Meet Bruce, EMD Director

Bruce Barton was officially named the new director of EMD on Nov. 9. Bruce was previously the director of the Riverside County Emergency Medical Services Agency within EMD, a position he held for 10 years. Prior to that, Bruce worked for American Medical Response. Altogether, he has more than 30 years of experience in emergency services.

Q: What did you think when CEO George Johnson asked you to be the new director of EMD?
A: I felt extremely honored and excited for such a great opportunity.

Q: What are some key projects or goals you have for EMD?
A: I want to establish the County of Riverside EMD as a leader in emergency management throughout the state. I will continue to look for ways to make data-driven decisions while recognizing that a holistic approach to all phases of emergency management sets us in a position to be better

EMD provides mutual aid support

The Emergency Management Department (EMD) provided mutual aid for multiple incidents to both Sonoma and Santa Barbara Counties. This assistance was in response to Emergency Management Mutual Aid (EMMA) requests.

In mid-October, Sonoma County made their first EMMA request, indicating they exhausted their local resources. In December, a second EMMA request was made through Santa Barbara. Donna Mayer, EMD, was the Operational Area (OA) EMMA coordinator for both requests.

As the EMMA coordinator, Mayer took on numerous roles to ensure the program was successful. This included identifying responders with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to fill the requested position and tracking them through their entire deployment and demobilization.

EMD team members deployed for the Sonoma Fire in October were Zander Johnson, Dan Bates, Lisa Madrid, Shane Reichardt and Michelle Kelly. Two months later, EMD was called upon again, this time by Santa Barbara County.

Santa Barbara experienced two separate incidents beginning in December – the Thomas Fire and the Mendocino mud flow. Patrice Shepherd and Shane Reichardt were deployed for both.

“Santa Barbara already knew us and how we worked,” said Reichardt, EMD emergency services coordinator. “We knew their EOC and JIC procedures.” Reichardt served as Joint Information Center Manager during both deployments.

Reichardt was equipped with various supplies in the event that accommodations would change and offered words of advice for anyone who may deploy for future EMMA requests.

“Be prepared and carry anything you may need just as a precaution,” said Reichardt.
prepared. There are a number of key projects that the department commenced some time ago under Kim’s leadership. I want these priorities brought to fruition, including the city assessments and work plans, County-wide continuity of operations plans, and the department’s strategic plan.

Q: What’s your favorite phrase?
A: When staff members report on a project update with clarity and completeness, I usually say something very profound like “Okey doke.”

Q: What is your least favorite phrase?
A: “That’s the way we’ve always done it.” Organizations are like the human body – if we’re not progressing and changing, we are regressing. Complacency will not help us achieve our goals. We need to be willing to evolve to push our projects and vision forward.

Q: How many people are in your family?
A: Britta and I have three kids and four grandkids – all boys. We enjoy tinkering with offroad jeeps, bike riding and camping.

Regards,
Bruce

EDITOR’S NOTE:
The Source is produced by EMD personnel. Please submit story ideas and pictures to EMDPIO@rivco.org.

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EMD receives Spirit of Emergency Management Award

The County of Riverside Emergency Management Department (EMD) accepted the Spirit of Emergency Management Award recognizing the collaborative work EMD performs in the field of emergency management. The award was presented by Temecula Mayor Maryann Edwards and Temecula Emergency Manager Roberto Cardenas during the city’s first-ever Business Continuity Summit on Oct. 19. Former EMD Director Kim Saruwatari and Emergency Services Coordinator Jerry Hagen accepted the award on behalf of the department.

“This recognition is indicative of all the collaborative work EMD performs in our cities and special districts,” said Saruwatari. “We are very thankful for the great partnership EMD shares with the City of Temecula and honored to be the first recipient of the city’s Spirit of Emergency Management award.”

Approximately 150 people attended the summit, comprised of community members from local businesses and chambers of commerce, as well as public safety and government personnel. Several speakers shared experience with emergency management plans and preparedness efforts, as well as lessons learned from real-world incidents. Saruwatari shared insight from the 2009 Swine Flu epidemic during the City Managers and County panel discussion, moderated by Hagen.

