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# ASPA BUZZ

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A Publication of the American Society for Public Administration, Utah Chapter

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## **ASPA Annual Legislative Preview**

**Thursday, January 12, 2006**

**11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

**State Office Building Auditorium**  
(north of State Capitol Building—1<sup>st</sup> floor)

**NOTE:** The west parking lot is still closed and there will be limited parking in the east lot. Please carpool where possible or use public transportation. Bus Route #23 is in the free fair zone and goes to the Capitol.

### **Speakers include:**

**House Speaker Greg Curtis (R), District 49**

**Representative Roz McGee (D), District 28**

**Senator Dan Eastman (R), District 23**

**Senator Ed Mayne (D), District 5**

Due to limited space, please make your reservations early. Box lunches will be provided. Reservations or cancellations must be received no later than Monday, January 9th. No shows will be billed.

**The cost of the luncheon is \$12.00 for ASPA members, students and *Buzz* Supporters and \$15.00 for nonmembers.**

Please call the Center for Public Policy and Administration, University of Utah, at 581-6493 or email [jrandall@cpga.utah.edu](mailto:jrandall@cpga.utah.edu) for reservations.

# DECEMBER LUNCHEON

By Chris Fawcett

## Lessons from Katrina: What Should We Be Doing To Prepare For Our Disaster?

*NOTE: A few paragraphs in the BUZZ can never capture all of the knowledge and wisdom that is dispensed by our luncheon speakers. Members and colleagues are encouraged to attend these activities to receive the full benefit available to participants.*

**Verdi White**, Director of the Division of Homeland Security for the State of Utah, spoke to ASPA members and guests about how Utah is preparing for a full range of potential disasters. In the past, Mr. White has served as the Deputy Commissioner for Public Safety, the Director of Comprehensive Emergency Management for the State of Utah, and is a former member of UOPSC (Utah Olympic Public Safety Command). He is an adjunct instructor for the Utah Police Academy, the Salt Lake Community College and also currently serves on several boards in the community.

Mr. White outlined the three pillars under girding state preparedness efforts.

- Community Level Intelligence  
(You have to have useful information coming in from first responders, state agencies, the FBI, etc.)
- Vulnerability  
(You have to identify vital resources and infrastructure and determine how to protect these assets.)
- Preparedness, Response, and Recovery  
(You need a plan on how to manage a disaster when it occurs.)

The acquisition and use of the latest technology, and applied sociology, are vital for building upon these three pillars. The first component, technology, mainly represents communication abilities, such as radio systems used by public safety officials and cell phones, as well as the network of computers used to coordinate responses to disasters. Hurricane Katrina wiped out most of the communication assets in the target area and chaos resulted. He noted that Utah has heavily invested in its communications systems over the past few years.

The second component, applied sociology, is what he described as “networks” that bring people together by forming partnerships and friendships between the community, first responders, and the rest of governmental structures. As a staff member of a social service agency providing assistance in a disaster situation, it is much easier to ask for assistance if you know and already have some kind of relationship with people in other agencies.

The State of Utah created a Unified Command System similar to the National Incident Management System during the 2002 Winter Olympics. Now under Governor Huntsman, a Homeland Security Advisory Council brings together subcommittees comprised of both private

and public entities. The purpose of this structure is to address private, public, HAZMAT and even possible pandemic disease concerns. Mr. White said that in order to prepare and handle disasters you have to bring together the best people available. Mr. White described how the chain of response in a disaster starts with public managers. The hierarchy is municipality to county to state and then to the federal government. Both live and online training is being provided for public managers on how they fit into the response to a disaster.

The biggest question surrounding the arrival of the Katrina victims to Utah was “Who is in charge?” They had thirty hours notice prior to the victims arriving in Utah. Director White stressed the importance of “first responders” to the response structure. It is, however, recognized that they cannot effectively respond to a general disaster unless they are personally assured that their own families are taken care of. He further commented on the importance of everyone, and especially first responders, having 72-hour kits prepared and fully available for use. He referenced the Salt Lake City tornado a few years ago and how core functions worked because planning had taken place. He also noted that Utah has been lucky not to have experienced any major disasters since that time.

