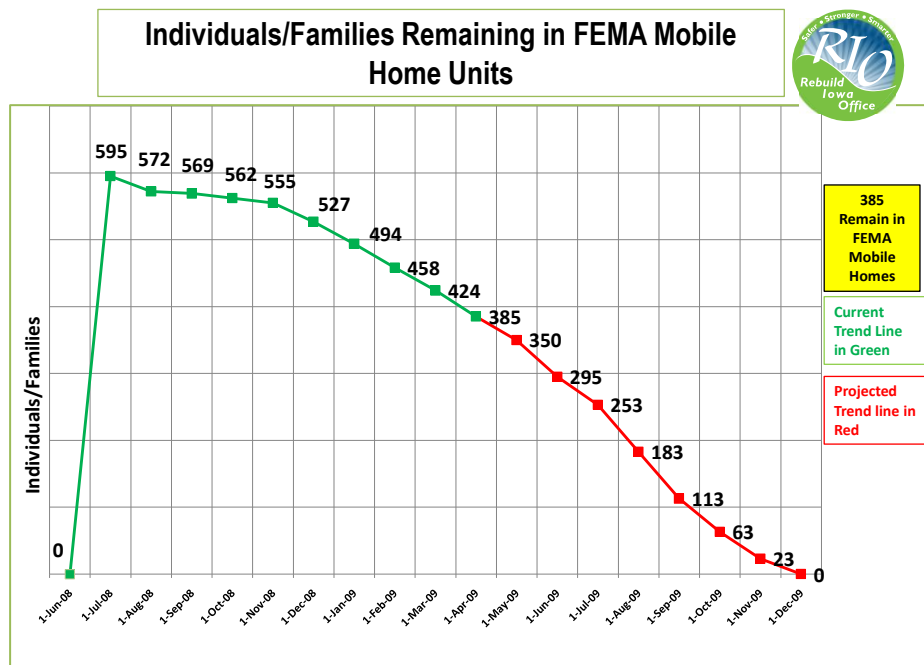
## **3. Activities and actions of implementing interdisciplinary "Task Forces" designed to bring in key stakeholders and experts to engage in dialog related to the overall economic recovery efforts of the state:**

No further task force meetings have been held since our last report. Task Force members, key stakeholders and experts continue to be informed regarding recovery operations and involved in meetings and projects on a case-by-case basis. See previous report.

**4. Completing economic recovery strategy plans specific to areas outlined in the EDA grant scope of work:**

**a. Housing**

- In February, the team helped to organize a housing conference in Coralville with Department of Economic Development, COGs and impacted cities. The goal was to discuss current roadblocks in housing programs and also make a year-long plan on a variety of housing issues including repairs, buy outs and new production with goals and benchmarks that will allow all of us to work together to solve problems and monitor progress.
- RIO staff continues to work with DED, IFA, COGs, and cities to complete a housing guide to include more comprehensive and organized information to help the local entities administer the Jumpstart programs. The first version of the guide is complete and will be frequently updated.
- The team continues to work on long-term housing solutions for impacted individuals. A part of this is ensuring that those living in temporary FEMA mobile homes are able to move to permanent housing as quickly as possible. The chart below details progress to date and anticipated future progress towards this goal.



**b. Transportation and Infrastructure**

- The team has been coordinating with legislators, the Governor and other government officials on infrastructure-related issues and bonding. Local communities were asked to submit projects that are “shovel-ready” and

able to be completed within two years. These projects total \$10.5 billion and state projects would add to this total.

- There are five priority categories identified by IDED in an effort to build and rebuild with an eye toward the economy of the future: 1) telecommunications; 2) transportation; 3) energy/utilities; 4) vertical infrastructure; and 5) natural resources (trails, water quality, and sewer). Task forces have been established for each focus area.
- RIO is now participating in the Infrastructure and Housing work groups for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding and the Governor's bonding proposal to connect those efforts to recovery-related needs.

