

ACTIVITIES REPORT

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2020



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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ADAPTING TO THE UNEXPECTED



It was February 2020 when we last convened in a large group, in-person, at the 56th Annual Governor's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Conference. At that time, we knew that COVID-19 was on the horizon, but I would guess that none of us could have known the true impact it would have on our professional and personal lives. As of the end of 2020, we are still in the longest State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) activation in Minnesota history. We will keep the SEOC fully activated until state assistance is not needed for COVID-19 response.

I would like to commend our local, tribal, state and federal partners for adapting to the unexpected over the past year. In addition to the pandemic, our regular work of standing by Minnesotans during their worst days continued. We all responded to many other emergencies and disasters in 2020. Notable among them was the civil unrest following the death of George Floyd. The Twin Cities made headlines as large crowds gathered to protest and demand justice as others arrived to participate

in civil unrest. However, other communities across the state also experienced unrest. I am pleased to say that our regular multi-agency coordination training allowed us to create a quick and effective response during that time.

In any given year, Minnesota Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) assists our local communities with response and recovery following natural disasters. For 2020, this included 12 State Disaster Declarations, which included damages sustained during winter storms, severe thunderstorms, flooding and hurricane force winds. In all, our disaster recovery specialists paid out \$5.8 million in state disaster contingency account funds to applicants who submitted eligible expenses for response and recovery costs.

HSEM has also assumed a coordination and planning role in several major events. For instance, HSEM has dedicated staff to coordinate with and support the Northern Lights Task Force as needed. County law enforcement agencies along the Enbridge Line 3 replacement project route make up the members of this task force. In addition, HSEM is assisting Twin Cities' law enforcement partners in preparing for the public safety planning related to the trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin.

For as much as we committed ourselves to taking care of our own, we also found time to assist our neighbors in need. For the first time in recent Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) history, HSEM coordinated the deployment of two Minnesota strike teams and a human services manager to help with wildfire response efforts in Oregon.

Emergency management personnel across Minnesota had to pivot in ways we likely never imagined over this past year. Our work has, undoubtedly, saved lives. Yet, the loss has been immeasurable. Today, we grieve the losses that thousands of families have experienced, and we pledge to continue to help Minnesotans respond and recover no matter what emergency may darken our doors. It is my pleasure to stand alongside you as we commit ourselves to keeping one another safe.

Joe Kelly, Director
Homeland Security and Emergency Management

PREPAREDNESS



Minnesota Departments of Public Safety and Education

Minnesota School Safety Center

Over the past year, the Minnesota School Safety Center (MnSSC) Team on-boarded two additional team members; School Safety Technologies Coordinator Jon Jorgenson, and School Communications Coordinator, Kasey Cable.

Both of these positions have already broadened our ability to provide additional focused resources to all elementary and secondary schools throughout the state.

As we moved to a virtual world, the MnSSC created a new electronic newsletter to distribute to school safety professionals statewide.

Drill and Lockdown Guidance

COVID-19 upended many aspects of our lives — including our children's education. When it became clear that school would look different for Minnesota kids, the MnSSC developed coordinated fire and lockdown drill guidance. The guidance was a result of a partnership with the State Fire Marshal Division (SFMD) and the Minnesota Department of Education. Whether virtual, in-person, or a hybrid of the two, the information was presented to schools operating in the COVID-19 environment.

For example, despite the pandemic, schools are still required to conduct safety drills for fires, lockdowns, and severe weather such as tornadoes. The SFMD School Inspection Team continues advising schools regarding fire evacuation drills, reminding them that fire drills are



School hallway empty during a lockdown drill.

still required during a pandemic. The team recommends students and staff maintain social distancing guidelines and practices during the drill. However, schools are reminded that when there is an imminent or substantial threat to life, the response must take precedent over the health risk(s) of COVID-19. Physical distancing and masking must take a back seat when evacuations are necessary to protect lives and prevent injury.

School Training

Staff also delivered Basic School Resource Officer (SRO) Basic and Advanced SRO Strategies courses throughout the year, all while adhering the pandemic protocols.

