

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE VETERANS, MILITARY AND HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Don Myers at 1:30 p.m. on February 3, 2009, in Room 711 of the Docking State Office Building.

All members were present except:

Representative Clay Aurand- excused

Representative Pat George- excused

Committee staff present:

Art Griggs, Office of the Revisor of Statutes

Scott Wells, Office of the Revisor of Statutes

Corey Carnahan, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Chris Courtwright, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Barbara Lewerenz, Committee Assistant

Conferee appearing before the committee:

Major General Tod Bunting, Adjutant General, Kansas Director , Homeland Security and Emergency Management

Others attending:

See attached list.

Moved by Representative Goyle, seconded by Representative Goico for approval of minutes of the House Committee on Veterans, Military and Homeland Security, held January 29, 2009, as amended to include Representative Garcia as present at the Committee Meeting and to delete "like Junction City for example" from page 2, first paragraph, second sentence. Motion Carried.

Chairman Myers introduced Major General Tod Bunting, Adjutant General, Kansas Director, Homeland Security and Emergency Management (Attachment 1).

Major General Bunting said there were three federal disaster declarations in Kansas in 2008 resulting in over \$400 million.. These included ice storms in north central and northeastern Kansas and tornadoes in Chapman and Manhattan. Support was also sent to Iowa to assist with flood damage and Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas to assist with hurricane damage.

The Kansas Guard has service men and women serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Djibouti and the U.S. Mexico Border protecting our national interests. Kansas Guardsman, SPC Ronald Schmidt, lost his life in Iraq in 2008.

Preparation for natural and manmade disasters is being expanded to include business and industry. The Eisenhower Center for Homeland Security Studies in Topeka is now open. It serves as a facility for business and government to better collaborate in planning efforts. The Great Plains Joint Regional Training Center in Salina is a new venue for military, first responders and business to train together. In 2009, Crisis City near Salina will open. It is a 160 acre mock disaster area where responders will be able to conduct real-world training with various disaster scenarios.

Major General Bunting stated his appreciation for the support of elected officials, local, state and federal partners and the families of those serving our country.

Questions and answers followed.

The new budget allows around \$5 million from the state (slightly less than last year). Federal funds are also received that result in an impact of over \$300 million. The largest portion is for salaries and maintenance. Guard Members are working with the military and civilian population in Armenia. training on emergency response and assisting civil authorities. With the help of Kansas State University, the newest mission is an agriculture development team helping to teach the Armenian farmers how to make a sustainable living. Typically in a disaster, the city manager, sheriff or county commissioner is in charge. Discussion was held regarding the issues military personnel returning from combat face when assistance is needed for medical treatment and employment.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the House Veterans, Military And Homeland Security Committee at 1:30 p.m. on February 3, 2009, in Room 711 of the Docking State Office Building.

Major General Bunting was invited to address the Committee later in the session to further discuss areas from a policy standpoint that could be improved. It was also announced that in September, 2008, Major General Bunting was elected Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Guard Association.

Chairman Myers announced the next meeting is February 5. The Committee will hold hearings and work **HB 2085 - An act relating to the veterans claims assistance program; service grant eligibility requirements** and **HB 2086 - An act relating to composition of the veterans claims assistance advisory board.**

Committee members and staff were invited to participate in a refueling training mission at Forbes Field later in the session. Chairman Myers thanked Vice Chairman Goico for this suggestion.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

**Testimony to the
House Veterans Military and
Homeland Security Committee**

Maj Gen Tod Bunting
The Adjutant General
Tuesday, February 3, 2009

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to visit with you today. As we look ahead to 2009, we take a moment to reflect on our accomplishments in 2008 and invite you to learn more about the Kansas Adjutant General's Department through some of the milestones highlighted in the annual report that we distributed by CD.

In 2008, Kansas had three weather disasters resulting in federal disaster declarations. These included a significant ice storm, which impacted much of north central and northeastern Kansas causing widespread power outages for days throughout 65 counties; tornadoes in Chapman and Manhattan, as well as storm damage in 44 other counties; and flooding in 10 counties throughout southeast and south central Kansas for total damages of over \$400 million. The Kansas Division of Emergency Management and local emergency managers worked to ensure Kansans had the resources necessary to sustain them through the storms and to begin the recovery process. There remain 12 federal disasters that are at some level of action in Kansas.

House Committee on Veterans
Military and Homeland Security
Date: 02/03/09
Attachment 1

During these disasters, Kansas Guardsmen were called out to support community needs including generator power and security. The State's Incident Management Teams supported the counties when needed with additional personnel to work in the emergency operations centers. Kansas stood ready when its neighbors needed help, too, sending support to the Iowa flooding, to Louisiana and Mississippi during Hurricane Gustav and to Texas for Hurricane Ike response.

Meanwhile, thousands of our Kansas Guardsmen served and continue to serve in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kosovo, Djibouti and along the U.S.-Mexico border, protecting our nation during the Global War on Terrorism. Every month, on average, anywhere from 500 to 1,000 of our 7,700 Kansas Guard members are deployed or are training and preparing to go. An example is the 100 trained Intelligence Specialists that have been on 24/7 duty at McConnell AFB for the last 17 months. The work our Guard members and emergency management staff do to keep our state and nation safe is invaluable and we thank them for the sacrifices they make to keep others from harm's way.

We remember the life of a Kansas Guardsman lost this year in Iraq, SPC Ronald Schmidt. He is forever in our hearts and we are indebted to his family for their sacrifice. Our world is constantly changing. We must anticipate the potential dangers around us by continuing to outsmart our enemies and preparing for the disasters that otherwise could devastate us.

We are working with local, state and federal partners to exercise our plans and conduct disaster drills to ensure we are prepared for any disaster--natural or manmade. We are expanding our partnerships to include private businesses and industry in our disaster response planning. In 2008, we held our first Business and Industry Forum in Salina and will host the second annual forum in the spring.

In addition, we opened the Eisenhower Center for Homeland Security Studies in Topeka to ensure businesses and government have a place to better collaborate in their planning efforts. Kansas government and business now have a new venue to train together with the opening of our Great Plains Joint Regional Training Center in Salina, where first responders, military and businesses can train together to respond to disasters. In 2009, we will open Crisis City in Salina, a mock disaster area where responders will be able to conduct real-world training with various disaster scenarios.

The job we do could not be done alone. We receive tremendous support from elected officials, local, state, and federal partners and from families of soldiers and airmen serving our country. We are dedicated to protecting Kansans and our country to ensure our way of life is preserved. We look forward to serving you again in 2009.

I would be pleased to answer any questions.