### **c. Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation**

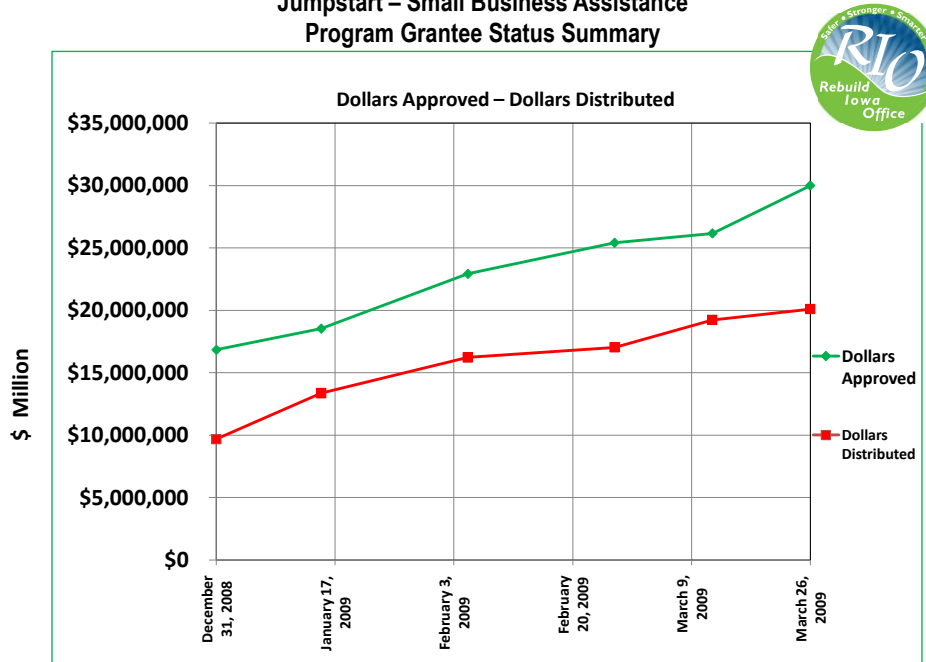
- The team is pursuing legislation to create a Regional Watershed and Land Use Policy Task Force that will lead the development of comprehensive state and local land use policies based on state, regional and local watershed planning that addresses principles of conservation, environmental protection, smart growth, low-impact development and green building techniques whenever practical and possible, and provide mitigation of future risk and losses from natural disasters.
- The team is pursuing legislation which requires cities and counties with a FEMA flood plain map to be in the National Flood Insurance Program. This requirement would assist businesses and individuals in obtaining affordable flood insurance.
- The team is working in partnership with other agencies to move forward with plans to develop new floodplain maps for the entire state. Funding has been secured to pay for the mapping and certification process. These maps will help businesses and individuals to better understand their flood risks and assist communities in mitigation planning. Floodplain maps will utilize LiDAR data coverage for the entire state, the last of which is being flown this year. Compiled floodplain maps for the entire state should be finished in three years – some as early as next year. FEMA certification of each individual Floodplain Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) may take longer. The LiDAR based maps will be much more accurate than anything currently available, especially with regard to elevations and contours.
- Utilizing a board created in 2008 – the Water Resources Coordinating Council – the Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO) asked the state and federal agencies involved to meet with the USACE's Rock Island District to begin the process of developing studies and management plans for Iowa's major river basins. The initial study will provide an Interagency Watershed Study of the Iowa-Cedar River Basin. Representatives of the involved agencies have met on two occasions in the first quarter of 2009, and will continue to meet throughout the remainder of the year. Input will be sought from all local, state, and federal interests and stakeholders to set a vision for the basin.

### **d. Economic and Workforce Development**

- Since last fall, the team has worked with the Department of Economic Development to develop, maintain and improve a program to provide small business assistance known as Jumpstart. The change below outlines the

progression of funding for that program. To date, more than 800 businesses have been approved for assistance under this program.