The MnSSC is in process of developing virtual delivery of several of our current course offerings. This will assist us in offering efficient training across the state. The team is also finishing the new training development for the School Resource Officer and School Safety Specialist training tracks. This work will be done in coordination with the Minnesota POST Board and the Minnesota Department of Education.

PREPAREDNESS

School Facility Assessments and EOPs

Beginning in March 2020, MnSSC team members provided significant support in the Operations and Planning Sections of the SEOC in support of the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest events. Due to this emergency deployment, the number of school safety presentations and facility security assessments was significantly reduced. These school safety activities will increase significantly as the COVID-19 response dials down in 2021.

HSEM Training

Angela Packer joined the team in November to assume the State Training Officer and Coordinator position. The team also has been integral in the further development of three new emergency management training tracks; Exercise Planner, School Resource Officer, and School Safety Coordinator.

In addition to all of these activities, HSEM Training & Exercise Team members filled critical support roles in the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) Logistics Team for the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest response emergencies.

Platform Changes

The HSEM Training & Exercise team worked diligently this past year to further develop and recalibrate several of the features of the Learning Management System (LMS) to be more intuitive and user friendly for our large cadre of students. With the enormous impact of COVID-19 response, the team researched and selected a virtual training delivery platform (Adobe Connect and Microsoft Teams) which will be utilized to safely and effectively provide training to our students statewide. The team has begun training course reviews and updates to align with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requirements and the needs of the HSEM Emergency Management training track priorities. In addition, the team continues to share information from our national training partners regarding virtual (online) trainings and updates on residential/mobile courses in coordination with our consortium course provider partners.

Workshops

Additionally, the team facilitated training and exercise planning workshops to all regions of the state in 2020. This included exercise support and development for several regions, as well as for statewide impact events such as the Line 3 public safety agency planning and coordination process.



Law enforcement participating in the Line 3 public safety planning exercise conducted at Camp Ripley.

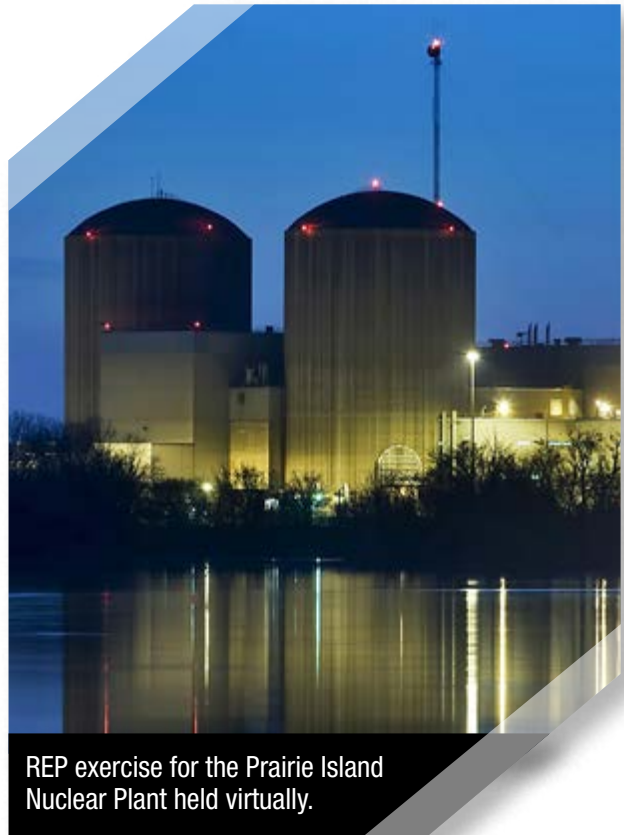
PREPAREDNESS

Radiological Emergency Preparedness Program

As the pandemic persisted, it became clear that the SEOC would not be available to host the annual radiological emergency preparedness (REP) exercise safely with a large group of people. That's when HSEM's REP staff successfully completed the 2020 Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant exercise in a new way. FEMA gave Minnesota credit for actual events conducted by the state and counties during the COVID-19 response. In addition, HSEM and Xcel Energy demonstrated certain actions in a virtual environment.

