

# Rebuild Iowa Coordinating Council Holds First Meeting

The first meeting of the Rebuild Iowa Coordinating Council was held last month. The council is comprised of 17 state agencies, groups representing local governments, and four Legislative members. The purpose is to oversee communication and insure coordination and partnership between state agencies and local governments in developing and implementing long-term recovery plans.

The council was created by the Legislature in House File 64. This bill also provided \$56 million in disaster relief for individuals and communities throughout the disaster areas.

The council is chaired by Lt. General Ron Dardis, who is also the executive director of the Rebuild Iowa Office. He told members that the 2008 weather related disaster would have an \$8 billion to \$10 billion price tag. Not only is it the largest disaster in Iowa history, but also the fifth largest in the nation.

Council members each explained their agency's role in

disaster recovery. Legislative members identified their concerns. Among the issues raised was the need for better communication, further clarification of disaster assistance programs, the inflexibility of federal programs, and the lack of data sharing between federal and state agencies.

Steve Saunders, Director of FEMA Preparedness Directorate, National Exercise Division, told the Council he is working with the Rebuild Iowa Office on an Iowa Recovery Analysis report. They will identify the best practices and pinpoint places where improvement is needed in Iowa's disaster recovery programs and plans.

The Iowa Recovery Analysis will be used by federal agencies in determining if there should be changes in federal regulations and policies related to disaster recovery.

The Rebuild Iowa Coordinating Council will meet every other month. The next meeting will be on July 21. The meeting will be used to review current recovery programs and

processes and then propose new priority issues as well as make recommendations to improve the recovery planning for the next 12 months. While the Council works on strategy and policy, interagency meetings will be held on the opposite months to continue work on implementing disaster recovery programs.

## ***Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission***

The Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission was created by executive order of Governor Culver last summer. The commission presented a 45-day and 120-day report on immediate and long-term disaster recovery recommendations. Of the twelve recommendations made in the 120-day report, Dardis told the commission in a teleconference meeting in May that the Legislature enacted all twelve.

The commission members agreed that they would remain on stand-by status through June 2011 when the Rebuild Iowa Office is scheduled to close.