**Jumpstart – Small Business Assistance  
Program Grantee Status Summary**



- In mid-March, the team coordinated with Iowa Workforce Development to promote the Emergency Public Jobs Program. As Iowa heads into spring, those that are unemployed due to the floods may apply for up to 6 months of work through this program. The Emergency Public Jobs program can provide employees for clerical work, filing, hard labor, debris clean-up, etc. The opportunities are endless and the program comes at no expense to the entity in need of workers. Also, the program allows state and local government entities that need workers to get workers completely paid for through this program, without impacting their own budgets. COGs, Entitlement Cities, Long-Term Recovery Committees and non-profits that work with disaster-impacted communities, can utilize this program.
- The team has also collaborated with IWD on a new small business assistance program using National Emergency Grant funding from the U.S. Department of Labor. This program was recently announced and provides \$5,000 grants to affected businesses with fewer than 25 employees.
- While Jumpstart Business has been successful in addressing many of the unmet needs of Iowa businesses due to the 2008 disasters, the Disaster Recovery Business Rental Assistance Program will benefit businesses that may not have been eligible for the Jumpstart Business program. The Business Rental Assistance Program promotes business growth and revitalization of commercial space damaged by the disaster. Businesses can receive up to \$50,000 in rental assistance reimbursement over six months (retroactive to Oct. 2008). Businesses must remain open during the six months.
- RIO's Economic Recovery Specialist is also currently working with Iowa Chambers of Commerce and the Iowa Chamber Alliance to gather information on the number of businesses that have reopened, as well as

information about those that have not and struggles to remain open faced by those that have.

**e. Education**

- The team is pursuing adjustments to current law that we learned in this year's disasters would help school districts in their response and recovery, including providing the director with broad temporary authority in times of natural disaster to grant one-time waivers to educational entities, opening the emergency fund levy to school corporations and allow them to petition for permission to assess and levy this tax for costs associated with and incurred within two years of a natural disaster, require school districts to buy flood insurance if available to them, add authority for the School Budget Review Committee to authorize a district or AEA to spend a reasonable and specified amount from its unexpended cash balance for costs of demolishing or repairing a building in the event of a natural disaster and up to two years after that event, and allow PPEL funds to be used for disaster clean-up costs.
- In March, RIO team members met with Jere Vyverberg, Superintendent of the Waverly-Shell Rock Community Schools met. The district is greatly appreciative of all hard work Dennis Harper from FEMA has done in the P.A. program. They will be able to relocate and replace the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade school that was built in 1951 in the floodway that has flooded 3 times. A junior high for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders that is in the floodplain will be collocated on land the school district currently owns. They will get between 6-8 million from FEMA and will go for local bonding referendum to try to complete the 23-24 million dollar projects.

**f. Public Health and Healthcare**

- The team worked with other state agencies on a plan for the use of Social Service Block Grant funds allocated to the state by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The funds will be used to fill unmet needs in disaster-related mental health, public health and services for the aging.

**g. Agriculture and Environment**

- The Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO) continues to work with state and federal partners to carry out recovery efforts and mitigate the effects of future disasters. The team has been working to identify needs in the agricultural business sector. One major need is funding for watershed protections. To date, Iowa has been allocated \$72 million through the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program for emergency recovery work and the purchase of floodplain easements. In addition, \$33.5 million has been allocated for the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) which helps defer the cost of conservation practices, restoring fences and removing debris from fields. We are working with USDA to get information on how this funding will be spent and hope to help prioritize its use.
- The team has participated on the five-state Interagency Levee Task Force cosponsored by FEMA and USACE. The Iowa Levee Work Group also continues to meet to jointly review projects, damage assessment reports, and project information reports. Levee District #11 in Louisa County

continues to work with USACE Rock Island to secure breaks in the upper end of the levee district.

- The team has also worked with the Iowa Legislature to move policy initiatives forward that will reduce risk to future floods and mitigate damages that might otherwise occur. Measures introduced in the 2009 session of the Iowa General Assembly:
  - Require all flood-prone communities to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
  - Create a task force to develop future policy for floodplain management, watershed management, and related land use.
  - Require more attention to storm water management and urban runoff, with improved storm water management plans.