Angie Johnson, EMD Administrative Services Analyst II, also presented the launch of the Business Emergency Operations Center (BEOC) to a very eager crowd. “The talk really got businesses thinking about their emergency plans and how to connect to government agencies and businesses during a disaster,” said Johnson. “This event led to a series of meetings and presentations that will increase involvement in the BEOC.”

EMD Health Education Assistant II Melanie Gonzalez spoke individually to attendees about emergency preparedness at a public education booth. EMD’s well-known red backpack, filled with emergency supply kit items, was also offered to a winner of an opportunity drawing.

Emergency Services Coordinator Jerry Hagen hugs Temecula Mayor Maryann Edwards after accepting the Spirit of Emergency Management Award on behalf of the department on Oct. 19.
Medical health exercise tests all too real terrorism threat

It’s a scenario made for popular crime drama. Terrorists target multiple facilities, resulting in mass casualties and a great deal of confusion. Unfortunately, it’s an all too real possibility. As a county, we have been fortunate not to have many disasters that tax our everyday resources. It’s easy to say that’s due in large part to having great people and resources. Even with the right people it’s important to train, network and test systems. That’s where the annual Statewide Medical Health Exercise comes in.

“It’s an opportunity to get all of the players together and test our plans and core capabilities,” notes Stacie Kelly, the department’s lead planner for the exercise. Program Chief Ramon Leon added, “Preparing for the Statewide Medical Health Exercise and testing our processes helps us document Countywide policies and procedures for these types of events. The collaboration with all the response partners truly strengthens our relationships and prepares us to respond efficiently and effectively.”

A planning team of 31 people worked for months to develop a scenario and a set of plausible expectations that pushed participants. The tabletop exercise was held on Oct. 11 and the functional exercise was Nov. 16.

“With the right team administering the exercise, we were able to guide people through any challenges so that it’s both a learning experience and an opportunity to strengthen plans for real world events,” said Kelly.

In all, there were more than 100 participants from agencies throughout the county. The scenario involved escalating terrorism incidents that involved multiple locations and compromised varying levels of the healthcare system.

Healthy motivations

January is Blood Donor Month.

Giving blood not really your type of thing? Picture this, a single car accident victim can need as many as 100 pints of blood. Your blood type might just be what they need. While type O blood is the most commonly requested by hospitals, type B blood is also at critical levels.

Consider donating some of your precious platelets by visiting a local blood donation site this month. LifeStream has offices in Riverside and La Quinta. The American Red Cross has blood drives scheduled throughout the month. Visit LStream.org and RedCrossBlood.org.

February is American Heart Month.

Staying active and eating healthy are the cornerstones to heart health. After you’ve been sitting for an hour at your desk, get up and move around for three minutes. Stretch, stand, walk up and down the stairs or get some sunlight outside.

Salt is a major player in heart disease. Salt packs on the water in our bodies, causing the heart to work harder and raise our blood pressure. Look at sodium content before you bite and use spices like onion and garlic powder instead of salt.

March is Nutrition Month.

Not all calories are the same! While an avocado and a candy bar might have similar calorie figures, the type of fat and calorie could not be more different. Look at nutrition labels and limit saturated fats, added sugars and sodium.
Karen Craven (aka K.C., center right), registered nurse with EMD/Preparedness Division, gives a briefing to medical volunteers providing flu shots to community members at the California School for the Deaf on Oct. 12.

Flu clinic brings vaccines to California School for the Deaf

Leaving your house to go almost anywhere during the months of October – December will often include someone, from a pharmacy worker to a supermarket greeter, asking if you’ve had your flu shot and offering to give you one. That’s because bringing flu shots to places where people visit every day isn’t just about convenience.

“It’s about protecting the public from a deadly disease,” says Public Health Nurse Marie Weller. “As more people get vaccinated each year, fewer people will get sick or as severely sick. We’ve seen more people get their flu shots when we bring them to places they are already at.”

In preparation for this year’s flu season, the Riverside University Health System - Public Health opened a community flu clinic on Oct. 12 at the California School for the Deaf in Riverside. Dozens lined up to get their shots, including students and staff from the school, community members and even some EMD personnel.

The planning leading up to the event involved several months of collaboration and coordination among several agencies, including the school, County of Riverside Executive Office Risk Management and the California Department of Education. American Sign Language interpreters were also actively interpreting the volley of conversations between clinic workers and deaf or hard of hearing people eager to get their shots.

The flu clinic was a demonstration of the Public Health Influenza Response Plan, which incorporates several key components of EMD’s Points of Dispensing (POD) Plan. Eleven personnel from EMD responded in the flu clinic, including screeners, time study keepers, Vaccination Unit Leader, Logistics Section Chief and positions within the virtual Medical Health Department Operations Center.

“My favorite part of events like this is how we join together with different departments to accomplish a project,” said EMD Volunteer Coordinator Jennifer Smith who was the Logistics Section Chief. “Our partnerships make us all successful.”

For EMD Medical Counter Measures Coordinator Anne Accurso, it was most exciting to see elements of the POD plan in action. “It was fascinating to work in the time study area,” said Accurso. “We tracked how long it took people to move through the clinic, which gives us information on how many people we can inoculate during a medical disaster.”

By the numbers

- **36.1%** represents the increase in Riverside County ambulance transports over the past year’s weekly average of 2,614 transports.
- **14%** represents the amount of visits to Riverside County physicians related to flu-like illnesses.
- **11** Riverside County deaths.*
- **39** intensive care unit patients throughout Riverside County.*
- **150-165 million** flu shots were projected by manufacturers to be offered for this year to community members throughout the country.

*Data effective Jan. 25, 2018
“BHAG.”

B what?

“Big, hairy, audacious goals,” states EMD Director Bruce Barton. “They will become our objectives that will push us forward.”

To a large extent, the direction of an organization is determined by how its employees, the core of the organization, join together to tackle objectives that steer the department forward.

To define exactly where EMD will go, and how we will get there, Program Director/EMD Administration Brian MacGavin has undertaken the creation and development of the EMD Strategic Plan. This plan will be the roadmap to a new destination – complete with a new mission, vision, department priorities and goals.

“Strategic planning is more than coming up with a plan,” said MacGavin. “It’s building a culture of accountability and using collective efforts to achieve our goals. This includes employee engagement so that each employee knows how they, and their team, are contributing to EMD’s mission and vision.”

MacGavin met with each division, as well as several stakeholder agencies, to create a SWOT analysis, which uncovers the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats throughout the department. The SWOT analysis is the foundation for both division and department work plans that will align together.

“The strategic plan will create a systems-based approach to emergency management,” said MacGavin. “The collective work from each area of EMD will complement other areas of the department.”

Common themes collected from the SWOT analysis throughout the department include strengths in our employee knowledge and depth, while weaknesses include employee engagement.

The strategic plan will be completed in April of this year. “2018 is going to be a great year,” added Barton.

On Oct. 19, the Youth Advisory Council hosted its annual Youth in Government day where high schoolers were matched with employees from throughout the County of Riverside for a day of mentorship.

Victoria Jauregui Burns, EMD deputy director, was matched with an energetic junior at Rubidoux High School named Heidi. For Jauregui Burns, the day was a chance to introduce a wide range of different job possibilities to a local student interested in county government or a similar field.

“Giving back to our youth is so valuable,” said Jauregui Burns. “The Youth in Government Day just takes willingness and essentially showing a mentee what we do.” This past Youth in Government Day was Jauregui Burns’ 11th year as a mentor.

Heidi is a dedicated student who is already taking college classes. Like Jauregui Burns, Heidi is also devoted to volunteering.
Kim and Debbie set sail to Public Health

Members of EMD threw a farewell lunch on Nov. 9 to wish Kim Saruwatari and Debbie Parliman well on their latest voyage to Riverside County Public Health. Saruwatari was the first-ever director of EMD who led the charge to bring three separate programs together under a single, comprehensive emergency services department.

