ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Together, working to improve outcomes

Annual Report

— Year in Review —

2025

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Director's Message

The past year reaffirmed a truth at the core of emergency management: resilience is built through partnership. No single agency or organization can meet the challenges we face alone. It is our collective strength within Anne Arundel that allows us to navigate emergencies effectively.

2025 saw the County address a number of hazards, including the immediate needs of families and residents affected by the recent federal government shutdown and delays in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

The County's Federal Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Workgroup, overseen by the Office of Emergency Management, worked with the Anne Arundel Food Bank and other County agencies and community partners to organize the food distribution effort. This mobilization of resources effectively addressed food insecurity from becoming a secondary crisis layered on top of the shutdown itself.

It's no secret that the Emergency Management landscape, especially how the federal government addresses disasters, is changing. Emerging hazards, rising disaster frequency, and a growing need for resources have placed a greater burden on local jurisdictions. For local emergency management agencies, this evolving environment means greater responsibility for large-scale incidents.

Counties will be expected to manage response efforts and coordinate recovery operations without assistance, all while continuing to deliver essential services to their communities. This reality places added operational, financial, and staffing demands on local emergency management, reinforcing the need for robust planning, training, and resource management at the local level.

As these new expectations come to light, the Anne Arundel Emergency Management team is ready to meet them with a united front. Strong partnerships have become more critical than ever, with success depending on effective collaboration. New partnerships will expand our capacity to provide the resources needed today and enable faster, more coordinated responses in the future.

At the same time, we want to underscore the growing importance of personal and household preparedness. When disasters occur, individuals and families are often the first line of resilience. We, as a community, are more effective when our residents are prepared for emergencies, such as having emergency plans and supplies, and staying connected to our office.

As we look ahead, our mission remains clear: build a safer, more informed, and more resilient Anne Arundel County. We will continue expanding partnerships, enhancing technology, and investing in training and education that elevate our county's readiness.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment. Together, we are creating a community that not only responds effectively to emergencies but also grows stronger through our collaborative work.

Preeti Emrick

About us

Mission

The Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) was established in 2006 to coordinate the County's response to major emergencies. Our mission is to help our County agencies, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and residents prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters.
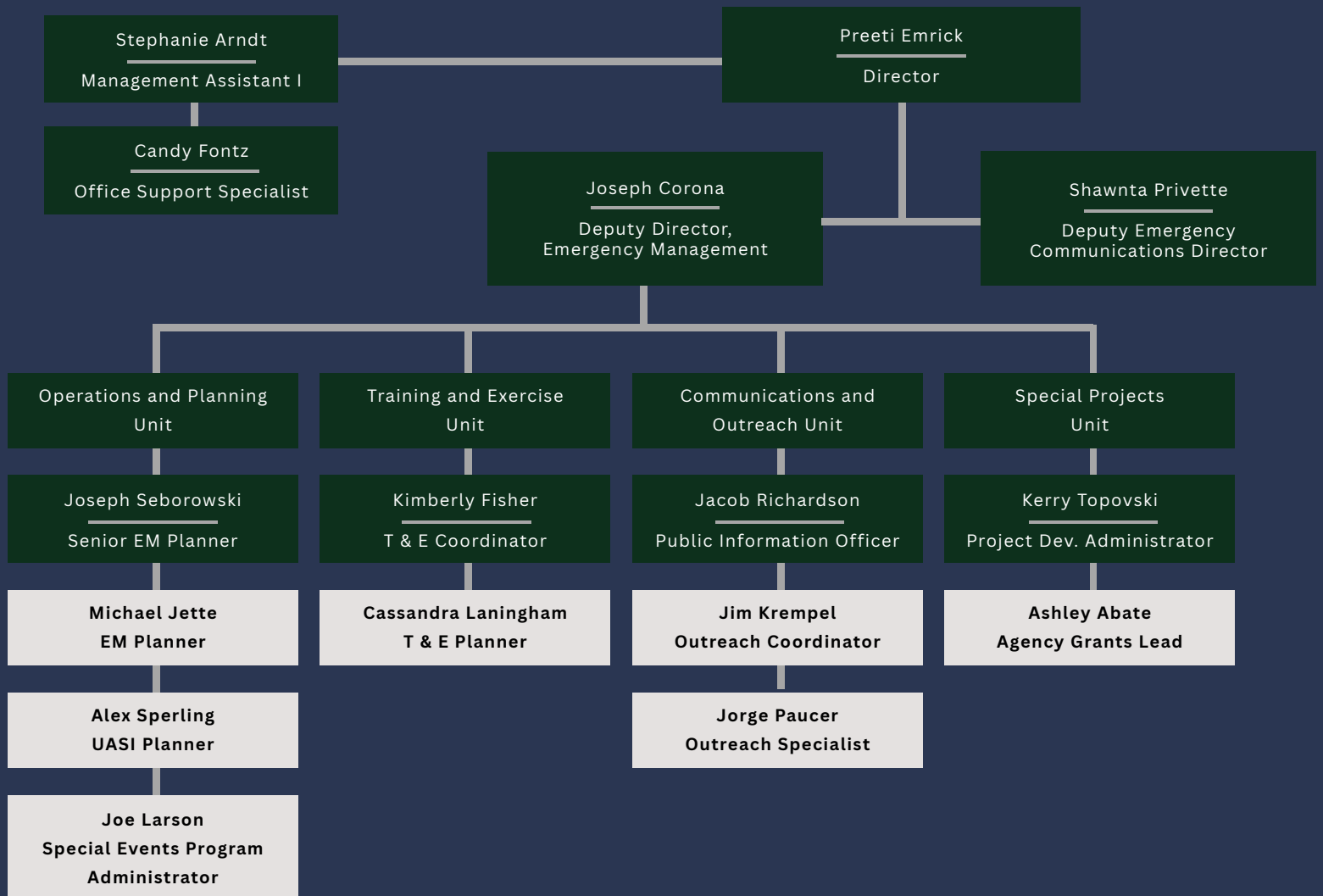
About us

Units

OEM is comprised of four units: Operations and Planning, Training and Exercise, Communications and Outreach, and Special Projects. The organizational chart below depicts the positions and names of staff members under each unit.