The REP staff also completed the following actions in 2020:

- ◆ Conducted a hostile action based drill with the Goodhue, Dakota and Pierce County, City of Red Wing, Minnesota State Patrol and Xcel Energy.
- ◆ Participated in a flood tabletop exercise with Xcel Energy and other local partners near the Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant.
- ◆ Converted Radiological Emergency Preparedness (REP) classes from in-person to virtual trainings.



REP exercise for the Prairie Island Nuclear Plant held virtually.

State Emergency Operations Center

The SEOC saw plenty of activity during 2020. As this report is being written, the SEOC has been active for more than 300 days during the sustained COVID-19 response effort. The activation is the longest in Minnesota history.

COVID-19 Activation

The SEOC went to a full activation in March of 2020 and has remained at this activation level to support the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) in their statewide response to the COVID-19.

During this activation, the SEOC provided a wide variety of support to partner agencies. Such as:

- ◆ Hosting daily meetings between local, state and federal partners.
- ◆ Coordinating activities and requests for resources and supplies.
- ◆ Facilitating information flow between FEMA Region V and Minnesota.

In addition, the SEOC staff provided support to MDH's Statewide Healthcare Command Center (SHCC), assisted with the acquisition of the COVID-19 alternate care site in Arden Hills, and hosted the Department of Administration, who managed personal protective equipment (PPE) purchases for first responders statewide.

Spring Flooding

It may not have made headlines, but Minnesota experienced some flooding in April of 2020. During this time, the HSEM coordinated the activation of the Minnesota National Guard (MNNG) to assist with flooding control and other mitigation efforts in the Red River Valley.



SEOC activated for the state of Minnesota COVID-19 response.



Alternate care site beds located in Arden Hills.

RESPONSE

George Floyd Death Civil Unrest

The SEOC provided logistics support to include food, sheltering, PPE and staging base operations to MNNG, the Minnesota State Patrol, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and local law enforcement agency during the May – June civil disturbance incidents. While activities were primarily located in the metro area, HSEM's support was statewide.

The SEOC also assisted in staffing the Multi Agency Coordination Center (MACC) during this incident and is now is actively involved in preparations for the trials of the former police officers charged in George Floyd's death.

EMAC Missions

The Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) allows states to send supplies, equipment and personnel to other states during a disaster or an emergency when all local resources are exhausted. HSEM coordinates EMAC requests and facilitated five missions this past year.

MN provided the following EMAC support: Oregon Wildfires

Last September, Minnesota answered the call when Oregon requested two strike teams to protect structures in wildfire impacted communities along the Oregon-California state line. The mission included the following local fire departments and volunteer crew members.

Minnesota Strike Team I

1. Brainerd Fire — Type I Engine
2. Eden Prairie Fire — Type I Engine and Task Force Leader
3. CrossLake Fire — Type II Engine
4. Fisher Fire — Type VI Engine
5. Motley Fire — Type I Tender

Minnesota Strike Team II

1. Bemidji Fire — Type I and Type VI Engines, Type I Tender and Task Force Leader
2. Bemidji Fire — Type VI Engine
3. Spring Lake Park, Blaine and Mounds View Fire — Type VI Engine



The SEOC provided logistics support to the MACC.



Minnesota firefighters sent to Oregon and assisted in controlling the Oregon wildfires last September.

While deployed, the EMAC members worked 12-hour days in rough, unfamiliar terrain. After work, they rested and slept in tents on the ground in makeshift camps. Community members expressed their appreciation for the firefighters with “Thank You” signs and cake upon the release from their mission.

In addition to the strike teams, HSEM coordinated the deployment of a Human Services Branch Coordinator to the Oregon SEOC during the wildfire response. Michelle Lakso is the emergency manager for the Minnesota Department of Human Services. While working in the Oregon SEOC, she assisted in coordinating programs and resources to assist wildfire-affected individuals and communities.

MN requested EMAC support: Law Enforcement Mobile Field Force (MFF)

Sometimes, during the response of an emergency, first responders realize they need a little extra help themselves. That’s why Minnesota submitted an EMAC request in May and June for six Type-2 law enforcement mobile field force teams. These teams assisted local law enforcement in protecting people and structures during the civil unrest following the death of George Floyd.

During that time, the Minnesota National Guard also responded to an EMAC request to deliver ready-to-eat meals, or MREs, to first responders on duty. In all, guard members delivered 30,500 MREs during this incident.

