

**TESTIMONY OF RAYMOND MORRIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
MINNESOTA FEDERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD
NATIONAL BUSINESS CENTER, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
BEFORE THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF
GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, HEARING ENTITLED, THE ROLE OF FEDERAL
EXECUTIVE BOARDS IN PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS**

SEPTEMBER 28, 2007

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I am Raymond Morris, Executive Director of the Minnesota Federal Executive Board (FEB). As an FEB Director, I am responsible for the coordination of Federal government agencies and entities within Minnesota and intergovernmental relationships with State and Local government agencies, especially in emergency preparedness matters.

My statement today will concentrate on FEB Minnesota's activities in emergency preparedness and response during crisis, including a potential pandemic influenza outbreak. I will focus on the current role our FEB plays in communicating vital information, coordinating activities, and serving as a catalyst to develop and enhance partnerships and collaborations among Federal, State and Local governments.

The early evening of August 1st was like any other hot and steamy end of the day in Minneapolis. Commuters were on their way home to loved ones and dinner. Two U.S. Army Corps workers, David Nerva and James Crosby, were at Lock and Dam #2 on the Mississippi River, locking through a passenger ferry that was going downstream. At 6:01 P.M. the tranquil scene at the lock was disrupted in a matter of seconds when the I-35W Bridge collapsed, nearly landing on the entrance to the lock. Nerva quickly closed the lock gates, thus stopping the flow of the river and giving dozens of people a chance to leave their sinking cars and swim to safety while Crosby ran to the bridge site to help some of the 108 survivors that rode the bridge down a distance of over 60 feet. These two Federal workers were among the unsung heroes in an evening marked by heroic efforts.

Of late Minnesota has had more than our share of natural and man-made disasters. The intergovernmental response to the sudden collapse of the I-35W Bridge in Minneapolis showed the nation the excellent state of preparedness among the Twin Cities emergency agencies. Another catastrophe struck Minnesota two weeks later as up to 20 inches of rain fell causing massive flooding throughout the southeastern portion of the state.

During both of these events FEB Minnesota acted swiftly, passing critical information through our email network from local and state government sources to over 100 Federal agencies. These updates continued throughout the month, keeping all agencies apprised of the status of the recovery operations, road detours, and other potential workforce impacts. The response to these disasters by all levels of government in Minnesota was

exemplary due to one vital element: trust. All of the major players knew each other by name and knew they could count on each other.

In the past year FEB Minnesota joined the FBI United States Public and Private Partnership emergency communications network commonly known as USP3. This program, offered to all FEBs at no cost, gives us advanced communications capability to contact our key Federal officials in every agency throughout the state. We thank the FBI for this important communications tool.

FEB Minnesota has worked hard over the past 10 years serving as a catalyst in the Federal sector to establish and maintain critical relationships with State and Local governments.

Our FEB participated in many task forces on topics from bioterrorism to debris removal and cosponsored a tactical mock terror attack exercise in 1999. Prior to the attacks of 9/11 we met with officials gathered by the Oklahoma FEB to learn the important lessons from the bombing of the Murrah Federal Office Building in 1995 and the more than 100 tornados that hit the state just months prior to our visit.

On the day of the 9/11 attacks, FEBs around the nation passed critical information to all agencies. Following 9/11 we made the decision to include State and local government agencies in all of our presentations and tabletop exercises. FEB Minnesota has filled the role of educating agencies on current information and trends in terrorism, antiterrorist activities, safe mail handling following the anthrax attacks, transportation safety, bioterrorism and pandemic influenza and, of course, Minnesota's weather challenges. The State of Minnesota has reciprocated by hosting DHS-funded emergency management classes in Federal conference centers.

Since 2001 FEB Minnesota has sponsored over 20 half- or full-day seminars open to all agencies, with expert speakers from the CDC, FBI, Secret Service, FEMA, Transportation Security Administration, U.S. Military Departments, and Minnesota State and Local Government agencies, to name a few. We hosted five major tabletop exercises, including the first large-scale pandemic influenza exercise in the country, entitled Steadfast Response II. The pandemic segment of this exercise was created by FEB Minnesota in conjunction with the Minnesota Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and the Minnesota Department of Health.

In the past year, we have held two additional tabletop exercises. The first was the Pan Flu II exercise that was developed by FEB Minnesota with assistance from the state health department. This exercise continued exploring the adverse impact of a pandemic to Federal, State and Local government agencies as well as key infrastructure businesses who were members of the FBI Infragard Program. In February we hosted Going To Red, Phase I, that explored the national threat of nuclear terrorism culminating with a 10 kiloton improvised nuclear device exploded outside the State Capitol City of Saint Paul. This exercise was developed by the FEB Minnesota in conjunction with FEMA and GSA Region V, Radiological Assistance Program of Argonne National Laboratory, FBI –

Minneapolis Field Office, Minnesota Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Cities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, and the Association of Minnesota Emergency Managers and the Metropolitan Emergency Managers Association.

Over the past three years we have worked extensively with officials of the Minnesota Department of Health on a program to cover key Federal workers such as air traffic controllers and FBI agents in the event of a pandemic or bioterrorism release, so that they could continue their critical duties without interruption.