Director White then took time to answer approximately eighteen questions from the audience. The questions ranged from “Are there specific plans on how to handle different populations such as the elderly and handicapped?” to “Is the state government or federal government first to respond to a major disaster?”

Mr. White was thanked for his presentation. He invited interested members of his audience to take part in different aspects of planning for homeland security. (Mr. White can be reached by calling the State Department of Public Safety at 801-538-9722.)

## **COUNCIL CORNER**

By Sandy Peck  
League of Women Voters

### **How to Help Your Legislator**

The first day of the 2006 legislative session is Monday, January 16. Tough issues are up for consideration, including budgets, tax policy, education reform and funding, transportation and growth, election laws, open and ethical government, child protection, nuclear waste disposal, managing water resources, health care for the uninsured and energy policy. Forty-five days (counting weekends) is not much time to deal with so many concerns. But if we are to have a citizen legislature whose members can take time to serve while still making a living, the session can't be overly long.

To help them get through the session, your legislators will be looking for information and advice from their constituents. They pay special attention to voters in their own districts who vote for or against them—and this is an election year. This is not to say they pay no attention to paid lobbyists, some of whom offer Jazz tickets and campaign contributions with their information. But keep in mind that there are a lot more voters than professional lobbyists, and only constituents have the power to actually elect or defeat a candidate. One person-one vote is the great equalizer and legislators realize that. Furthermore, most of them take very seriously the responsibility of representing the citizens in their district.

To receive the full value of your vote, it's important to follow up by staying informed, getting to know your legislator and communicating your wishes. Fortunately, in Utah it's not that hard. One option is to visit Capitol Hill. You can sit in on committee meetings and House and Senate sessions, listen to the debate, offer comments to committees, pass notes and information to legislators when they're on the floor, even ask them to come out and speak with you. Usually legislators will respond, although towards the end of the session things get hectic.

If you can't go to the Capitol (there are no evening meetings after all, the parking is terrible, and observation space is limited) try the legislative website. It's full of information about committee makeup, agendas and minutes, the text of proposed laws, where they are in the process, and who voted for and against them. Not only can you look up this information, you can have it emailed to you. You can also learn about your legislators, link to their email, and find their phone numbers and addresses. Best of all, you can listen to committee meetings at the website and both see and hear House and Senate sessions. If you're not online, call the House 801-538-1029, or Senate 801-538-1035, to get phone and fax numbers and mailing addresses.

The important thing is to be in touch, whether by mail, e-mail or phone call (ask your legislator which he or she prefers). A letter explaining your priorities before the session begins is a good start. Remember, just a handful of calls or letters on an issue can make a difference. Some helpful hints: Identify yourself, that you are a constituent, and your particular issue, including the bill name or number if you know it. It's best to stick to one issue at a time. Always tell the truth. Be as brief and to the point as possible. Explain how you or others would be personally affected. Note what you agree on and express your appreciation for listening and for votes that please you.

Remember the more informed you are, the more helpful you can be, so pay attention to newspapers, radio and television news. The League of Women Voters, for example, provides a daily morning update on legislative action during the session on KCPW (88.3 and 105.3 FM and 1010 AM), by email ([lwvut@xmission.com](mailto:lwvut@xmission.com)) and on our website at [www.lwvutah.org](http://www.lwvutah.org). Or call us at 801-272-VOTE.

Give it a try. The next election isn't until November, but you can use your voting power to the fullest by getting to know your legislators and making your voice heard between now and March 1st. You'll be glad you did.

## **WELCOME TO NEW ASPA MEMBERS!**

Joseph A. Asbell  
Heather Bennett  
Wade Dessenberger  
Michael A. Eggett  
John A. English

Barbara Lynn Leavitt  
Juilann Northrop  
Candelida Ramos  
Jorae Scofield  
Sunday D. Stanley