RECOVERY

Emergencies don't take a break just because we're in the middle of a pandemic. In 2020, HSEM recovery staff paid \$37.9 million in federal funds and \$12.4 million in state funds for disaster reimbursements.

Reimbursements paid to Minnesota applicants for state disasters in 2020 totaled \$5.8 million dollars.

Federal Disaster

Minnesota's one and only federal disaster declaration was a result of the state's COVID-19 response efforts. President Donald Trump declared DR-4531 on April 7 for Jan. 20 onward. This disaster declaration will still be in effect well into 2021.

The declaration ensures Minnesota will receive direct federal funding that will help continue to mitigate the pandemic's impact on public health, state resources, unemployment, and community infrastructure such as health care facilities.

It also authorizes funding to support crisis counseling, supplemental nutrition programs, medical assistance, funeral assistance, legal services, and statewide hazard mitigation.

Under a disaster declaration, reimbursable activities typically include activation of the State Emergency Operations Center, National Guard costs, law enforcement, mental health support, and other measures necessary to protect public health and safety.



Federal disaster declaration for assistance during COVID-19 response.

RECOVERY

2020 STATE DISASTERS AT A GLANCE

DR	Incident Period	Date Declared	Incident Type	Eligible Counties and Tribes
SD-052	8/13/20–8/14/20	12/7/20	Heavy rains and flooding	Cass, Itasca, Norman
SD-051	8/8/20	12/7/20	High winds and heavy rains	Goodhue, Yellow Medicine
SD-050	7/25/20–7/27/20	12/7/2020	Heavy rains, flooding, and slope failures	Nicollet, Renville, Sibley
SD-049	5/27/20–6/3/20	11/5/2020	Fires - Civil Unrest	Hennepin
SD-048	7/15/20–7/17/20	10/19/2020	Severe thunderstorms with heavy rain, flooding, and damaging winds	Cass, Kittson, Marshall
SD-047	7/6/20–7/8/20	10/19/2020	Severe thunderstorms with damaging winds	Wilkin
SD-046	6/23/20–7/3/20	10/12/2020	Heavy rains and flooding	Kittson, Le Sueur, Morrison, Nicollet, Renville, Washington
SD-045	6/17/2020	8/14/2020	Severe storms and flooding	Roseau
SD-044	6/7/20–6/10/20	8/14/2020	Severe weather and flooding	Kittson
SD-043	3/9/20–5/7/20	7/23/2020	Spring flooding	Hubbard, Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Polk
SD-042	3/29/2020	5/21/2020	Rain and Heavy Snow	Morrison
SD-041	12/28/19–12/31/19	3/20/2020	Severe Winter Storm	Renville
SD-040	9/20/19–10/17/19	1/6/2020	Heavy rains and flooding	Carlton, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Roseau
SD-039	10/12/19	1/6/2020	Severe Thunderstorm with heavy rain and hurricane force winds	Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

MITIGATION

HSEM's Hazard Mitigation program was awarded an EPA "Building Blocks for Regional Resilience Technical Assistance" grant in conjunction with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The grant supported the development and implementation of the Southern Minnesota Resilience Workshop with 125 attendees over three days.

- ◆ HSEM's State Hazard Mitigation Officer, Jennifer Davis, received the 2020 Minnesota Climate Adaptation Award in the institution category for the 2019 State of Minnesota Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- ◆ Jennifer Davis was also the invited guest speaker at the US Army Corps of Engineers' Silver Jackets Training Seminars on Ice Jam Flooding in St. Louis, MO.

Hazard Mitigation Highlights

- ◆ 17 County Hazard Mitigation Plans approved.
- ◆ Pre-disaster mitigation planning with nine other counties continues.
- ◆ Completed one hazard mitigation grant program acquisition.
- ◆ Completed one hazard mitigation grant program generator project.

Elected Officials Training

In 2014, Director Kelly started the Elected and Appointed Officials Training program. This program is specifically designed for senior officials of tribal, county, township and city governments. The four modules range between two and two-and-a-half hours and include:

- ◆ Senior officials' roles and responsibilities during emergencies.
- ◆ Understanding federal and state disaster assistance programs.
- ◆ Communicating with the public during emergencies.
- ◆ Review and tabletop exercise.

