

**Statement of
Michael W. Goin
Executive Director
Cleveland Federal Executive Board**

Before the

**Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce and the
District of Columbia
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate**

Good morning Chairman Akaka and Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the role of Federal Executive Boards in Pandemic Preparedness. My name is Michael Goin. I am an employee of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Glenn Research Center currently serving as executive director of the Cleveland Federal Executive Board, a position I have held since February 2004.

In my role as executive director, I see my responsibility as that of ensuring the organization and delivery of projects and programs that support two distinct lines of business: Human Capital Readiness and Emergency Preparedness, Employee Safety and Security; while promoting communications, cooperation, and collaboration across agency lines, thus creating high-quality Government services and information for our community.

Federal Executive Boards have contributed to the emergency response capabilities of the federal community. As stated in the testimony of my colleagues from Minnesota and Boston, we will provide clear examples of our Federal Executive Board's impact in the area of emergency preparedness. This morning, I will focus my comments on what the Cleveland FEB and its member agencies have done in the areas of emergency preparedness. I will provide specific examples of activities led by our Federal Executive Board, to include how we serve in a unique and vital coordinating role for our local federal community and nation. Additionally, I would like to share a perspective from our local federal agencies on what they believe is needed and how Federal Executive Boards can further assist in pandemic planning.

BACKGROUND

As stated in the Government Accountability Office report (07-515), over 40,000 civilian service employees are covered by Federal Executive Boards in Ohio (Cleveland and Cincinnati). The Cleveland Federal Executive Board currently serves over 94 federal agencies covering more than 17 counties in Ohio (*see attached geographical boundaries map*).

Also, I should point out that many of our federal agencies in the Cleveland area operate throughout the northern half of Ohio, increasing our area of impact well beyond our stated geographical boundaries.

The mission of the Cleveland Federal Executive Board is to promote unity of purpose among Federal agencies to better serve our community and employees. The activities, projects and programs of the Cleveland Federal Executive Board are coordinated utilizing specific committees, working in partnership with federal, state, and local partners. The Cleveland Federal Executive Board committees' focus includes special areas of interest, such as community relations, training and development, leadership, and security. The security committee, led by the Cleveland Field Office of the FBI, is divided into 4 distinct subcommittees, Emergency Preparedness led by the United States Coast Guard, Ninth District, Information Technology led by NASA- Glenn Research Center, Intelligence led by the FBI, and Physical Security led by Federal Protective Services.

As I am sure you are aware, Federal Executive Boards are not equipped to serve in a first responder role, however we believe we enhance the federal response capability by sponsoring interagency training and conducting exercises that directly impact the readiness of those responders and employees. It is my belief that our Federal Executive Board has served a critical role in the Cleveland area, disseminating key emergency information, ensuring interagency collaboration, and providing timely notifications that assist agency leadership in their decision making process.

Like many of the other Federal Executive Boards, prior to September 11, 2001, much of our preparedness efforts were focused on weather related issues. Following 9-11, our focus has shifted, at the request of our member agencies, to develop an all-hazards plan and an emergency contingency procedures and guidelines handbook, designed to assist employees prior to, during, and immediately following an emergency or disruptive event, including a pandemic.

CLEVELAND'S EXPERIENCE & ACTIVITIES

The federal agency leaders of our community have stated that they expect to receive accurate, timely, and credible information from their Federal Executive Board. They expect us to serve as the focal point for sponsoring interagency training, sending notifications, identifying best practices, and collaborating with state and local partners. I believe that through the combined efforts of the 28 Federal Executive Boards, we are developing and adopting best practices and setting measurable goals. This has assisted us in establishing credibility as a source for emergency preparedness training, partnerships, and notification. Although much has been accomplished, I believe that more needs to be done to ensure uniformity throughout the Federal Executive Board network.

During the past 4-years, the Cleveland FEB has been very active in coordinating and facilitating emergency preparedness activities, as well as developing partnerships with state and local agencies. In an effort to provide you my best perspective on the role of Federal Executive Boards in a pandemic, I will touch on activities and issues directly related to human capital management (e.g. telework, leave policies, and succession planning).

As it relates to pandemic preparedness, the Cleveland Federal Executive Board sponsored a modified, scenario based, Pandemic Tabletop educational exercise, modeled after the Minnesota Federal Executive Board's Pandemic Tabletop. The Cleveland area's exercise provided city, state, and local agency's emergency managers and stakeholders the opportunity to develop and review their agency's pandemic plans and explore HR concerns associated with a pandemic. One of the major findings identified in the exercise was agency inconsistency related to the development and use of telework programs; many agencies had not recognized the value or impact of telework programs in a pandemic.

In an effort to heighten management and employee awareness of pandemic preparedness and planning, the Cleveland Federal Executive Board partnered with the Defense Finance and Accounting Service Cleveland and the Cuyahoga County Board of Health to conduct a series of pandemic briefings, designed to educate attendees on plans and procedures that will help mitigate the effects of a pandemic outbreak. Additionally, working with FEMA region V, the Cleveland Federal Executive Board served as a resource point to order and distribute emergency pocket cards for all civilian and contract employees (*see attached preparedness pocket card*).