Under the vision of former CEO Jay Orr and the Board of Supervisors, Saruwatari established a new department in July 2015. Not just new to Riverside County, but new to the field of emergency management. EMD joins traditional and disaster health emergency management, and emergency medical services under one roof.

Through all of this change, Parliman, executive secretary to Saruwatari, remained the constant. Parliman has held Saruwatari together for several years, functioning at top speed. Juggling paperwork, hectic schedules and travel arrangements for the entire department was no easy task, but Parliman executed it all with style.

“While I am personally sad to see both of them return to Public Health, I am also very happy for the next chapter in their careers,” said EMD Preparedness Program Chief Ramon Leon. “The promotions are well deserved!”

Debbie Parliman (left) and Kim Saruwatari (right) say heartfelt goodbyes at a farewell lunch on Nov. 9 in Riverside.

New year brings new hires

The Emergency Management Department (EMD) started off the new year by bringing five new hires on board. One of the newly added staff will be working with the Operations Division and the other four new employees reside in the Business and Finance Division (BFD).

Nadine Hays, Emergency Management Program Supervisor of BFD Fiscal, said that the arrival of the new staff was EMD’s good fortune.

“We’ve had some strong employees join us,” said Hays. “I look forward to working with each of them.”

Humberto Martinez is a TAP Support Services Technician and currently works with the Operations Division. His primary focus will be on Fleet Services and helping out at the warehouse. Martinez has worked for other County departments in the past with a background in logistics and warehouse operations. Martinez likes to spend his spare time with his five children and two grandchildren.

The other four new hires were welcomed by BFD. Heather Garnett, Joe Barron, Bertha Vaca and Alecia Wagner can all be found in suite 320, working hard to keep EMD financial matters in order.

Garnett comes to us from the Economic Development Agency (EDA), Housing Authority as an Accountant I. She enjoys running half marathons and going to Disneyland.

Barron, Accounting Technician II, came from the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) and worked with the Management Reporting Unit in Fiscal. He enjoys hiking, cooking and bowling.

Vaca and Wagner were previously with the Invoice Processing Unit in Behavioral Health. Vaca now holds the title of Accounting Technician and Wagner holds the title of Administrative Services Assistant. Vaca said she enjoys spending time with her son, going to Disneyland and the gym. Wagner enjoys watching her children play sports, as well as hiking and travelling.

From left: Bertha Vaca, Heather Garnett, Alecia Wagner and Joe Barron join the EMD/Business Finance Division. (Humberto Martinez not pictured.)
Service Awards

Service awards are for total service to the County of Riverside. Anniversaries below are for Nov. 2017 – Jan. 2018. Thank you for your dedication to public service!

Verna Liles – 1 year
Zander Johnston – 2 years
Dana Lagunas – 3 years
Jerry Hagen – 4 years
Scott Moffatt – 8 years
Shane Reichardt – 9 years
Ramon Leon – 12 years
Annette Reese – 13 years
Karen Craven (aka K.C.) – 16 years

Keep it profesh

Put your hands together for Michelle Kelly and Eric Cadden, who both recently completed their final coursework for Master of Arts and Bachelor of Arts degrees, respectively. Kelly received a master’s in Emergency Management and Homeland Security from Arizona State University in December 2017.

Cadden earned a bachelor’s in Emergency Management, with honors, from Grand Canyon University in August 2017. Cadden also earned his Emergency Management Specialist certificate from California Specialized Training Institute (CSTI) in July 2017. Shane Reichardt also received a Public Information Specialist certificate from CSTI in June 2017.

Brian MacGavin received his Accreditation Manager certification from Emergency Management Accreditation Program in Nov. 2017.

Employees in action

James Lee (left), REMSA, and Martin Baxter (right), Preparedness, practice donning hazardous materious suits while performing everyday hazardous jobs in EMD.

Parting shot

An orange glow reflects the flames from the Thomas Fire that burned more than 281,893 acres in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties in December 2017. EMD deployed responders using the Emergency Management Mutual Aid system to the Santa Barbara Emergency Operations Center and Joint Information Center.