



Joint News Release

Kent and Ottawa County Emergency Management

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 15, 2013

Contacts: Lisa LaPlante – 616.632.7182

Shannon Felgner – 616.738.4672

Two West Michigan Emergency Management Leaders Honored for Outstanding Service

WEST MICHIGAN – The most successful response to disasters requires training, dedication, teamwork and preparedness. West Michigan is fortunate to have Emergency Management Coordinators who recognize this; their efforts are being recognized among the best in the state by the Michigan Emergency Management Association (MEMA). Jack Stewart, Emergency Management Coordinator for Kent County, and Beth Thomas, Ottawa County Emergency Management Director, received awards for their work.

Jack Stewart was recognized with the Distinguished Service Award. According to the submission, Jack “is an excellent example of an all-round Emergency Manager and the epitome of a public servant. This candidate has mastered the ability to lead many into collaboration in order to accomplish a unified goal.” Stewart played a critical role over the past year with response and planning, especially during severe flooding that impacted Kent County in April 2013. He was instrumental in incorporating two city Emergency Management programs and the Local Emergency Planning Committee program into the Kent County Emergency Management program last year. He, along with Beth Thomas, co-authored the two-jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan, which was only the second Hazard Mitigation Plan in the State of Michigan to be approved by FEMA.

Beth Thomas, Ottawa County Emergency Management Director, was honored as Best Local Emergency Management Coordinator in a jurisdiction with a population of over 60,000. According to the nomination, “The abilities of this candidate are not only evident in the efficient daily operations of her jurisdiction, but especially in her drive to create and maintain excellence in the field of Emergency Management. This persons’ experience in emergency planning on a global scale led this Emergency Management Coordinator to go beyond expectations this past year.” She, too, successfully responded to the April flood and provided guidance and assistance to eight jurisdictions to applying for recent hazard mitigation grants, with 14 large projects submitted to the state so far.

The Michigan Emergency Management Association Annual Awards Program is designed to recognize individuals and communities who have embraced MEMA's mission. The purpose of each award is to recognize exemplary performance in the award category. Congratulations to both Jack and Beth for their recognition.

###
