

WATER AND WASTEWATER AGENCY RESPONSE NETWORK (WARN)

Overview of WARN and Status of Michigan Program

January 2009

WHAT IS A WARN?

- A Water and Wastewater Agency Response Network (WARN) is a network of utilities helping utilities to respond to and recover from emergencies
- Participation is voluntary
- There is no obligation to respond
- There is no cost to participate



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A WARN?

- A WARN establishes an agreement and protocols for sharing resources among water and wastewater utilities statewide
- A WARN provides a forum for establishing and maintaining emergency contacts
- A WARN provides access to specialized resources needed to respond to emergencies that disrupt water and/or wastewater systems
- A WARN can facilitate training that specifically focuses on the exchange of resources during an emergency or drill

WHY IS A WARN IMPORTANT?

- Utility resources are specialized
- Utilities must be self-sufficient
- Utilities must fill the gap before the arrival of government aid



WHAT DOES A WARN PROGRAM PROVIDE A UTILITY?

- Access to specialized, certified, and knowledgeable utility personnel
- Access to heavy equipment, tools and supplies used by utilities during normal events



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A WARN?

- There is no cost to participate
- WARN is like investing in a no cost insurance policy to access resources when needed
- WARN increases emergency preparedness and coordination
- WARN enhances access to specialized resources
- WARN provides a single agreement to access resources statewide
- WARN expedites arrival of aid (don't have to work out the administrative items; the agreements and WARN protocols work them out in advance for you)
- WARN agreement contains indemnification and worker's compensation provisions to protect participating utilities and provide reimbursement protocols

HOW DOES A UTILITY GET ASSISTANCE DURING AN EMERGENCY?

- Currently, each WARN system provides aid depending on their Mutual Aid Agreement
- Initial access may be made directly to other members or through an identified coordination point
- As a result of the contact, WARN members are able to match the equipment, skilled labor, and other resources needed with resources other members have available by querying a database, calling members, or using an internet message board to locate those resources
- Each WARN also provides facilitation in collecting damage assessment and locating resources as needed
- Public utilities may also access other resources through local, state, and federal agencies

ARE MEMBER UTILITIES REQUIRED TO RESPOND AND SEND RESOURCES?

- There is no obligation to respond



WHAT HAPPENS IF A UTILITY SENDS RESOURCES AND NEEDS THEM BACK?

- Under no circumstances is a utility to send resources if it impacts their ability to manage daily operations or response to its own emergency
- It is up to the lending utility to determine what resources to send
- Resources remain under the authority of the sending utility, and as such can be recalled any time

WHAT HAPPENS IF EQUIPMENT ON LOAN IS DAMAGED OR STOLEN?

- The draft MI-AWWA mutual aid/assistance agreement addresses this. “In the event the Responding Member’s equipment is damaged during the Period of Recovery that is not caused by carelessness, negligence or operator error on the part of the Responding member, the Requesting Member shall reimburse the Responding Member for the repair or replacement of the damaged equipment.”

ARE MUTUAL AID AND ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES ELIGIBLE FOR FEMA REIMBURSEMENT?

- It is important to understand how the FEMA programs work and understand how they apply to mutual aid/assistance in advance; Some key considerations for FEMA reimbursement include:
- The assistance is requested by the Applicant
- The work performed is directly related to the disaster and is otherwise eligible for FEMA assistance
- The entity can provide documentation of rates and payment for services, if requested
- The agreement is written and was in effect prior to the disaster

WILL A UTILITY BE REIMBURSED FOR THE USE OF THEIR RESOURCES?

- This depends upon the terms that the lending and borrowing utilities agree upon. The draft MI-AWWA mutual aid/assistance agreement addresses this. “Unless otherwise mutually agreed in whole or in part, the Requesting Member shall reimburse the Responding Member for each of the following categories of costs incurred while providing aid and assistance during the specified Period of Assistance.” The language has categories that include personnel, equipment, materials and supplies, incidental costs, payment period and disputed billings.
- In some cases during a federally declared disaster, FEMA may provide reimbursement for equipment, fuel, and personnel used in a disaster

HOW IS WARN DIFFERENT FROM A STATEWIDE MUTUAL AID PROGRAM?

- Statewide mutual aid/assistance agreements (MAA) frequently require a declaration of a “local emergency” to activate the agreement, WARN agreements do not require the declaration of an emergency, saving critical time in response
- Statewide MAA programs do not typically include private utilities, WARN agreements can and do
- For aid to cross state lines coordination with state emergency management is recommended and is typically facilitated by Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) in coordination with the National Response Plan

