



## COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

### SANTA BARBARA COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT LEVERAGES FEMA EXPERTISE

**SANTA BARBARA, CA December 11, 2013** - The Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management has begun working in collaboration with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to bolster its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) capabilities, staff competency, and national consistency using grant funded technical assistance experts familiar with emergency operations centers nationwide.

Many elements of the final implementation of this program will be a first for both FEMA and Santa Barbara County. With this pilot program the Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management is hoping to set a benchmark for new EOC operational practices. If it is as successful as OEM hopes it will ideally become a best practice in the State and Nation. The comprehensive EOC operational makeover will more adequately meet the needs of the Santa Barbara County Operational Area and will address the all too common economic, resource and political limitations faced by the Santa Barbara County Operational Area and emergency management offices everywhere.

This type of collaboration is key to the continued success of emergency management offices everywhere, and the Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management is particularly excited about its potential success. Jeff Lusk, FEMA Deputy Federal Preparedness Coordinator, visited OEM on December 10<sup>th</sup> and stated, "Santa Barbara County lies in a critical position on the Central Coast. FEMA Region IX looks forward to continuing to work with the Santa Barbara County Emergency Management to increase the



Jeff Lusk, Deputy Federal Preparedness Coordinator, FEMA Region IX, US Department of Homeland Security visits OEM

ability to Prepare, Respond, Recover and Mitigate against the threats that face this beautiful place and the citizens who live here.”

Specific details about the program will be released in the months to come as OEM staff and their FEMA counterparts continue to develop the materials and implement the training elements. Completion of the program is scheduled for Q2 2014 with full implementation expected to begin the second half of 2014.

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