

IDHS Announces Leadership Changes

Wednesday, 28 October 2009

Joseph E. Wainscott, Jr., executive director of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS), has announced changes in leadership at IDHS. Gerri Husband has been named director of field services, and James (Jim) Bennett will be the new director of training. Rick Archer will serve as the state emergency medical services (EMS) director. Brad Thatcher will take over as the assessment branch chief with the planning and assessment division.

Gerri Husband, a Clay County resident, was promoted from assistant director of the field services division to director. In this position, Husband's essential duties will include, coordination of IDHS activities and the centralization of the resources that are most directly involved in establishing, supporting, and communicating with the District Planning Oversight Committees (DPOCs), District Planning Councils (DPCs), and District Task Forces (DTFs). Field Services staff will provide guidance and direction in support of local government (to include emergency responders and emergency management agencies) for technical assistance "subject matter expertise," in support of their efforts in planning, training, exercise, and response. She joined IDHS in 2006 as an exercise training manager. Prior to joining IDHS, Husband worked as the emergency management agency director and local public health coordinator in Clay County. She is a nationally certified emergency manager, a master exercise practitioner and holds a state professional emergency manager certification.

Jim Bennett will serve as the director of preparedness and training. Bennett was hired in 2008 as the Assistant State Fire Marshal and most recently served as the director of field services. The IDHS training division provides or coordinates training, continuing education, and exercises for the state's public safety practitioners. The division's associates currently provide training in emergency management, emergency medical services (EMS), fire services and hazardous materials. In addition to its training efforts, the division maintains certification records for Indiana firefighters and EMS personnel. Before joining IDHS in 2008, Bennett served 35 years with the Connersville Fire Department, eight of those he served as Fire Chief. In 2007, he was honored as Fire Chief of the Year by the Indiana Fire Chiefs Association. Bennett has a bachelor's degree from Indiana University, a fire science technology certificate from IU and is an internationally accredited hazardous materials technician. At New Mexico Technology University, he received training in incident response terrorist bombing technical operations.

Rick Archer has been appointed the State Emergency Medical Services Director. Archer's primary duties in his new position are to coordinate IDHS efforts in EMS and to represent Indiana to national EMS organizations. Archer will continue to serve as the compliance and certifications branch chief of the IDHS preparedness and training division. The branch is responsible for certification and regulation of all ambulances within the state designated as emergency response vehicles, certification and regulation of all air medical evacuation or transport services based in or operating in the state, certification and regulation of all EMS training institutions in the state, providing regulatory oversight of all EMS hospital operations, and overseeing the issuance and collection of any fines related to the violation of state statute or rules in connection with the regulatory oversight of the listed responsibilities. Archer joined IDHS in 2006 as an exercise training manager and most recently served as the exercise training officer (ETO) for the State of Indiana. Archer has more than 30 years' experience as an emergency medical technician, paramedic, EMS educator and ambulance service manager. He developed one of the first primary instructor courses, helped develop emergency vehicle operations training, and assisted in the management of a neonatal transport service for a major children's hospital. Archer is a master exercise practitioner and helped design the Ardent Sentry and pan flu exercises. He also served on the planning committee of the 2011 national level exercise.