In addition to our pandemic exercises and activities we have continued to update and enhance our 24/7 emergency notification system. Through the efforts of our Dallas-Fort Worth Federal Executive Board and the partnership with the FBI, our member agencies are now part of a national emergency notification system, Law Enforcement Online (LEO) and United States Public and Private Partnership (USP3). For the purpose of emergency notification, the USP3 Web based system is capable of issuing notifications in multiple formats: email, text, and text-to-voice. The system can issue 5,000 email and text messages and 10,000 outbound calls in a matter of minutes. Prior to adopting the USP3 system, we were reliant on an outdated phone tree style call down emergency notification process. In response to the recent flooding that many Ohio counties experienced, we have also developed a process where weather warnings from the National Weather Service will be issued utilizing the USP3 notification capability.

In addition to the emergency notification capability of the USP3 system, the system also provides members with a daily global snapshot of world events. Many of the daily notifications include relevant information related to H5N1 and pandemic concerns (*see page 8 for report sample*).

Some additional examples of emergency preparedness exercises sponsored by the Cleveland Federal Executive Boards include:

National Response Plan Table Top Exercise

In an effort to encourage reflection and discussions by Agency management regarding crisis response plans, policies, capabilities, jurisdictional roles, interagency collaboration, and cooperation; the Cleveland Federal Executive Board sponsored an interagency National Response Plan tabletop training exercise. The facilitators for the tabletop were professional training instructors and FBI specialists from the FBI academy in Quantico, Virginia.

Prior to the exercise, each participating agency was forwarded a copy of the NRP and encouraged to review their agency's role in the plan. The review was especially helpful in stimulating thought, discussion; for some agencies it was their first exposure to the NRP.

Cleveland Security Briefing and Table Top Exercise

In 2006, the Cleveland Federal Executive Board conducted a Cleveland Security Briefing and Emergency Preparedness Tabletop Exercise. The tabletop exercise was designed to increase agency's understanding of their roles and responsibilities, review notifications and response actions, identify shortfalls and planning gaps associated with their emergency plans. Members of the U.S. Coast Guard, Ninth District and the Cleveland Division of Police facilitated a forum presenting a series of scenarios depicting real life emergencies. The scenarios tested key emergency decision points and interagency issues related to the notification and management of the federal workforce. The tabletop exercise also served as a preparatory exercise for agencies scheduled to participate in the Cleveland Area Security Initiative Exercise sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security.

Cleveland Urban Area Security Initiative Exercise

In 2006, sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security and led by the U.S. Coast Guard Ninth District, Cleveland area agencies participated in a full-scale urban emergency exercise. The exercise included State, County, city, and local personnel, as well as Cleveland Federal Executive Board member agencies, as well as emergency support agencies. Goals for the exercise included testing communications, evaluating training, and the identification of areas needing improvement. The exercise also provided the opportunity to test the interoperability of communications systems, Incident Command System, and identification of training needs. At the conclusion of the exercise, a representative from the Cleveland Division of Police provided the Cleveland Federal Executive Board's Policy Committee with an after action report to ensure agencies could fully benefit from the lessons learned from the exercise.

CHALLENGES

As stated in the GAO report, there are inconsistencies across the FEB network in regards to different staffing levels, different funding models, different resources, and different reporting structures. However, each Federal Executive Board faces the same degree of complexity in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

In preparation for this hearing, I surveyed our member agencies to better report their challenges associated with pandemic planning and readiness. Many of the agencies identified issues related to telework programs and their agency's inability to handle a surge during a pandemic. They are seeking assistance from the FEB to help clarify telework, leave policies, and hiring flexibility guidelines. Much of that will be accomplished with the help of the OPM. Many agencies point to the need for periodic security and emergency preparedness training, credible information of new developments, and timely updates from reliable sources. I believe our close working relationship with FEMA will help us meet the training needs, however, resource limitations may adversely impact our ability to deliver all that is needed and expected.

If FEBs are to be effective in these areas, our positions will need to be properly designated as to having a role as emergency personnel. I believe this will alleviate any clearance issues that may develop as our roles expand. It is also my hope that the final version of the National Response Framework will appropriately identify FEBs as having a role in emergency planning and support.

This week our office sponsored retirement seminars for CSRS and FERS covered employees. Within a survey of the 230 attendees, 63% of them stated they intend to retire within 5 years, validating predictions that the waves of retirements are imminent. Given those projections, we are faced with yet another challenge: how do we maintain our capabilities with the pending loss of some of our most knowledgeable and relied upon personnel; many of those will be our emergency responders.

What resources will be available to support the FEB strategic plan that's being developed with the guidance of OPM? As we focus more of our attention on emergency preparedness issues and activities, we must be mindful of its impact in the areas of human capital management and community outreach, clearly both affect our overall success. Many of our human capital management programs ensure our emergency preparedness initiatives are effective by ensuring individuals are trained and employees are aware.