The Office of Emergency Management activated the Emergency Operations Center a total of TEN times in 2025

Stephanie Arndt
Management Assistant I

Preeti Emrick
Director

Candy Fontz
Office Support Specialist

Joseph Corona
Deputy Director, Emergency Management

Shawnta Privette
Deputy Emergency Communications Director

Operations and Planning Unit

Training and Exercise Unit

Communications and Outreach Unit

Special Projects Unit

Joseph Seborowski
Senior EM Planner

Kimberly Fisher
T & E Coordinator

Jacob Richardson
Public Information Officer

Kerry Topovski
Project Dev. Administrator

Michael Jette
EM Planner

Cassandra Laningham
T & E Planner

Jim Krempel
Outreach Coordinator

Ashley Abate
Agency Grants Lead

Alex Sperling
UASI Planner

Jorge Paucer
Outreach Specialist

Joe Larson
Special Events Program Administrator

BRIDGING RESPONSE WITH POLICY:
THE LAUREL PARK COOLING MISSION

Anne Arundel County Executive Steuart Pittman, seated center, Councilwoman Julie Hummer, seated left, and Councilwoman Allison Pickard, seated right, after signing Bill 79-25 into law on Thursday.

The measure of effective emergency management lies not only in the speed of a crisis response but also in the ability to transform frontline lessons into long-lasting community protections. Between 2024 and 2025, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) coordinated a multi-agency effort at a Laurel Park apartment complex that did exactly that, moving from tactical door-knocking to the successful passage of landmark legislation.

The mission began during a severe June 2024 heatwave. An apartment building in Laurel suffered a total failure of its air conditioning system, leaving over 250 households in life-threatening conditions and sending temperatures inside to above 90 degrees.

After being notified of the situation, OEM coordinated a multi-agency wellness operation, working in coordination with the Department of Aging and Disabilities (DOAD), the Department of Health (DOH), the Anne Arundel Annapolis Community Emergency Response Team (AAACERT), the Office of the Sheriff, and the Office of Community Engagement and Constituent Services (CECS). Together, these teams conducted door-to-door wellness checks for 254 individual units, providing cooling resources, medical assessments, and critical education on the symptoms of heat-related illness.

The systemic nature of this vulnerability was underscored the following year when the cooling system failed again during peak summer temperatures. Unlike heating, there were no provisions in county law that required landlords to maintain their AC.

Recognizing the recurring risk to residents, OEM escalated the response by coordinating with the Office of Transportation to deploy mobile cooling buses and worked with local partners to staff a dedicated overnight cooling location. While these measures were vital for life safety, they also provided the undeniable data needed to advocate for a permanent solution.

Armed with these frontline perspectives, OEM and local elected officials championed **Bill 79-25**. This legislation, which has now officially passed, establishes clear mandates for functional air conditioning in multiple dwellings and imposes significant fines for non-compliance, ensuring housing providers are held accountable for resident safety. By turning these repeated crises into a catalyst for policy, we have shifted from a reactive posture to one of proactive prevention.

APARTMENT COMPLEX SPENDS HEAT WAVE WITHOUT AIR CONDITIONING

In a statement, Anne Arundel County Executive Steuart Pittman thanked the community and public organizations involved in passing the legislations, "I want to thank the residents of the Elms for alerting us to these unsafe conditions, the County Council for their unanimous support of this legislation, and the staff and volunteers with Anne Arundel County Department of Health, Office of Emergency Management, Community Engagement and Constituent Services, and CERT for supporting our residents during the outage and working together to find a solution."

The Laurel Park mission remains a testament to OEM's core commitment: Together, working to improve outcomes. We do not simply manage disasters; we also work tirelessly to address systemic vulnerabilities, ensuring a safer, more resilient Anne Arundel County for every resident.
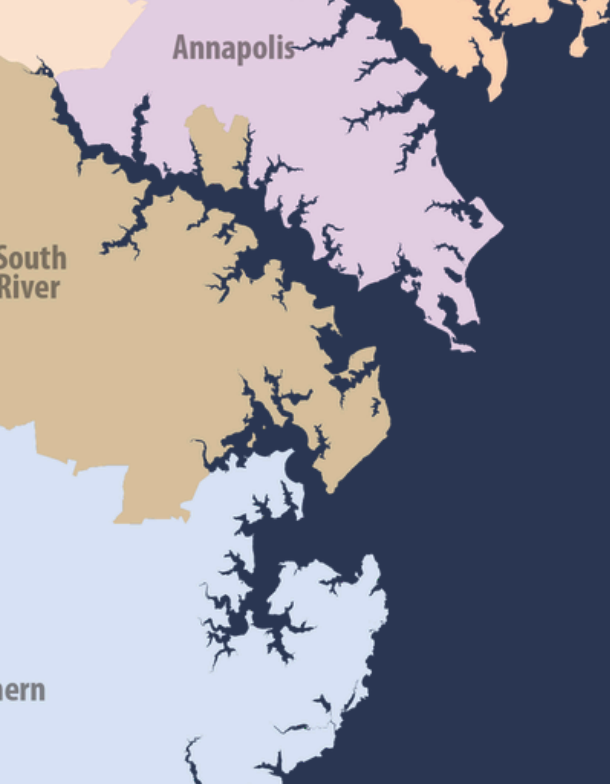
CRISIS
at the corridor

The Mayo Peninsula Isolation Event
Reflections on the Gas Leak of January 17, 2025

Residents of the Mayo Peninsula are acutely aware of the geographic reality of their home: a single road serves as the sole ingress and egress for the entire community. This vulnerability was brought into sharp focus on the evening of January 17, 2025, when an underground gas leak at the intersection of Central Avenue (Route 214) and Muddy Creek Road forced the immediate closure of the peninsula's only artery.

The decision to completely halt traffic was a critical life-safety measure. Because of the extent of the leak, the risk of ignition from vehicle engines or electrical systems was significant. Closing the corridor allowed BGE and fire crews to isolate the volatile area, preventing a potential explosion in a high-traffic zone. While the closure caused a major disruption, it was the only way to prevent the incident from escalating.