COMPONENTS OF A WARN PROGRAM AND CORRESPONDING MI-WARN STATUS

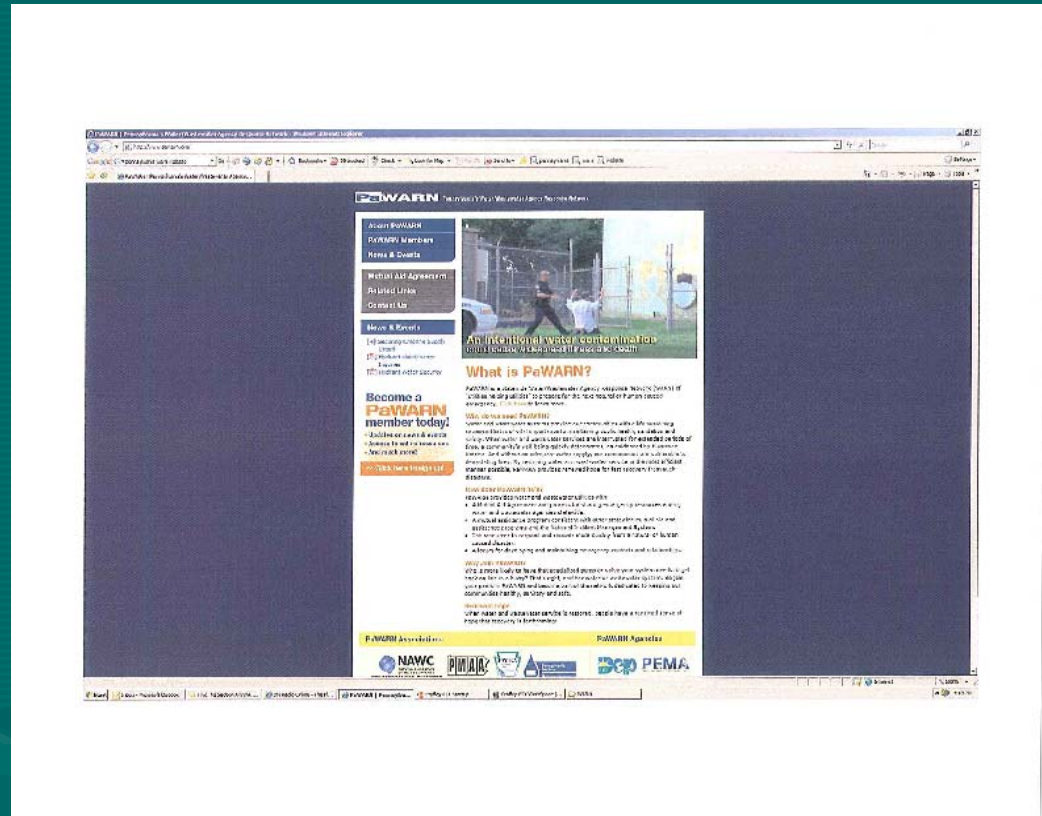
1. Identify interest in starting a program- COMPLETED
2. Form an initial leadership team- COMPLETED
3. Prepare a kick-off session- COMPLETED
4. **Establish a steering committee- COMPLETED**
5. **Identify a mission for the program and steering committee goals- ESTABLISH A MI-WARN WEBSITE AND MAA COMPLETED**
6. **Review use of state regions- COMPLETED**
7. **Identify mutual aid and assistance activation criteria- COMPLETED**
8. **Draft an agreement- COMPLETED**
9. Create facilitation tools- Web Site - PENDING
10. Maintain the program- PENDING

MI-WARN STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

- Steering committee formed in March of 2007 consisting of large and small water and wastewater systems, MWEA, MRWA, Michigan State Police, RCAP, consultants and MDEQ
- Have added APWA
- Evolution of committee based on need, interest, expertise, business sector and region

MI-WARN WEBSITE STATUS

- Under development by SEMS, should be coming soon, under review and being funded by MI-AWWA, MWEA and MRWA
- Permanent website funding for annual maintenance and hosting under discussion. Anticipated cost is approximately \$2,500 per year



MI-WARN PARTICIPATION INTEREST

- The MI-WARN steering committee developed a WARN informational flyer that was sent to all Tier 1 water utilities in Michigan in June of 2007. The flyer directed interested communities to register on the MRWA website. To date, MRWA reports that over 35 communities have registered their interest to participate in a MI-WARN

What is WARN ????

Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (WARN):

Is a system designed to facilitate a utilities-helping-utilities approach to providing assistance during times of crisis.

By establishing mutual aid agreements before a crisis occurs, WARN participants pave the way for member utilities within (and outside) of their respective states to send valuable aid in a quick and efficient manner.

WARN participants can access specialized resources to assess and assist water and wastewater systems until such time as the system can develop a permanent operating solution.

To All Interested Public Utilities

In the middle of a water security crisis such as, an attack against a water treatment plant or contamination of the drinking water, they will be of intense interest. Risk communication during such emergencies will directly influence events. Poor communication can fan emotions and undermine public trust and confidence at best, and at worst, incite high tensions, misinformation, and additional crises that need to be handled. Good risk communication can rally support, calm a nervous public, provide needed information, encourage cooperative behaviors, and potentially help save lives.