The county emergency management director works with HSEM to get the training scheduled. Since the inception of the program, Director Kelly has now completed

trainings for 117 jurisdictions. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 response, Director Kelly conducted just one training last year at the Prairie Island Indian Community.

Elected Officials training is Director Kelly's passion project and he hopes to resume trainings soon. He looks forward to sharing the many lessons learned at all levels of government during the pandemic response and recovery.

Communications Joint Information Centers

A joint information center (or JIC) is a physical space in which communicators gather to work together to create consistent messaging for the public. A joint information system (or JIS) is the framework in which multiple agencies work within to exchange information and create that public messaging. Throughout this past year, the DPS-OOC participated in the following JICs and JISs.

- ◆ COVID-19 state response.
- ◆ Civil unrest following the death of George Floyd.
- ◆ Northern Lights Task Force and the replacement of the Enbridge Line 3 pipeline.
- ◆ Operation Safety Net and the public safety preparation for the trial of Derek Chauvin.

COVID-19 Response

This past year was a busy one for the DPS Office of Communications (OOC). Leadership stood up a virtual joint information center (JIC) for COVID-19 response in March, and included state agency, public, and private partners to ensure a working situational awareness of the pandemic. Those virtual JIC meetings continue through October and included:

- ◆ Monitoring traditional and social media engagement.
- ◆ Compiling daily news releases during the height of the outbreak.
- ◆ Launching a redesigned SEOC website detailing the latest guidance and recommendations.
- ◆ Highlighting response efforts through regular weekly blogs.

MITIGATION

In addition, staff members served as work group members to the Testing Work Group and the State Healthcare Coordination Center (SHCC), which was tasked with identifying an alternate care site (ACS) that could be stood up should hospital capacities be overrun. DPS-OOC handled all media inquiries related to the SHCC's work and produced a 10-minute video tour of the ACS at Langton Place in Arden Hills.

The media room was the site of numerous news conferences and media briefings as Gov. Walz detailed new or revised guidelines and restrictions during the pandemic and during the civil unrest following George Floyd's death. In addition, the DPS-OOC photographer was tasked with running audio and visual equipment for news conferences held in other locations throughout the year, at the request of the Governor's Office.

Closed Captioning Project

The DPS-OOC continues to work on the launch of a closed captioning project that would allow our video production teams to close caption our live news conferences in real-time. In addition, the new hardware and software would also allow closed captioning to be included into all of our post-production videos, which live on our DPS web and social media pages.

This project is made possible by a grant facilitated through HSEM and will be implemented in two phases. During 2020, the DPS-OOC acquired nearly all of the necessary audio/visual equipment. Over the next year, staff will work to integrate that equipment to launch this new service.



MITIGATION

TPT Now 2.5 and the Community Resiliency Advisory Council

Imagine you've recently moved to a different country — one where English isn't spoken, and you don't speak the language very well. Now imagine there's some sort of disaster, such as a tornado or flash flood. You need information you can understand about where to take shelter, who can help you, what happens if you need medical attention or food. What if you couldn't get it? Imagine how scary that would feel; how isolating.

That can happen right here in the United States — even here in Minnesota. It's an issue that the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and Twin Cities Public Television (TPT) are teaming up to solve. The goal? To improve the availability of public health and safety information to people who speak English as a second language (ESL).

Launched in 2017 with help from Metro region emergency managers, TPT NOW (channel 2.5) provides daily situational and emergency response communications, including warning and alerts in four languages: English, Hmong, Somali and Spanish. Preparedness information includes routine topics such as flu shots and winter car kits, but in emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, TPT NOW supports local and state agencies as a dedicated service reaching cultural communities.

But don't think of TPT NOW as a news station. They don't edit any of the messaging they receive. Nor are they a government agency. Lillian McDonald, who is the managing director of Emergency Response Services at TPT, describes TPT NOW as the "sweet spot" between news and education, supporting public officials trying



TPT NOW televises Governor Walz press briefing describing COVID-19 efforts.

MITIGATION

to reach target audiences. McDonald says, “We provide information the state government needs to get out to the community long after news crews have finished their live shots.”