#### **h. Cultural Heritage**

- The team is a partner in an Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (IMLS) grant to develop a statewide disaster preparedness and response plan for cultural resources in Iowa. The primary goal is to marshal resources to act as first responders for cultural entities in the event of a disaster. Specifically, the grant will fund surveys of institutional preparedness, knowledge of resources, geo-referencing location of cultural repositories, raising awareness of the need for disaster response plans, developing a strategy for establishing first responders, and developing a simple, broadly applicable disaster response planning tool. This will ensure that in the event of an emergency situation, Iowa's cultural entities are able to quickly respond and provide safe conditions for collections.
- The team is working towards legislation to change Historic Site Preservation Grant program (administered by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs) requirements to allow greater flexibility for awarding funds during natural disasters and assistance businesses and homes with historic significance in rebuilding.
- The team is working towards legislation to increase the State Historic Preservation Tax Credits cap from \$20M to \$50M, with a portion set aside for disaster projects. This would allow for more projects to be funded in times of disaster.
- The team has worked specifically with representatives of cultural institutions important to the economic development of affected communities, including the Cedar Rapids Czech Village Museum. The museum is vital to Cedar Rapids' economic recovery and needs \$25 million in order to recover and is looking for \$10 million from state sources and \$10 million from federal sources. RIO agreed to help them identify funding and have already discussed their project with EDA.

#### **i. Records Retention**

- The team is working towards legislation that will provide a staff person to the Department of Cultural Affairs to coordinate best practices and technical assistance for local records retention.

#### **j. Individual Long-Term Recovery**

- The team has led efforts to connect the Iowa Department of Human Services and local Long Term Recovery Committees to administer the new



Individual Unmet Needs program. Unmet needs grants of up to \$2,500 will help low- to moderate-income households obtain items or pay the cost of a service not already paid with assistance from insurance, charity or government programs. Uses include repair or replacement of private property, home repair, mental health services, child care, and temporary housing and transportation costs.

- The team has developed a framework to support Disaster Recovery Case Management services in communities across Iowa. These services are provided through the Long Term Recovery Committees. We are supporting this system and gathering information including statistics and best practices in order to prepare a plan for case management in future disasters.

## **5. Actions and activities toward the conduct and information gathered during the six “Speak Up Iowa” listening sessions**

This program is completed, see previous report.

## **6. Activities and action toward community economic recovery strategy plans:**

- a. The team has partnered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), FEMA, and Iowa Department of Economic Development to bring the EPA’s Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program to five Iowa communities: Cedar Falls, Cedar Rapids, Coralville, Iowa City, and New Hartford. The 10 communities that participated in FEMA’s ESF #14 Long-Term Community Recovery process were eligible to apply. FEMA ESF #14 is providing \$200,000 to EPA to provide the assistance. EPA representatives from Washington, DC, Kansas City, and a smart growth expert from San Francisco (Rick Williams of Van Meter Williams Pollack) joined RIO and IDED on a tour of each of the five communities during the week of March 23<sup>rd</sup> to meet leaders and refine the scope of work. The consultant will outline options for each community to select. A team of experts will then be created to conduct the work. Assistance may include development code audits, market studies, housing choice and infill recommendations, storm water management and other green infrastructure options, and community visioning. The overall goal is incentivize development that fosters economic growth, protects the environment, and promotes healthful living.
- b. The Community and Regional Recovery Planning (CaRRP) Team continues to work with the 10 most affected communities in the state on their recovery planning. were able to assist each community with recovery planning specialists to help each community as they moved through the stages of community recovery including:
  - Post disaster assessment
  - Articulating the communities post disaster vision
  - Identify community economic recovery goals
  - Take actions to achieve recovery projects and programs designed for each community
  - Implementation of the recovery plan
- c. From this engagement with the impacted communities common community needs for recovery were identified and the following recovery tools were developed:
  - Communications Mapping tool
  - Decision-Making Tool
  - Project & Program Development Guide