Utilities Helping Utilities

If you are interested in participating or learning more about the WARN program, please fill out the information form and send it in, or go onto the website below and enter your information electronically on the MRWA website:

www.mrwa.net

If you are aware of another Public Water or Waste Water facility that has not received this flyer, please share this info with them. They can request additional flyers from temporary contact:

Robert F. Babcock
Security & Emergency Response
Coordinator - Water Bureau
Michigan Department of Environmental
Quality, Constitution Hall, 2nd floor, 626
W. Allegan Street
P. O. Box 30273
Lansing, MI 48933-7773 USA
voice: 517 373 8566
fax: 517 373 2040
email: babcock@mi.gov

Information Form

Please complete and return this

CONTACT NAME: _____

UTILITY NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: (____) _____

EMAIL: _____


Drinking Water WSSN # _____


Wastewater NPDES Permit # _____

Mail To: Michigan Rural Water Association
PO Box 960
Harrison, Michigan 48625
E-Mail: mrwa.net

Comments: _____

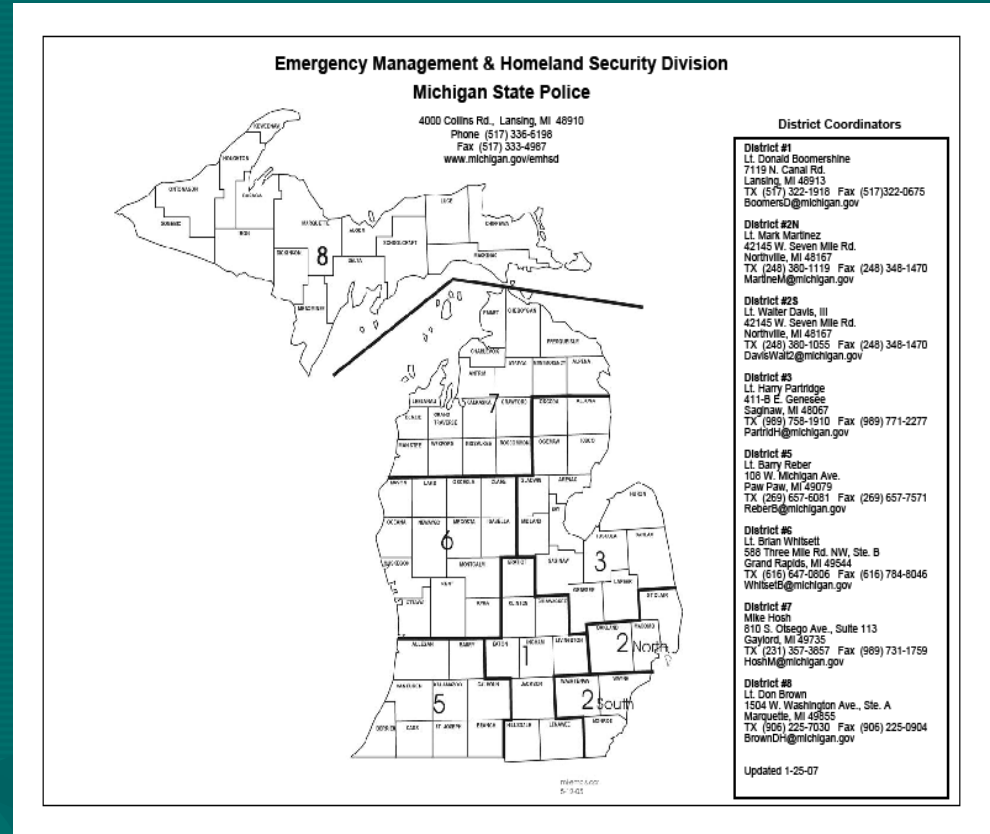
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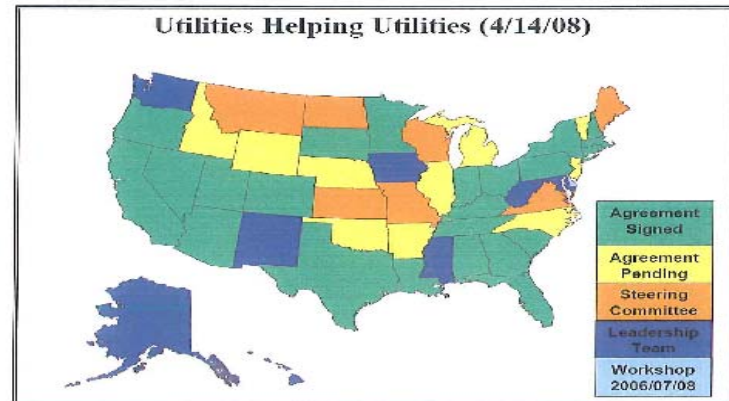
MI-WARN GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS

- Several geographic regions for MI-WARN have been proposed. One of the most viable is to break it into the same regions as Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division of the Michigan State Police



NATIONAL WARN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

- In April 2006 only three (3) States- California, Texas and Florida had signed WARNs. Three (3) other States were assessing the concept
- As of April 2008, thirty-five (35) States had signed WARNs and several States had pending WARN agreements



THANK YOU!

For further information, please visit the National WARN website
at: www.NationalWARN.org

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