With the need for real-time information during COVID-19, TPT NOW used existing relationships with community and cultural media to broadcast live news conferences in four languages. The simulcasts are then picked up by community broadcasting partners: Somali-TV, Hmong-TV, TPT NOW (Spanish), and TPT MN (English).

This partnership is more than language translations. If you’re translating word-for-word, for example, you’re likely to transfer some English idioms (think “play it by ear” or “ballpark figure,” for example) that simply don’t translate. And in public safety messaging — whether it’s an emergency or not — clarity is key. That’s why it’s so helpful that TPT works with established linguists from Minnesota communities: They understand what their cultural group needs in order to understand and take heed of the messaging. “When you see public safety programming in your own language by your own community with your own community, people pay attention, and that’s huge,” said McDonald.

The Department of Public Safety has been partnering with TPT NOW since 2015, but it has only been recently that Minnesota’s diverse populations have discovered this work. That’s because, during the COVID-19 pandemic and the civil unrest following George Floyd’s death, TPT NOW and its broadcast partners found increasing ESL audiences watching and streaming news conferences in each language. In fact, TPT NOW’S highest-performing simulcast was an address by Gov. Tim Walz on May 29, when he discussed the civil unrest and resulting curfew. That broadcast alone reached 40,843 screens and was aired by two Latinx radio stations in Minnesota.

But DPS and TPT want to get the word out even further. We want diverse communities to know that there’s a place they can turn to and trust to provide them with the most accurate and up-to-date information during a public safety or health crisis. Because, no matter what language you speak, you deserve to know what’s going on during an emergency. DPS’ partnership with TPT NOW fills that important niche in Minnesota.

GRANTS AND DEVELOPMENT

COVID-19 Funding

The United States Congress appropriated supplemental funding to the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) program to assist with emergency management activities supporting the prevention of, preparation for, and response to the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency.

Over this past year, HSEM passed through Minnesota's full allocation \$1,769,795 to:

- ◆ 87 counties
- ◆ The four cities of the first class
- ◆ 11 tribal nations

The funds supported planning and operational readiness for COVID-19 preparedness and response; development of tools and strategies for prevention, preparedness, and response; and ongoing communication and coordination among federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial partners throughout the pandemic.

Non-Profit Security Grants

After the Non-Profit Security Grant outreach meeting in late 2019, HSEM scheduled a workshop to assist new grant applicants and provide additional information in 2020. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, alternative measures needed to be considered and help was provided to grant applicants virtually.

After the application process completed in May 2020, Minnesota non-profit organizations received nearly \$1.2 million in support for target hardening and other physical security enhancements to non-profit organizations that are at high risk of attack.

Funding Approval for New State Emergency Operations Center

If the prolonged SEOC activation has made anything clear, it's that we are in desperate need of a new facility. Fortunately, the gears are now in motion for that to happen. In October, state lawmakers recognized the need and approved Gov. Walz's bonding bill which allocates \$29.5 million for the project.

The new facility will be a much larger, standalone building situated on a 10 acre parcel of land outside of the urban

St. Paul setting north of the capital city. Currently, the project is in the predesign phase. The Minnesota Department of Administration has already sent out a request for proposals from design firms who may be interested in this project. Leaders with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Homeland Security and Emergency Management division (DPS-HSEM) reviewed those proposals in January 2021 and a team will choose a design firm in the weeks after.

Barring any delays to the project, design development will take place in the spring and summer of 2021. Bidding for construction is set for July through November. Actual construction should start in January 2022 and could take 12-14 months to complete. This means the new facility will likely open sometime in the spring of 2023.

The new SEOC will not only give staff the room and resources they need to manage emergencies; it will also be the state's designated "continuity of government" facility. This means that during a catastrophic event, the SEOC will be the place where the governor and other key officials would relocate to ride out the emergency.



Major water damage in SEOC causes disruption to activation activities.

ABOUT DPS-HSEM



2020 Governor's Conference brought emergency managers from across Minnesota together to learn and share best practices.

Our Core Values

Communications: We speak with one voice. We actively listen. We get the right information to the right people at the right time, so they can make the right decisions.

Service: We are available to help promptly and respectfully with reliable information and solutions.