- Iowa Resources Guide
- d. Workshops were conducted with the ten impacted communities in February 2009 to develop an understanding of what tools are available and how to apply them in their communities. Copies of the plans developed for each community and the recovery tools are available to assist all communities in their long term recovery planning regardless of their level of impact. They are located under the “Long-Term Community Recovery” section of the RIO Web site at [www.rio.iowa.gov](http://www.rio.iowa.gov).
  - e. From the lessons learned and best practices developed with the initial 10 impacted communities, RIO’s CaRRP team is conducting outreach to 22 additional communities to offer recovery assistance. The objectives of this outreach include:
    - To provide community leaders the opportunity to share information about their recovery progress and the challenges they face.
    - To help ensure communities have access to information and services available to them for planning, recovery and mitigation.
    - To identify regional issues.
  - f. To date, CaRRP team members have had positive and constructive meetings with community staff and leadership in Anamosa, Charles City, Dyersville, Elkader, Manchester, Mason City, Oakland, Olin, Rockford, Vinton and residents of the unincorporated village of Rochester. A report is being compiled to include how each community has been impacted by the floods, and the status of their recovery process including what worked well and what has caused problems or delays to recovery.
  - g. The team is leading efforts in Cedar Rapids to negotiate a solution on the issue of power generation in the downtown. The steam power system was destroyed in the disaster and state and federal assistance is needed to creating a solution that will maintain affordable prices for downtown businesses. Negotiating a workable solution is key Cedar Rapids’ downtown economy.

**7. Activities and action toward regional recovery strategy plans:**

- a. In February, the team attended a regional disaster recovery strategic planning meeting in Cedar Rapids. The meeting was lead by a statewide initiative called Safeguard Iowa Partnership which was developed to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from catastrophic events in Iowa. Representation from this group includes government agencies like FEMA and, local businesses, AEGON, Rockwell, and Alliant Energy. The strategic planning meeting was an important step forward to engaging public and private partners in regional planning efforts.
- b. The team also worked with FEMA to hold workshops on communications, decision-making, program development and funding options in the 8 most-affected communities to help them in their recovery process and encourage them to consider regional approaches. Since it included private-public partnership, this group has a great opportunity to leverage resources and support. The locations included Palo, Oakville, New Hartford, Iowa City/Coralville, Cedar Falls/Waterloo, Cedar Rapids, Parkersburg, and Waverly.
- c. In March, the Chief of Staff presented an overview of the disaster impacts, role of the RIO and the recovery progress to the Iowa State Association of Counties conference for county supervisors.

**8. Activities and action toward bringing federal and state agency partners together to address disaster recovery issues and join in economic recovery strategy planning efforts:**

- a. The team continues to hold a joint state and federal agency coordination meeting each month. In addition to updates from each agency, topics discussed included: lead abatement issues, several Cedar Rapids projects including the Human Service Campus, and an Oakville project. Also discussed were the Waverly Inflatable Dam, Parkersburg Emergency Services Building and Parkersburg Park Plaza. Propose discussion and identification of needs to meet demolition and construction phase beginning in the spring.
- b. The team is working with other agencies and local governments to partner on statewide promotion and coordination one-year disaster commemoration events.
- c. The team also brought state and federal agencies together to discuss issues specific to debris removal, landfill, and salvage issues. The team is working with the Iowa Historic Preservation Alliance in Cedar Rapids and other communities to salvage valuable building materials from HMGP and other property acquisition programs. IHPA has sophisticated plans to clean and bundle materials for resale. This not only promotes recycling and reduced landfill use, but also could serve as an additional economic opportunity for communities.

**9. Activities and action towards creating a comprehensive, statewide infrastructure plan, including the creation of task forces in natural resources, energy, telecommunications, transportation and vertical infrastructure:**

- a. The team is partnering with the Iowa Department of Economic Development on this initiative. DED has hired a consulting firm to carry out some of this work.
- b. The core team of the infrastructure planning continued to meet at least weekly to develop strategy.
- c. Data input was finalized and reviewed towards the development of the preliminary aggregate assessment report of statewide infrastructure needs.
- d. John Gillispie, director of the Iowa Communications Network, presented information to the core team and IUB director regarding options of future use of technology, particularly the concept of building broadband wireless access in rural areas using the ICN as the backbone and partnering with the interoperability priorities for public safety communications.

