Lightning Talk
Using GIS & Smart Devices to Track Volunteers During Incidents and Special Events

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Lesson Learned or Model Practice Synopsis

• Nashua has seen an exponential increase of Public Safety GIS tool development since 2012
• Cocktail Napkins -> Cloud-based GIS -> Crowdsourced GIS -> Mobile GIS
• Our workers and responders are busy during and after an incident and vetted volunteers are looking for ways to help
• How can we use volunteers to verify and update geospatial information submitted by the public and responders?
• How can we track the status and location of our volunteers during special events or incidents?
• Esri Collector, Esri Workforce, and ArcGIS Online has been successfully implemented in numerous exercises, incidents, and special events.
• All out of the box apps and templates...no custom development.
Using Volunteers to Collect Damage Info

Road Obstruction Edit Map
Map of road obstructions used for editing of Road Obstructions during emergency operations.

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Tracking Volunteer Location and Status During Incidents

[Images of maps and locations]
Tracking Volunteer Location and Status During Special Events
Outcomes Achieved in Implementation

• It’s not a steep learning curve, but it isn’t a straight line – training and practice is required
  • Include safety, team organization, and how to use the technology

• Road Obstructions map during 2011 “Snowtober” included approximately 50 data points (trees down, wires down, and other roadblocks)

• Same map during a smaller storm in 2014 with participation of volunteers yielded 200 accurate data points that were relayed to Public Works, Electric Company, and shared in the Common Operating Picture

• Bottom Line: We’re getting more information, better status of each data point, and deploying resources quicker to fix the problem
Take-Away Message

• If you have volunteers in your jurisdiction, leverage them to assist with GIS
• There are plenty of new mobile apps that can enhance the ability to collect information from volunteers in the field as well as track their location and status
• We have already developed a training for your volunteers that we are willing to send you...don’t recreate the wheel!

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