While the County works to improve notification speed and identify additional respite locations, the true heroes of the 2025 isolation event were the residents who were prepared. In an emergency, a prepared resident is a partner in public safety. By being self-sufficient, you allow first responders to focus entirely on the crisis at hand. As we work to improve our ability to respond to these events, we also invite residents to take these proactive steps:

1. The Vehicle Go-Kit: Stash a blanket, water, snacks, and a portable charger in your car. Being stuck on the wrong side of a closure is a minor inconvenience rather than a crisis when you have the essentials.
2. Get connected with Alert Anne Arundel: Knowledge is power. Text AAAlert to 38276 to join Alert Anne Arundel. This is the primary and fastest way we connect with residents during emergencies.
3. Strengthen Your Shelter-in-Place Supply: Maintain a 72-hour supply of food and medications. When the peninsula is isolated, standard delivery services and grocery store trips may not be possible.
4. Build Your Network: Identify a mainland contact for a place to stay, and also a contact near your home who can check on your pets or elderly family members if you are stuck off-site.

By taking these steps, you ensure that even when the road is closed, the community remains resilient, connected, and safe.

A Coordinated Response

In a multi-agency effort, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) partnered with County Police and Fire, BGE, DPW, and Public Schools to mitigate the impact.

- Prepositioning of resources: Police and Fire units secured the danger zone and prepositioned emergency resources on both sides of the closure to ensure an uninterrupted life-safety response.
- Mass Care: South River High School and the Southern District Police Station were rapidly converted into warming centers, with resources staged for potential overnight stays.
- Public Information: OEM established a dedicated call center to field hundreds of inquiries, preventing the 911 system from being overwhelmed by non-emergency calls and providing public updates.
- Restoration: While BGE crews worked through the night to secure the leak, DPW teams salted the roadway to ensure a safe reopening once the risk of ignition was eliminated.

Helping Hands

Throughout November and into the New Year, Anne Arundel County has mobilized a network of partners and resources to keep food on the table for in-need residents, including those affected by the recent federal government shutdown and delays in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

On November 4, 2025, County Executive Steuart Pittman announced $500,000 in emergency funding for the Anne Arundel County Food Bank. The money, drawn from the county's $10 million federal disaster response fund in the FY26 budget, is dedicated to expanding food distributions for residents directly affected by the shutdown and the uncertainty around SNAP.

The need is significant. In Anne Arundel County, nearly 42,000 residents rely on SNAP benefits: more than 22,000 households, including roughly 17,000 children and over 5,000 seniors. When federal funding was paused and payment timelines became unclear, those families suddenly faced the possibility of empty refrigerators. At the same time, federal workers and contractors across the region began missing paychecks.

During a press briefing, County Executive Pittman explained how the County's Federal Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Workgroup, overseen by Preeti Emrick and the Office of Emergency Management, worked with County agencies and other local partners to organize the food distribution effort.

"The increased demand from our pantries, our food bank, and the entire food distribution system has been growing and continues to grow," said Pittman. "Anne Arundel County and our partners will continue to do what we have always done: fill in the gap and protect our people."

At the state level, Governor Wes Moore declared a state of emergency ahead of the anticipated lapse in SNAP funds, directing $10 million to food banks and partner organizations across the state to help manage the surge in demand. Maryland also committed $62 million to cover the portion of November SNAP benefits not funded by the federal government, ensuring continuation of assistance while local providers scaled up emergency food operations.

Anne Arundel County has positioned itself as a bridge between those state and federal actions and the residents who need immediate help. The $500,000 allocation to the Anne Arundel County Food Bank has enabled expanded food distributions, hosted at senior centers, community centers, and other accessible locations across the county.

CONT.

"Anne Arundel County takes care of our people. We held funds in reserve in this year's budget so that we could continue to provide the support our residents depend on, no matter what was going on with the federal government," said County Council Chair Julie Hummer. "I'm very happy that our foresight is helping to ensure that our people are not going to go hungry."

The county's strategy goes beyond one-time events. Through the Anne Arundel County Food Bank's network of pantries, soup kitchens, and mobile food pantries, residents can access ongoing support closer to home. The food bank maintains an up-to-date pantry and resource list in both English and Spanish, connecting people with neighborhood-level providers that offer groceries, prepared meals, and related support services.

To make that system easier to navigate, Anne Arundel County operates a Food Access Warm Line at 410-222-FOOD (3663). Residents can call or email to be matched with the closest food distribution site, pantry, or community program based on their address, transportation options, and household needs. The county has also published a "Support for Residents Navigating Recent Federal Changes" webpage that consolidates information on emergency food distributions, financial assistance, and other shutdown-related resources.

These efforts are coordinated with a broad coalition that includes the Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Aging and Disabilities, the Department of Health, the Food Council, and nonprofit partners such as the Anne Arundel County Food Bank and local community organizations. Together, they are working to prevent food insecurity from becoming a secondary crisis layered on top of the shutdown itself.

"This has been a team effort throughout the county, from the dedicated volunteers of the Anne Arundel Food Bank and Anne Arundel – Annapolis Community Emergency Response Team to everyday employees who are giving their time to assist us and provide food to the community," said Preeti Emrick, Anne Arundel County OEM Director. "This event is one more example of the importance of whole-community preparedness and developing our abilities to work together, from county and state agencies, to individual families and households.

As we enter the new year, Anne Arundel County is dedicated to fully utilizing local emergency funds, state assistance, and community partnerships to keep residents fed while federal systems stabilize. As the situation evolves, Anne Arundel County's expanded food distributions, strengthened pantry network, and centralized warm line are intended to ensure that at-need residents have a reliable place to turn for help.

If you or someone you know is experiencing food insecurity, please contact the Food Access Warm Line at 410-222-FOOD (3663).

OPERATIONS AND PLANNING

The Operations and Planning Unit ensures plans, policies, and procedures reflect the County's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters. This unit also manages Alert Anne Arundel, the County's Mass Notification System, and coordinates special event planning with public safety agencies.

COUNTY COOP PLANNING

Continuity of Operations (COOP) is essential for maintaining critical government functions during any disruption. Throughout 2025, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) led a year-long, countywide initiative to review, update, and standardize COOP Plans across all Anne Arundel County departments and agencies.

In partnership with the University of Maryland Center for Cyber, Health, and Hazard Strategies (CHHS), this effort transformed existing, disjointed plans into a unified, consistent framework. CHHS developed a common template to ensure standardized procedures during an emergency.

This proactive effort has significantly enhanced the County's preparedness. By standardizing processes and developing a robust COOP framework, the program ensures a resilient and effective government for Anne Arundel County.

Key accomplishments include:

- Comprehensive Plan Updates: Workshops ensured that critical information, such as resource requirements and contingency solutions, remained up to date.

- COOP Base Plan & Core Protocols: A core Base Plan was created to provide a unified framework, guidance, and concept of operations, enabling staff to continue or rapidly restore essential functions. This plan outlines core protocols, including orders of succession, clear communication methods, and provisions for alternate work locations and vital records.

SPECIAL EVENTS

In 2025, the Anne Arundel County Special Events Program once again experienced growth in the number of special events hosted throughout the county. These events encompass a wide range of activities, from community gatherings to large-scale festivals and cultural celebrations.

The program, now in its third year, has continued to evolve, adding a designated Special Events Program Administrator within the Office of Emergency Management. This position directly supports the program's goal of hosting safe events throughout the county by strengthening coordination and planning among partners.
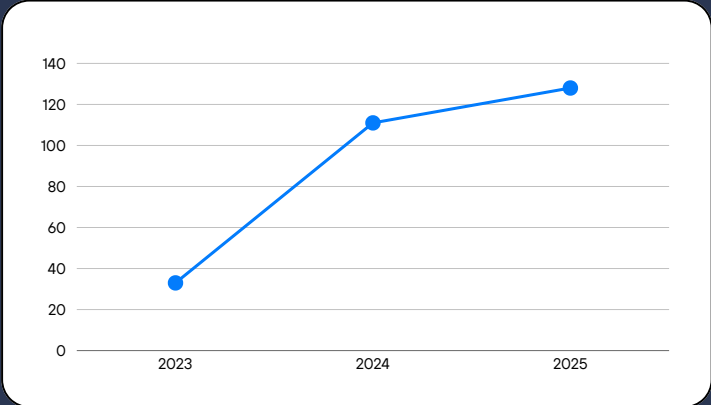
The new position also enabled improvements to the program, such as a new comprehensive special events dashboard, increased planning and after-action meetings, and a special events guide, which is to become available to the public in 2026.
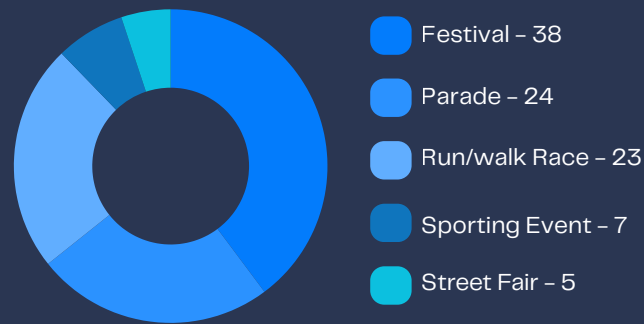
CONT.

Leveraging the new position, OEM and the Special Events Task Force are poised for the program's further expansion in 2026. The program remains dedicated to supporting and assisting event organizers in an effort to continue hosting special events across the county that showcase collective pride and strengthen community bonds.
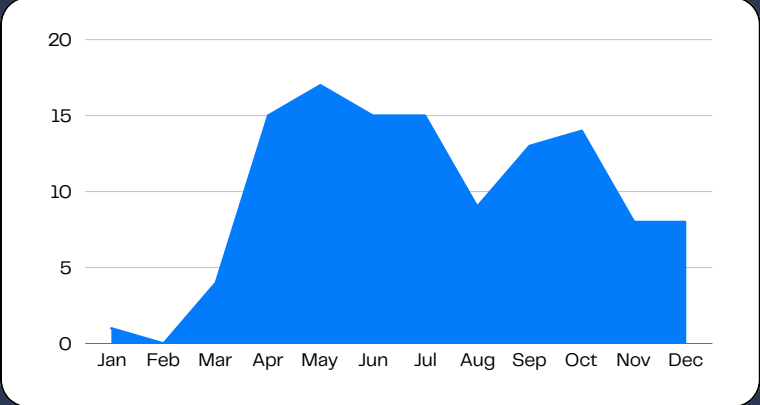
In **2025** - 103 Special Event Permits were Issued

Most Common Events

- Festival – 38
- Parade – 24
- Run/walk Race – 23
- Sporting Event – 7
- Street Fair – 5

Program Growth (permits issued per year)

Number of Special Events by Month

PANDO

PANDO is a portable, modular shelter system designed to provide privacy and dignity within emergency shelter environments. Constructed from PVC pipe and curtains, the system allows large open spaces to be rapidly converted into individual shelter cubes of approximately 40 square feet. The modular design also allows curtains to be repositioned to create larger units suitable for families, and the system can be expanded or reduced to meet the needs of any space or population size.

The PANDO concept was inspired by Japanese architect Shigeru Ban, whose humanitarian work used cardboard tubes and curtains to transform gyms and stadiums into private shelter spaces following the 1994 Rwandan crisis and the 2011 earthquake in Japan. Building on Ban's original idea, OEM adapted the concept using PVC pipe to create a more durable, reusable, and structurally stable system. The name "PANDO" references the Pando aspen clone in Utah, recognized as the world's largest living organism—symbolizing strength, adaptability, and interconnected growth, all of which reflect the system's purpose and design.

2025 Dam Safety Workshop

A featured presentation by WSSC Water highlighted emergency preparedness practices for large-scale water infrastructure. WSSC Water shared operational insights, including "Black Sky" planning for catastrophic disruptions and a recent brush fire response near a dam facility, demonstrating the importance of rapid detection, integrated communications, and coordinated response with local emergency services.

NUMBER OF ANNE ARUNDEL DAMS BY OWNERS/OPERATORS:

PRIVATE - 5	ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY - 3
MARYLAND STATE - 3	WSSC WATER - 2
FEDERAL/MILITARY - 1	ANNAPOLIS CITY - 1

On March 25, 2025, the Anne Arundel County OEM hosted the "Dam, Dam, Dam: 2025 Dam Safety Workshop" in response to increasing extreme weather risks and the annual requirement for Emergency Action Plan (EAP) updates for regulated dams. The workshop brought together dam owners, operators, regulators, and emergency management partners to review regulatory requirements, strengthen emergency planning, and reinforce coordinated response procedures related to dam safety across the county.

Attendees represented U.S. Army Fort Meade, the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, the State Highway Administration, the City of Annapolis, Anne Arundel County departments, regional utility partners, and multiple private owners and homeowner associations.

> Maryland's Dam Safety Program ensures all dams are designed, constructed, operated and maintained safely to prevent failures and the resulting consequences.

Representatives from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) Dam Safety Division provided an overview of regulatory responsibilities, including updates to the state's EAP template and annual submission deadlines. Emphasis was placed on dam owner liability, inspection requirements, and the importance of proper maintenance and operation to reduce risk and potential downstream impacts.

LAKE WATERFORD DAM

Instruction was provided on EAP fundamentals and outlined the county's EAP review and approval process. The event concluded with a facilitated tabletop exercise simulating incremental extreme weather impacts on county dams. Participants worked through a multi-day scenario involving heavy rainfall, rising reservoir levels, and physical indicators of potential dam failure.

The exercise and workshop successfully reinforced the importance of regular planning, training, and collaboration to reduce risk and protect life and property. The outcomes support Anne Arundel County OEM's ongoing commitment to infrastructure resilience, regulatory compliance, and effective emergency coordination ahead of future severe weather events.

TRAINING AND EXERCISE

The Training and Exercise Unit maintains and facilitates a comprehensive training program for the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and its partnering agencies. This unit works with partnering County, State, and non-governmental agencies to coordinate regular training and exercises to develop the knowledge, skills, and capabilities to effectively prepare for, mitigate, respond to, and recover from potential emergencies and disasters that may affect County residents, businesses, and visitors.
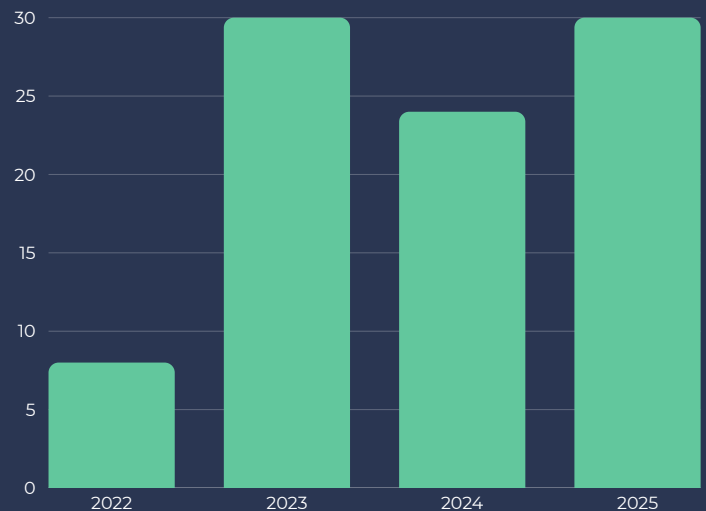
REACHING GOALS

In 2025 the Training and Exercise Unit conducted a total of 30 exercises and drills and 60 training sessions.

Exercises Conducted per Year

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) serves as the "nerve center" of operations during an emergency to coordinate the activities of the various agencies responding. Each agency in the County is required to designate personnel to serve as EOC Representatives, and these reps are required to take six training courses as preparation for that role. Each course is offered quarterly, and by the end of 2025, **87%** of our EOC Reps had completed all required training courses -- an all-time high for the unit.

EXTREME EVENT

How would your community fare in a disaster? This is the question several groups confronted with Extreme Event - a community resilience game in which between 18-48 players take on community leadership roles and work through a simulated disaster to learn how to manage an emergency. The Training and Exercise Unit offered this 3-hour game session several times this year, including sessions for EOC Reps, Department of Public Works Waste Management Services, and the annual HERoes on the HERizon summer camp for young women. If you have a community group that would like to schedule a session, contact us at training.oem@aacounty.org!

Krampusnacht
Emergency Management Exercise

Krampusnacht was a scenario-based emergency management exercise designed to test winter storm preparedness, interagency coordination, and communication under extreme conditions. Framed around a fictional winter storm, the exercise used a narrative-driven approach to simulate rapid-onset hazards, including heavy snow, ice accumulation, power outages, hazardous travel conditions, and increased demand for emergency services.

The intent was to practice our current abilities in activating emergency operations center (EOC) functions, coordinating with public works, utilities, and community services, and managing evolving operational priorities. Emphasis was placed on situational awareness, decision-making under time pressure, and maintaining the operational picture as conditions deteriorated.

A key component of the exercise focused on public information and emergency communication, requiring the development and dissemination of timely, clear, and coordinated messaging to address public safety concerns and needs, adapting messaging as conditions worsened and public concern increased.

The Krampusnacht exercise provided a low-risk environment to identify gaps in winter readiness plans, resource allocation, and communication protocols. Lessons learned will inform updates to winter storm annexes, training programs, and public outreach efforts, strengthening overall preparedness for real-world severe winter weather events.

EOC Readiness WEEK

With forecasts that predicted an active 2025 Atlantic hurricane season, the Office of Emergency Management launched a focused initiative this past June to ensure our partner agencies are prepared for the months ahead. The inaugural EOC Readiness Week (June 9–13) provided a critical opportunity to engage Emergency Operations Center (EOC) representatives of all experience levels—from first-year liaisons to veterans with over a decade of service—before the peak of the season.

Central to this initiative was standardizing operations and the rollout of the newly created 2025 EOC Representative Guide. To bring this resource to life, the Training and Exercise team developed three new virtual sessions explicitly modeled after the guide's protocols: EOC Activation & Notification, EOC Arrival & Setup, and EOC Operations & Coordination.

Beyond basic operations, agency EOC representatives led additional sessions on how they support activations. A specialized IT & Communications session demonstrated our technical readiness to deploy backup and additional communication systems, ensuring connectivity remains unbroken during incidents.

Simultaneously, training on internal situational awareness tools—specifically the EOC Dashboard and Damage Assessment platforms—sharpened the EOC's ability to track and visualize real-time impacts. The curriculum also prioritized equitable response through focused training on ADA considerations and inclusivity.

The week culminated with an executive tabletop exercise and in an in-person activation drill, allowing representatives to apply these comprehensive skills in a hurricane-themed scenario. By combining advanced technical training with practical "muscle memory" exercises, OEM has ensured that when the call comes, our County's response team is aligned, competent, and ready.

CYBER-ready

As part of Cybersecurity Preparedness Month, OEM facilitated the CyberReady game which brought together leaders from various Anne Arundel County agencies, such as Department of Public Works, Fire, Mental Health Agency, Office of Information Technology, Office of the Executive, Office of Transportation, and Police.

The exercise fostered inter-agency collaboration, allowing players to spend cyber credits on capabilities for managing cybersecurity risks prior to an incident, with limited budgets and resources. Outside of sparking new perspectives related to
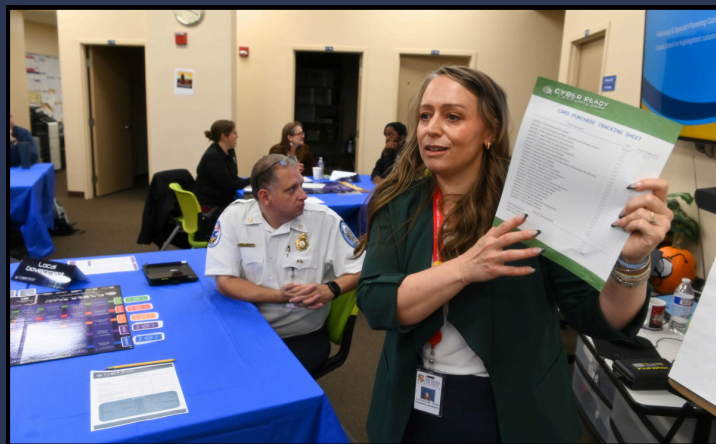
real-world Continuity of Operations Plan updates and strategic planning ideas for individual agencies, the exercise demonstrated how each participant represented a vital link in the county's infrastructure.

Resilience is also building relationships, as OEM has done with this training. Having these 'what if' discussions now, face-to-face, ensures that if a crisis occurs, we are executing a unified response as a team.

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

The Communications and Outreach Unit ensures that timely and accurate information is shared with the public and County agencies before, during, and after emergencies or disasters. This unit increases public awareness and education through social media, traditional media, presentations, and attendance at community events.
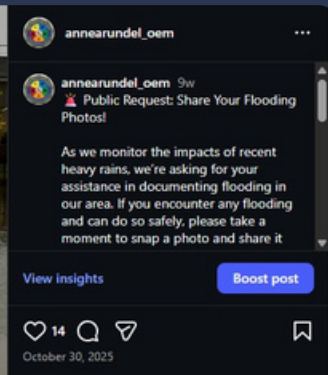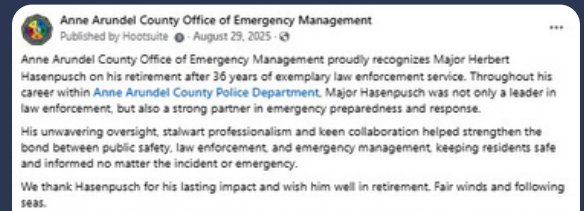
Social Media METRICS

(Metrics gathered and summarized from Facebook, Instagram, and X)

Measured Growth

Metric		Growth
Followers	⬆	4%
impressions	⬆	610%
shares	⬆	20%
Clicks	⬆	24%
Comments	⬆	29%
Reach	⬆	115%
Growth (Year over year)	⬆	60%

annearundel_oem

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🚩 Public Request: Share Your Flooding Photos!

As we monitor the impacts of recent heavy rains, we're asking for your assistance in documenting flooding in our area. If you encounter any flooding and can do so safely, please take a moment to snap a photo and share it

View insights   Boost post

♡ 14

October 30, 2025

TOP POSTS!

Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management
Published by Hootsuite · August 29, 2025 · 🌐

Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management proudly recognizes Major Herbert Hasenpusch on his retirement after 36 years of exemplary law enforcement service. Throughout his career within Anne Arundel County Police Department, Major Hasenpusch was not only a leader in law enforcement, but also a strong partner in emergency preparedness and response.

His unwavering oversight, stalwart professionalism and keen collaboration helped strengthen the bond between public safety, law enforcement, and emergency management, keeping residents safe and informed no matter the incident or emergency.

We thank Hasenpusch for his lasting impact and wish him well in retirement. Fair winds and following seas.

➡ Community Outreach ⬅

6,849
PEOPLE REACHED

91
COMMUNITY EVENTS AND TRAININGS

HERoes on the HERizon

**Anne Arundel County
Office of Emergency Management
Community Engagement Program**

Nearly 30 young women from local high schools and colleges across Maryland spent a week in July immersed in emergency management, cybersecurity, and public safety at the third annual HERoes on the HERizon summer camp, hosted by the Anne Arundel County OEM.

The free, week-long camp, held July 14–18 at the OEM office in Glen Burnie, aimed to introduce participants to careers in public safety through hands-on experiences and mentorship from professionals across multiple agencies.

"This program is about more than education; it's about empowerment," stated Preeti Emrick, Director of Anne Arundel County OEM. "We want these young women to see themselves as leaders in the future of emergency management. Our goal is to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to not only respond to emergencies but also to proactively build resilient communities. By fostering their interest and talent in this critical field, we are investing in a safer, more secure future for Anne Arundel County and beyond."

Throughout the week, participants engaged in CPR and trauma care training, observed members of Civil Air Patrol Maryland Wing's Emergency Services team lead a demonstration on ground and drone-based Search and Rescue tactics, and participated in a tour of the mini-city training facility, where public safety officials practice in realistic environments to best prepare for real-world emergencies.

CONT. →

"This program is about more than education; it's about empowerment."

After touring the mini-city, campers got to see the Prince George's County SWAT vehicle and meet some of their K-9 officers.

This year's camp also featured an expanded focus on cybersecurity. Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency regional advisors led an engaging Jeopardy game that both informed and roused playful competition.

Among the numerous field trips included a visit to the Laurel Racetrack hosted by The Maryland Jockey Club, where campers learned about emergency planning and security efforts, with a hands-on tour of the track.

"This program is a cornerstone of our commitment to nurturing the next generation of leaders, fostering an environment that enhances academic aspirations and providing avenues for career exploration," stated Emrick.

The camp is scheduled to continue in 2026, with plans to expand its reach and offerings. To apply or learn more about the program, email oem-camp@aacounty.org.

