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County Officials Awarded for Excellence in Emergency Management

PRATTVILLE- County and State Emergency Management Agency (EMA) officials met this week for the Alabama Association of Emergency Managers (AAEM) annual conference. An awards luncheon was held on Tuesday to recognize the individuals and counties who have shown outstanding leadership and dedication to emergency management.

The awards bestowed were as follows:

The *Pat Neuhauser Spirit of EMA Award* is given to someone who demonstrates a high level of enthusiasm in promoting emergency management, a willingness to share and serve, and is dedicated, faithful, and loyal. This is the most prestigious award offered by AAEM. This award was given to Eddie Lary of Tuscaloosa County.

The *Preparedness Program of the Year Award* recognizes a program that has developed a structure in preparing for disasters. They must have developed and exercised a plan, developed a volunteer management program, worked with the community to better prepare for disasters and emergencies. This award was given to Russell County for their project "Storm Safety- What's Your Plan?"

The *Response Program of the Year Award* recognizes a program that has developed a structure in responding to disasters. This program will have responded to a disaster while displaying an outstanding and timely response to an affected area, citizens, and victims. The medium size county awarded was Autauga County for their program "NSIDE/MapsLive", while the large size county award went to Shelby County for "Pipeline Emergency Response in Shelby County".

The *Mitigation Program of the Year Award* acknowledges a program that has focused on long-term strategies to protect lives and reduce the impact of disasters. This award was given to Jefferson County for their project, "Developing a Program - Changing Strategy for Mitigation".

The *Alfred T. Moore Memorial Volunteer Award* is given to someone who demonstrates loyalty, a willingness to serve in any emergency, and has been serving in a volunteer capacity for at least five years. This year's award was given to Mike Watkins of Lee County.

"We're honored to be able to recognize these excellent individuals and county teams who work tirelessly to serve their communities. Outstanding programs require outstanding individuals behind them, and we're proud to recognize them at our conference", said AAEM President, Johnathan Gaddy.

The AAEM Annual Conference was held in conjunction with the Governor's Preparedness Conference at the Montgomery Marriott Prattville Hotel & Conference Center at Capitol Hill on March 14th and 15th. EMA officials participated in continuing education sessions, committee break-outs, group presentations, and caucus meetings.

The Alabama Association of Emergency Managers is an affiliate organization of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama (ACCA). ACCA is a statewide organization representing county government in

Alabama. ACCA promotes improved county government services in Alabama, offers educational programs for county officials and their staff members, administers insurance programs for county governments and employees, offers legal advice, and represents the interests of county government before state and federal organizations and agencies.