For example, the Cleveland Federal Executive Boards sponsors a nine-month leadership development program (Cleveland Federal Community Leadership Institute) to ensure our federal community has a pool of qualified candidates to assume leadership roles in the future. Much of the training is focused on teamwork, community awareness, and individual accountability. As the wave of retirements loom, and succession models are developed, we must be more proactive and less reactive in preparing our future leaders.

CLOSING

In closing, I would like to say that I believe Federal Executive Boards do have a significant role to play, not just in pandemic planning, but in the overall efficiency of our government in the field. Let me also say that many of the examples I provided today, could not have been possible without the support of our sponsor agency, NASA Glenn Research Center. Their dedication and unwavering support of the Cleveland FEB, has been paramount in our ability to deliver on our goals.

Our federal leaders have stated that they are committed to the work of the FEB, its mission, and its goals. As one agency leader recently commented, "The FEB is the only venue for agencies to interact with each other, thereby offering a means of communication that would otherwise not exist."

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee. It has been my honor to appear before you today. I hope that the information contained in this statement provides insights into what role Federal Executive Boards have in a pandemic preparedness and in enhancing our government's emergency response capability. At this time, I would be happy to answer any questions you or the other members of the subcommittee may have regarding my statement.

Geographical Boundaries for the Cleveland Federal Executive Board (CFEB)

CFEB Coverage Area (as of 10/2006)



Counties covered by the CFEB include:

Ashtabula, Carroll, Columbia, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Harrison, Holmes, Lake, Lorain, Mahoning, Medina (except the city of Wadsworth and Westfield Center), Portage, Stark, Summit, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, and Wayne Counties.

** In 2007, the Cleveland Federal Executive Board expanded its Combined Federal Campaign geographical coverage area to 18 Ohio counties and 2 counties in Pennsylvania (Erie and Crawford).*

Emergency Preparedness Pocket Card

GSA

citizen★corps



FEMA

GSA

Smarter Solutions



Be Prepared
for Emergencies!
Get a Kit.
Make a Plan.
Be Informed.

Prepare Your Important Documents

In the event of an emergency, having copies of important documents and other valuable information in a safe place can be vital for your well-being. The checklist on the reverse side can be completed according to your personal situation and kept with copies of the documents as a cover sheet.

After you compiled your documents, be sure to keep them in a secure place, such as a bank safe-deposit box where they are less likely to be damaged or lost.

(See reverse side.)

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Emergency Preparedness Important Documents Checklist

PERSONAL PAPERS

- Social Security Numbers; important mailing and e-mail addresses; and phone numbers
- Birth certificates; adoption papers
- Marriage certificate
- Citizenship papers; naturalization documentation
- Drivers licenses; passports; federal and state IDs
- Shot records; blood types
- Court orders relating to divorce, child support and custody, alimony or property division

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- Wills (last will and testament, living will)
- Powers of attorney documentation (for financial and health matters)
- Insurance policies, including policy numbers and coverage limits, addresses and phone numbers of agents or companies
- Bank accounts with types of accounts and account numbers, and telephone numbers associated with the accounts
- Credit card account numbers and telephone numbers associated with each account
- Real estate documents (deeds, deeds, mortgages, and promissory notes; closing papers)
- Vehicle titles
- All bonds, stocks and certificates; sales or installment contracts and finance agreements
- Additional documents

To learn more, visit
www.ready.gov.

RESOURCES

I. ARTICLES

The Cleveland Federal Executive Board Emergency Dismissal Plan

<http://www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/OHR/FEB/eplan.pdf>

The Cleveland Federal Executive Board Employee Emergency Contingency Handbook

<http://www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/OHR/FEB/emerghb.pdf>

The Cleveland Federal Executive Board's Constitution and Bylaws

<http://www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/OHR/FEB/bylaws.pdf>

The Cleveland Federal Executive Board- 2007 Combined Federal Campaign Coverage Area

<http://www.uws.org/cfc/neocfccounties.pdf>

Code of Federal Regulations:

5CFR960 Federal Executive Boards

http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_07/5cfr960_07.html

II. REPORTS

Cleveland Federal Executive Board- 2006 Annual Report

<http://www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/OHR/FEB/ar2006.pdf>

Cleveland Federal Executive Board- 2005 Annual Report

<http://www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/OHR/FEB/ar2005.pdf>

Government Accountability Office Report (GAO-07-515)

The Federal Workforce: Additional Steps Needed to Take Advantage of Federal Executive Boards' Ability to Contribute to Emergency Operations, May 4, 2007

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07515.pdf>

USP3- Global Information Snapshot –Sample Report

Indonesia

Disease

A man who contracted bird flu after preparing an infected chicken had died on 09/06/2007, lifting worldwide death toll to 200, Friday, September 07, 2007

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/detailgeneral.asp?fileid=20070906182923&irec=2>