SUMMER CAMP SAFETY

Anne Arundel County OEM conducted its first summer camp safety presentation designed to strengthen preparedness, coordination, and situational awareness among camp administrators, staff, and community partners ahead of the summer 2026 season. The meeting brought together representatives from public and private camps, recreation programs, childcare providers, public safety agencies, and county agencies to enhance understanding of safety expectations and emergency procedures, and to provide notice of available county resources.

Held in a virtual format to maximize accessibility, the presentation focused on the unique risks associated with summer camps, including severe weather, extreme heat, medical emergencies, transportation incidents, and external threats. The presentation emphasized that while camps vary widely in size, location, and programming, the fundamentals of preparedness remain the same: planning, communication, training, and coordination.

The session opened with an overview of OEM's role in supporting community preparedness and its function as the coordinating agency during emergencies. Presenters outlined how camps fit into the county's broader emergency management framework and why early engagement and information-sharing are critical, particularly during the high-activity summer months when thousands of children participate in camp programs across Anne Arundel County.

A central component of the presentation was emergency planning. Participants were walked through key elements every camp should have in place, including emergency action plans, evacuation and shelter-in-place procedures, medical response protocols, accountability and reunification processes, and staff roles during incidents. Emphasis was placed on ensuring plans are not only written, but regularly reviewed, practiced, and updated to reflect current conditions and lessons learned.

Communication and coordination were recurring themes throughout the meeting. Presenters stressed the importance of maintaining up-to-date contact information, establishing redundant communication methods, and knowing when and how to contact emergency services or county agencies. OEM also reviewed how timely information sharing during an incident can improve response outcomes and reduce confusion for parents and guardians.

Weather and environmental hazards were a major focus, given the increased likelihood of thunderstorms, heat-related illness, and localized and flash flooding during the summer. OEM highlighted the importance of monitoring official weather sources, understanding warning terminology, and having clear decision-making thresholds for modifying or canceling activities.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of available county resources, including preparedness guides, training opportunities, and templates that camps can adapt for their own use. Participants were encouraged to continue engaging with OEM, ask questions, and view preparedness as an ongoing process rather than a one-time requirement.

By hosting the virtual summer camp safety presentation, Anne Arundel County OEM reinforced its commitment to proactive community engagement and shared responsibility for safety. The meeting provided camp operators with practical guidance, reinforced best practices, and helped ensure that camps across the County are better prepared to provide a safe and resilient environment for children throughout the summer.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

The Special Projects Unit organizes, leads, and helps execute projects that may fall outside the scope of regular duties. This assists with grant management, oversees public assistance reimbursement after disasters, and supports the operational readiness of the Emergency Operations Center. The Special Projects Unit also manages our emergency call center during emergencies and coordinates logistics for mass care sheltering supplies.

Hazard Mitigation Plan

In September 2025, Anne Arundel County adopted the Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) 2025 update, assuring the jurisdiction met the five year update planning requirement established in Federal regulations.

Development of the plan was a multi-year process that involved a coordinated effort between the Office of Emergency Management, County departments, municipalities, public utilities, nonprofit partners, and community stakeholders.

Data from multiple sources on historical hazards and their impacts on life, property, and infrastructure were used for the 2025 update. The process involved community input allowing residents to voice concerns that helped to identify local mitigation projects and priorities.

The adoption allows the County to access funding sources to support various mitigation and public assistance projects. As Anne Arundel County continues to grow, the HMP serves as a tool that demonstrates our long-term commitment to building community resilience through the identification of mitigation projects and actions that help to safeguard our community.

For more information on the Hazard Mitigation Plan 2025 update, please visit:

www.aacounty.org/emergency-management/ hazard-mitigation-plan-2025-update

Or contact the Office of Emergency Management at 410-222-0600.
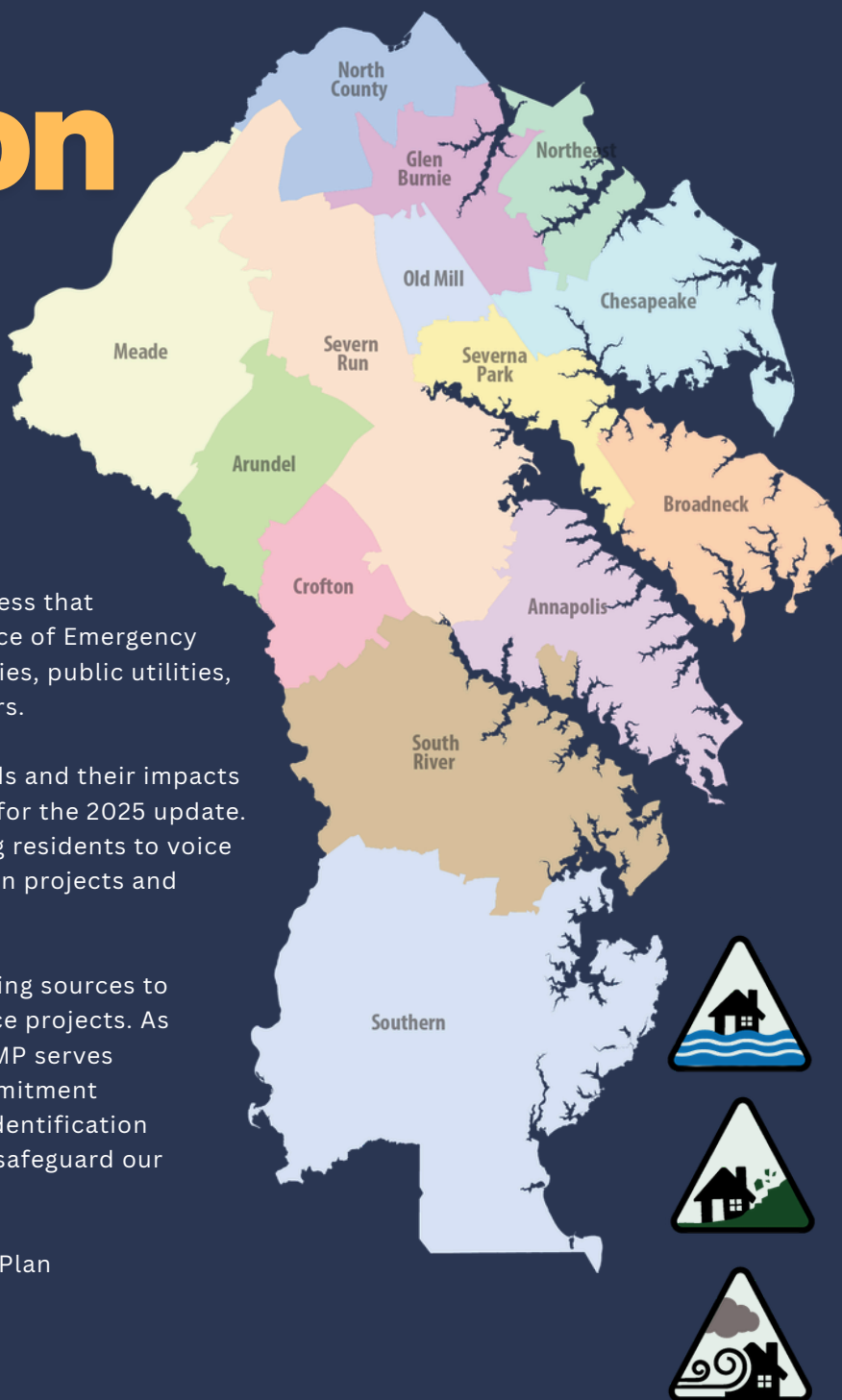
RECOGNIZING OUR OWN