Of most importance to our FEB is the establishment and cultivation of the personal relationships to bind all levels of government together to help Minnesota citizens in an emergency. Because the Federal Government is the third largest employer, public or private in Minnesota, FEB Minnesota represents all of the Federal agencies in the state as a board member of the Association of Minnesota Emergency Managers. We also have an active presence in other key intergovernmental organizations like the Metropolitan Area Managers Association and the FBI Minneapolis Field Office's Joint Terrorism Task Force. Strong personal relationships make emergency management work for our citizens.

There are three major elements that join to make the Minnesota FEB a strong and effective force. The first is an active and effective Executive Committee, comprised of 33 senior Federal officials who are all active partners in improving the effectiveness of the Federal workforce.

Second, we have an active intern program with over a dozen colleges and universities in Minnesota. This program provides FEB Minnesota annually with more than two additional work years of manpower and helps provide a quality experience working in government for students completing their Bachelor's or Master's degrees. Our intern program is essential to help instill the importance of public service, especially in light of challenges posed by the large scale retirements from the Federal service.

The final part of the equation making our FEB strong and effective is financial and administrative support by a key Federal agency. I am proud as a 28-year veteran of the Department of the Interior that the DOI is our funding and support agency.

The National Business Center funds the two professional FEB positions in Minnesota as well as an operating budget for travel and office expenses. In Minnesota, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Regional Office provides additional computer, telephone and other administrative support to our FEB.

FEB Minnesota focuses our emergency preparations on an all-hazards approach. Our coordination among Federal agencies and our State and local partners is a vital aspect of our contingency planning and educational activities. We serve as a catalyst to develop and cultivate personal partnerships among all entities of government—the fruits of which were evident during the recent collapse of the I-35W Bridge and the extensive flooding in the state. With these situations in mind, it would be helpful for the FEBs to be specifically mentioned in key Federal emergency planning documents when they are

revised. Addition of the FEBs to documents like the National Response Framework will minimize the duplication of Federal resources, especially in the areas of crisis communications and training programs in Federal field areas. Defining the FEBs' existing Federal function in emergency preparedness planning documents would foster clear understanding of our roles by the State and local governments we partner with on training programs and other preparedness activities.

In closing, I would like to thank you Mr. Chairman and the subcommittee members for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am ready to answer any questions that you may have.

Additional Information:

FEB Minnesota – FY2006 Annual Report:

http://www.doi.gov/febtc/files/FEB_Annual06.pdf

FEB Minnesota – FY2005 Annual Report:

http://www.doi.gov/febtc/files/FEB_Annual05.pdf

FEB Minnesota – FY2004 Annual Report:

http://www.doi.gov/febtc/files/FEB_Annual04.pdf

Federal Executive Board Web:

<http://www.feb.gov>

Office of Personnel Management Information:

OPM Handbook On Pay and Leave Benefits For Federal Employees Affected By Severe Weather Emergencies or Other Emergency Situations

<http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2005/2005-18hb.pdf> - See page 20

Federal Register – Proposed Rules:

November 25, 2002 Federal Executive Boards

<https://www.opm.gov/fedregis/2002/66-0070559-a.pdf>

Code of Federal Regulations:

5CFR960-- PART 960_FEDERAL EXECUTIVE BOARDS

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

GAO Reports:

The Federal Workforce: Additional Steps Needed to Take Advantage of Federal Executive Boards' Ability to Contribute to Emergency Operations GAO-07-515 May 4, 2007

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

Human Capital: Opportunities to Improve Federal Continuity Planning Guidance GAO-04-384 April 20, 2004

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04384.pdf>

Decisions of the Comptroller General of the United States, Vol. 65, July 1986

<http://archive.gao.gov/otherpdf1/088025.pdf>

Federal Executive Boards Contribute to Improved Field Management but Future Is Uncertain GGD-84-31 March 6, 1984

<http://archive.gao.gov/d5t1/123584.pdf>

Department of the Interior – National Business Center Web:

<http://www.nbc.gov/>

Government Executive Magazine Articles

Hackers deface Federal Executive Board Web sites, August 18, 2006

http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=34812&sid=1

Plan B June 6, 2005

http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?filepath=/dailyfed/0605/060605o1.htm

Terrorism course proves popular with federal managers, May 30, 2003

http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?filepath=/dailyfed/0503/053003p1.htm

Few agencies outside Washington buy antiterror gear for employees, April 7, 2003

http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?filepath=/dailyfed/0403/040703p1.htm

Agencies craft policies for dealing with 'severe' terror threat, March 26, 2003

http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?filepath=/dailyfed/0303/032603p1.htm

After attacks, some agencies revise evacuation plans, February 12, 2002

http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?filepath=/dailyfed/0202/021202t1.htm

OPM recommends telecommuting as a way to help employees cope, September 26, 2001

http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?filepath=/dailyfed/0901/092601t2.htm

Regional Powerhouses, November 1, 1996

http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?filepath=/features/1196s3.htm