**10. Activities and actions toward communication with lowans about overall disaster impacts and the strategy planning process:**

- a. The team frequently works with other local, state and federal agencies to get information out to the public via press conferences, press releases or other special event. Examples include addressing how disaster victims file claims for tax preparation with the Iowa Department of Revenue; mental health awareness and where to go for help with the Iowa Department of Human Resources; the approval of the \$125 million CDBG action plan with the Iowa Governor's office; proclaiming March Flood Awareness Month with the Iowa Insurance Division, Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division and Iowa Department of Natural Resources; the selection of five Iowa communities for the EPA's Smart Growth program with EPA, Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division and the Iowa Department of Economic Development .
- b. The RIO Web site serves as an additional tool to get disaster-related information out to the people who need assistance. The site includes links to all disaster programs, a

video link; submission of photos/stories; information on Long-Term Community Recovery; Case management information; and Task Force Areas.

- c. In an effort to further educate people in Iowa and beyond on the magnitude of this disaster, the team added two additional charts on the RIO Website from RIO Strategic Planner which outline the top 10 disasters of 2008 (based on FEMA Public Assistance) and compares the 2008 disasters to the Iowa floods of 1993.
- d. The "Iowa Recovery Times" newsletter is issued monthly to the RIO e-mail distribution list. It is also posted to the RIO Web site. In addition, RIO's Long-Term Community Recovery Teams distribute the newsletter directly to Iowans impacted by the disaster via community meetings.
- e. Weekly RIO updates on funding and disaster recovery programs are sent out via press releases every Friday afternoon. These releases include funding flow charts which can also be found on the RIO Web site. The weekly news release highlights any new information about, or new sources of, funding. It also includes a condensed chart in the body of the release that shows funding flow.

#### **11. Activities and action toward and overall communication strategy for the recovery process:**

- a. The RIO communications team developed plans for a media campaign during March which Governor Culver proclaimed Flood Awareness Month. Radio station interviews were set up for the first two weeks of March. The interviews were split up among RIO Communications and the Iowa Insurance Division. Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources were also involved in some media tours. The focus was awareness of the National Flood Insurance Program and flood preparedness and safety. The communications team had a conference call meeting with representatives from all the organizations involved including FEMA.
- b. The RIO Communications team is currently working with numerous state agencies and disaster-impacted communities to coordinate and assist in planning and publicizing one-year anniversary commemoration events. We are implementing a strategy to use these events to not only publicize the work that still needs to be done in Iowa and maintain and state and nationwide focus on the disaster, but also to help show progress that has been made and boost morale and business interest in the state.
- c. The team works to assist businesses that have reopened in promoting their businesses and also with businesses looking to assist in recovery efforts with promoting their assistance. For example, Officials of Allsteel and HON, two Muscatine-based office furniture companies owned by HNI Corporation, are offering deep discounts to flood-affected businesses through 2009, or as long as there is a need. The team utilized press communications and newsletters to help promote this discount.

#### **12. Activities and action toward engaging Councils of Government:**

- a. The CaRRP group met with the Iowa Association of Regional Councils on two occasions in the quarterly reporting period. At that meeting the COGs selected a representative to participate in the RIO's Interagency Coordination Team meetings to help connect them with federal and state resources and information. Several specific program administration and planning issues were also discussed and the team followed up with further information and assistance on these topics.

- b.** The other meeting was in March and the team presented information on the outcomes from the CaRRP and FEMA Long Term Community Recovery planning activities with the initial 10 impacted communities. These outcomes include the recovery strategies or plans for each community, The Disaster Recovery Toolbox, and the CaRRP teams plans for continued outreach to 22 additional communities that were impacted in the disaster event of 2008. The meeting included interaction and feedback from the Council of Government Directors on what they were encountering in the communities and ways that RIO can work with their disaster recovery coordinators in the field. The next meeting with the COG's will be on May 8<sup>th</sup> to continue with this coordination effort.
- c.** The team hosted a series of conference calls in January to bring together the Long-Term Recovery Committees (LTRCs) and COGs and Entitlement Cities. The calls were regionalized so that the LTRCs were matched with the COG or entitlement city that administers the Jumpstart program for the areas which they cover. In some cases multiple COGs and Entitlement Cities were on the call as well as multiple LTRCs.
- d.** Representatives of the 22 new cities receiving outreach from RIO's CaRRP team were invited to participate in a legislative update by telephone. Relatively few of the communities participated, but many of their COGs did phone in. All will be invited to participate in an end-of-legislative session recap after the legislature adjourns.