Teamwork: We work together. We build trust by sharing our experience and expertise, and respecting each person's perspective.

Excellence: We are dedicated to delivering top quality results. We pursue personal growth and continuous improvement.

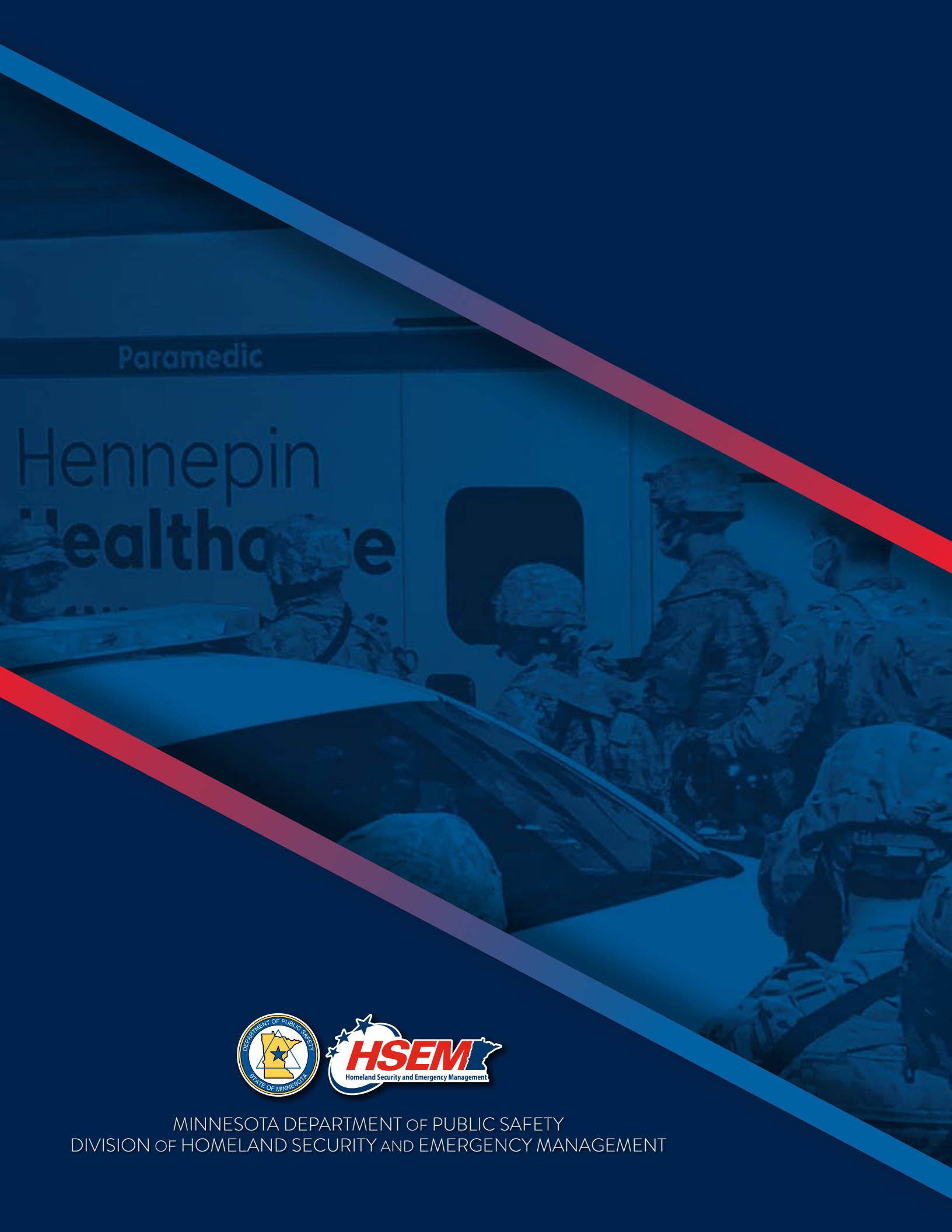
Professionalism: We hold ourselves and each other to the highest standards of conduct.

Our Mission

Helping Minnesota prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters.

Our Vision

A resilient Minnesota prepared to respond and recover.



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT