

# Welcome to the EMAT Newsletter!



The Home of  
Texas Emergency  
Management Professionals

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear EMAT Members,  
We have been up to a lot at EMAT and we are focused on adding value to your membership.

We're back on social media. We launched our first and second bimonthly training webinars.

You're getting regular email updates about what we are doing and to get your feedback on key legislative issues. Our board members are working on key committees and workgroups throughout the state. The newly formed Training Committee is working on ways to offer you professional development throughout the year. The Awards Committee is revamping its approach to the awards process to be able to recognize your work.

The flagship of EMAT, the annual symposium, is in the works and promises to be a terrific event with some surprises in store.

Want to be part of the action? Please join a committee.

There are many exciting things happening. I hope you will take advantage of these new initiatives and tell us how we can keep doing better.

See you at the 13th Annual EMAT Symposium in San Marcos, February 23rd-26th.

Francisco Sánchez, Jr., President

**Main News**  
**EMAT Spotlight**  
John Henderson, EMC  
City of Wichita Falls

**Update: Senate Bill 11 and  
Safety School Committees:**  
What Emergency Managers need  
to know

**Passing of Patrick Repman**

## **EMAT Member Spotlight** **John Henderson, Wichita Falls EMC**

We've all heard it before, but John Henderson, Wichita Falls EMC, "wears many hats" in his role. ICS Instructor, LEPC Chairman, IMT member, mentor to new EMCs in the region and managing the mobile command unit at local events all fall to Henderson. He also partners with Sheppard Air Force base, the local health department, and the NWS SkyWarn team. He is a team of one, but has built a network of local and regional partners and they even share the same booth at public events.

"My goal has always been to strengthen the relationships," Henderson said. "I can't do it by myself. I really rely on them."

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TEXAS HAPPENINGS

EMAT MEMBER SPOTLIGHT (CONT.)

Henderson’s main focus since becoming EMC in 2009 has been growing his role. He devotes time to go out and meet with the new emergency managers in his COG, talking about grant forms and state issues. Henderson is a mentor and admits he’s made a lot of mistakes, hoping that he can help others from falling down the same traps.

“You may have just graduated with an EM degree, but it doesn’t mean you’re ready to cut your teeth on EMPG grants,” Henderson said.

As one of only 3 ICS instructors in his region, Henderson sees the need for more mentoring opportunities to support emergency managers across the state. With EMAT, he feels the certification for professionals is important, but will not be as useful without a mentoring component. For new and seasoned professionals, Henderson sees emergency management as a constant learning opportunity.

“I enjoy this job,” Henderson said. “Some days I may not act like it, but I do. I should’ve jumped into this a lot sooner, when I was younger.”

When Henderson is not in the office, you can find him at a high school volleyball court, refereeing a varsity game or coaching a club volleyball team. In the office or on the court, Henderson is always coaching, including his own kids who have finished college or will soon graduate.

“I can’t seem to give it up,” Henderson said. “I’ve got girls that I coached that are now varsity starters.”

Contact John: 940-761-6870, [john.henderson@wichitafallstx.gov](mailto:john.henderson@wichitafallstx.gov)



John Henderson  
City of Wichita Falls EMC



SENATE BILL 11 AND SCHOOL SAFETY COMMITTEES: WHAT EMS NEED TO KNOW

Senate Bill 11, a comprehensive school safety bill that went into effect this summer, did a number of things to change the business of Texas school districts. In at least one way, it will also change the business of emergency managers across the state. Each school district (there are over 1000 of them) is now required to have a representative from their local emergency management agency on their Safety and Security Committee. This means that nearly every local EM agency in the state will have a member on at least one committee, and many will have members on multiple committees.

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## SCHOOL SAFETY COMMITTEES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

• **The Superintendent is the Executive of the District:** Management of a school district is a challenging job, with every topic capable of presenting diverse opinions and conflicting interests. Allow the Superintendent the same respect you would appreciate extended to your own office or department by addressing business with them first.

• **Know your role, and stay in your lane:** Be very familiar with the statutory role of the Safety and Security Committee, and try to separate your function there from the role you serve in your EMA. These committees serve to review specific plans and reports, and make recommendations. They do not have any authority to “direct” the actions of a district, and have no authority to reach outside their specific charge. Just because a topic or issue may benefit from your input, it may not be suitable for discussion in this specific committee, which has parents, teachers, and other non-public safety entities as a part of its required membership. Many districts will struggle to keep committees focused, so don’t be a part of the problem.

• **Take a balanced approach:** These committees are required to have representation from emergency managers and from law enforcement. There is no requirement for representation from public/mental health professionals, nurses, firefighters, infrastructure experts, transportation, food safety, mass care NGOs... the list goes on. Remember this fact so that committee emphasis and effort is not narrowed to mirror its construct.

• **Appreciate that many districts are not accustomed to sharing vulnerabilities with outsiders:** For many districts, including non-employees on this type of committee may be unsettling. Don’t automatically assume that their hesitance is because they are trying to obfuscate the process. In reality, many district leaders recognize that they

are not experts in public safety and emergency management, and thus not equipped to know what information is safe to share and with whom.

• **Address issues with understanding:** Many of you may be surprised by the “EOPs” you review early on. Unfortunately, for years, a series of response checklists have been circulated (particularly among small and rural school districts) as “EOP templates”. These documents address items such as fire exiting, suspicious persons, and even lockdown procedures. They often do not address prevention, mitigation, preparedness, or recovery. They may not address organization, communications, logistics, or any other topic you’d expect to find in an EOP, nor do they contain functional or hazard-specific annexes. If you find yourself in this situation, use it as an opportunity to help and support your district. Address the issues directly with district leadership and allow them to get ahead of the challenge. Then, most importantly, give them the support they need to get it done right.

• **Don’t forget why you are there:** One of the hardest things to learn as a public safety professional in the education environment is that it isn’t always “Safety First”. While many educators won’t say it out loud, the fact remains that it truly is “Education First”. While it may be hard for career public safety experts to stomach, the fact remains that schools exist to educate, and we must learn to temper our desire to do things in the safest way with the overall goal of making sure the next generation of students as a whole, are equipped appropriately. These approaches are not often mutually exclusive, but there will be times in which the best solution for each are at odds with one-another. You will be most effective if you can see problems from this alternative perspective. Again, you don’t have to agree, but you do have to be able to appreciate the different view.

**Jeb Lacey, EMAT Legislative Committee Chair**

## PASSING OF PATRICK REPMAN



It is with great sadness that we share the passing of Patrick Repman, MA, MBA, CEM, TEM, who died after a long battle with cancer on November 20, 2019. Patrick was an active EMAT Corporate Board Member and served as the Public and Private Partnerships Committee Chair. Patrick constantly served his community as a firefighter, emergency manager, IMT member, college instructor, and volunteer. His passion for emergency management and his dedication to EMAT will not be forgotten. Let us carry on our work as emergency managers in his honor. More information on Patrick can be found at: [www.emat-tx.org](http://www.emat-tx.org).

**SUBCOMMITTEE NEWS****AWARDS COMMITTEE - BRIAN MURRAY**

The Awards Committee is sifting through the awards submissions in preparation for review and selection in January. The 2020 EMAT Awards nominations closed on December 6, 2019. Any members with questions on the awards or the selection process should contact Brian Murray at [brian.murray@oem.hctx.net](mailto:brian.murray@oem.hctx.net)

**COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE - CHIP ORTON**

The Communications Committee has been working on this new format for the EMAT Newsletter, and with other committees to improve things for the 13th Annual EMAT Symposium! Additionally you have seen more content via email and the website. Look for the new social media request for why you think the EMAT Symposium is so great! Future focus will be on marketing, improving the website, and improving communications processes.

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE - JEB LACEY**

The Committee is monitoring ongoing special committees and meetings at the capital, as well as making early contact with key legislators. The committee is also working on developing an EMAT Legislative Strategy for the next session.

**PRIVATE-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE**

The Private-Public Partnership is diligently working towards goals for 2020 and beyond. The Committee Chair position is vacant with the passing of Patrick Repman.

**SYMPOSIUM COMMITTEE - PATRICE REISEN-HICKS**

The planning for the 2020 EMAT Symposium is well underway. It is the committee's goal to ensure that each Symposium is better than the one before. We will continue to host three tracks during the next Symposium to include Emergency Management, Leadership, and School Resiliency.

Sign up for the 13th Annual EMAT Leadership Symposium at: [www.emat-tx.org/event-359201](http://www.emat-tx.org/event-359201)

**SUBCOMMITTEE NEWS - CONTINUED****TRAINING COMMITTEE - LAURA GEHRIG**

A committee report is not available at this time. For committee information, please contact the committee chair at: [laura.gehrig@hpsc.state.tx.us](mailto:laura.gehrig@hpsc.state.tx.us).

Watch the first two EMAT Webinars online now at [www.emat-tx.org/Webinars](http://www.emat-tx.org/Webinars). The next webinar will be in January 2020.

**TEM COMMITTEE - PATRICE REISEN-HICKS**

The TEM Commission continues to strive to improve upon the application review process. As of October, the Commission has reviewed approximately 25 applications. It is the Commission's goal to offer a quality and valued certification to EMAT's members. If anyone would like to join the TEM Commission as an application reviewer, please contact the association. To be eligible, the reviewer must be an EMAT member in good standing and hold a current TEM certification.

**BY-LAWS COMMITTEE - PATRICE REISEN-HICKS**

In the coming months, the Bylaws Committee will coordinate with the Nominations Committee to include more clarification of the election of Executive Officers. This will not impact the nomination and elections process until Spring 2021.

**NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE - JAIME GALLOWAY**

Nominations Committee has suggested edits to the bylaws relating to online voting timelines. The suggestion have been submitted to the nominations for review.

**MEMBERSHIP & MARKETING COMMITTEE - HALLIE FRAZEE**

The Membership & Marketing Committee is regrouping and preparing to start on a new membership campaign, focusing not only on new members, but how we are bringing value to our current members. We will be looking for your input at the symposium in February and welcome participation from all EMAT members. We will work with the Communications Committee on this campaign and the TEM Commission on making it a true added value for members.

## FINAL WORDS

**13TH ANNUAL EMAT SYMPOSIUM  
FEBRUARY 23-26, 2020  
EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTER  
SAN MARCOS, TX**

**EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION available until January 31, 2020.**

<https://www.emat-tx.org/event-359201>



*We need your help!*

Take out your phone,  
get camera ready,  
and tell us why EMAT matters to you!

Upload your video to Google Drive and  
we'll do the rest!

**Upload: [shorturl.at/flQ45](https://shorturl.at/flQ45)**

### EMAT WEBINARS

We are excited to have added webinars for our members. For more information on the webinars or to see the ones posted so far, please visit: <https://www.emat-tx.org/Webinars>

### ABOUT EMAT

The Emergency Management Association of Texas is dedicated to the advancement of the field of emergency management both statewide and nationally. To that end, EMAT engages in an array of efforts to advance a statewide emergency management agenda and to promote the professional growth of the emergency management practitioner.