Kasey Thomas
Awarded the McDonough Excellence in PIO
The Maryland Emergency Management Association recognized Kasey by awarding her the Ed McDonough Excellence in PIO Award. This award was created in honor of the late Ed McDonough, a constant and overwhelmingly positive presence in emergency management in Maryland and around the country since 2003.

Alexander Sperling
Nominated for Rookie of the Year at MDEMA
The Maryland Emergency Management Association recognized Alex by nominating him for the Maryland 2025 Rookie Emergency Manager of the Year, an award that honors and encourages new talent.
Safety Award from NAACCC
At the 40th annual Community Safety Awards, the Northern Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce recognized Alex for his dedication and performance in safeguarding our community.

Cassandra Laningham
2025 Anne Arundel County Safety All Star
Cassandra was recognized by the County's Office of Risk Management and awarded the Safety All Star 2025 award for her efforts in reviewing and updating our emergency action plan to align with best practices. We are grateful for her work on ensuring our staff is knowledgeable and prepared.

Joe Seborowski
Nominated for EM of the year
Anne Arundel has a rich tradition of talented, selflessly giving individuals who work hard every day to ensure the safety of our communities. The Maryland Emergency Management Association recognized Joe by nominating him for Maryland 2025 Emergency Manager of the Year.

NEW FACES

Shawnta Privette is the new Deputy Emergency Communications Director for Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management. With an extensive background in public safety, she has exemplified dedication for more than two decades. Beginning as a Police Dispatcher in 1998, she advanced into leadership roles, including Police Dispatch Supervisor, Police Communications Operator Supervisor, Computer-Aided Dispatch Manager, and, most recently, Communication Director.

With a Bachelor's in Homeland Security and dual Master's degrees in Homeland Security Management and Law and Crisis Management, Shawnta combines expertise with experience. Her career is decorated with numerous honors, yet she considers her proudest moment receiving the Medal of Honor and Citation of Valor from the Baltimore City Police Department—a testament to her courage and commitment.

Jacob Richardson is the Public Information Officer for Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management. With a military background in U.S. Navy public affairs and federal service at the Department of Veterans Affairs, he brings more than a decade of experience in multi-media production, crisis communications, media relations, and brand management. His work focuses on developing community programs, building partnerships with local organizations, and strengthening public engagement through clear, coordinated messaging.

Joe Larson serves as the Special Events Program Administrator and is responsible for the special events program and coordinating with other County agencies to review and plan for all special events. He joins the OEM staff from the University of Maryland, where he received a B.S. in Public Health Science, while also working for two years as an intern for the Fairfax County Department of Emergency Management and Security. In addition to his education, Joe spent the past six summers working as an Ocean Rescue Lifeguard and Crew Chief for the Fenwick Island Beach Patrol.

LOOKING AHEAD

As we look toward the coming year, our commitment to public safety continues with the ongoing design and development of the new Joint 9-1-1/Emergency Operations Center. This project represents far more than a future construction project; it marks the beginning of a faster, more unified response system tailored specifically to the needs of our growing community. The momentum being made behind the scenes is setting the stage for a transformative leap in how we protect our residents.

For our community, the impact of this transition will be felt most acutely in the moments when every second counts. By planning a facility that brings police, fire, and EMS dispatchers into a single, shared operations floor, we are working to permanently dismantle the "digital silos" of the past. The new facility will be a collaborative environment designed for the instant flow of information.

Once complete, residents calling for help will experience a more intuitive and seamless process. Because our dispatchers will sit side-by-side, emergency details can be shared across all disciplines in real time. This ensures that whether you need a single ambulance or a multi-agency response to a complex scene, help is dispatched through a singular, total, and unified effort. This consolidation is designed to not only reduce transfers but to enhance the situational awareness of every first responder heading to your door.

This evolution will be further solidified by the transition of our Office of Emergency Management into the Office of Emergency Management and Communications. This organizational shift ensures we are ready to hit the ground running as the project moves into its next phases. The year ahead is about more than just infrastructure—it is about the promise of a more resilient County, one where every resident can rest assured that when they dial 9-1-1, they are supported by an elite, rapid-response network that is more connected, more coordinated, and more ready than ever before.

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Phone: 410-222-0600   -   oem@aacounty.org   -   https://www.aacounty.org/oem

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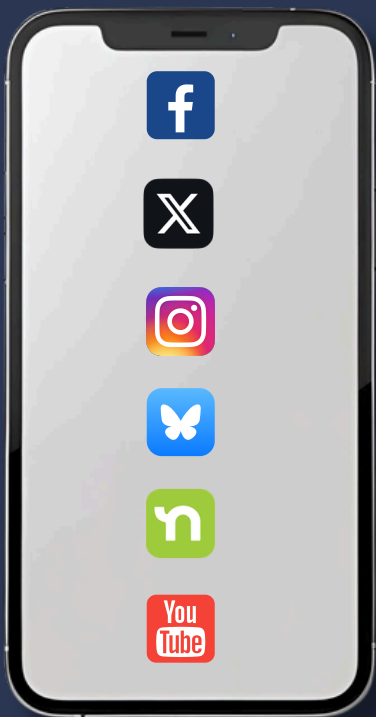
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