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### AERObridge Participates in FEMA NLE 2011

For immediate release: Washington, DC - AERObridge, in conjunction with FEMA, state and municipal authorities and various relief organizations took part in FEMA's National Level Exercise 2011 (NLE 2011) over a four day period, May 16 – 20, 2011.

National Level Exercise NLE 2011 was an operations-based exercise centered on the scenario of a catastrophic earthquake in the New Madrid Seismic Zone, encompassing four FEMA Regions (IV, V, VI and VII) and eight Central U.S. Earthquake States: Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee. NLE 2011 exercised initial incident response and recovery capabilities, tested and validated existing plans, policies and procedures including the New Madrid Catastrophic Plan which is currently under development.

The disaster scenario was as follows: On 16 May 2011, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) confirmed that a (simulated) catastrophic earthquake with a magnitude of 7.7 had occurred on the southwestern segment of the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ), with an epicenter at Marked Tree, AR. A second large earthquake with magnitude of 6.0 was simulated a short time later on the Wabash Valley Seismic Zone (WVSZ), with an epicenter near Mt. Carmel, IN.

The response objectives to these simulated disasters included Critical Resource Logistics and Distribution, Emergency Public Information and Warning, Mass Casualty Care, Communications, and Citizens Evacuation and Shelter-In-Place.

AERObridge activated a response to the simulated disaster and within a very short period of time achieved several critical initial goals. These included:

1. The rapid deployment of Eagles Wings Foundation teams to do aerial surveillance with several aircraft flying actual missions;
2. Simulated 2 aircraft up immediately to survey airports which would have provided a complete survey of usable runways, taxiways, ramps, hangars and airport ingress/egress routes within 6 hours;
3. Rapid response from a number of member-based organizations with Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association leading the way with a simulated outreach to their 400,000-plus membership for aircraft donation within 2 hours of the initial disaster notification;
4. Established contact with FEMA Region VII's Volunteer Agency Liaison Jono Anzalone who communicated to us that the location for mass care and triage was designated as Springfield MO. This allowed us to rapidly decide that our round robin flights would be between Springfield and the 10 designated General Aviation airports we had targeted in the disaster zone. Also, he gave us the Points Of Contacts from the Red Cross who were coordinating operations at the mass care locations in Springfield;

5. Coordinated with FAA at MCC to establish VFR procedures and explained mission parameters and objectives;
6. AERObridge VP Aviation Relations Eric Whyte coordinated donated aircraft assets and their potential missions, directing simulated groups comprised of a variety of aircraft selected to meet each of the stated, perceived and potential capability levels necessary to facilitate the response efforts. The total number of GA aircraft “procured” for the effort maximized, but did not exceed, the capacities of the airfields within the response zone;
7. The simulated airlift, based on the performance and capabilities of the 100 aircraft confirmed as available to fly (if this had been an actual event) between Springfield, MO and the 10 GA airfields surveyed and selected in disaster zone would have provided the ability to move, on a daily basis, 2,360 people in to as well as an equal number out of the disaster zone and 178,000 lbs. of supplies both into and out of the disaster area. This translates to 16,520 people and nearly 1.25 million pounds of supplies moved over the course of the first seven days of disaster response.

“NLE 2011 completely validated the lessons we’ve learned and the plans we’ve made since our first activation in response to the relief needs after Hurricane Katrina,” AERObridge president Marianne Stevenson said. “We were able to assess, communicate and subsequently meet the adjunct transportation needs simulated during NLE 2011. While doing so we were also able to further underscore the utility and outright necessity of a vibrant, capable and varied general aviation fleet. We’d like to extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the owners of the donated aircraft, as well as to AOPA staff and members who pitched in to make this exercise realistic and demonstrate that the goals we set are achievable in a real world scenario. We must thank the NBAA and its membership who also pledged their aircraft to the response efforts as well.”

AERObridge is a National Business Aviation Association–endorsed group of experienced aviation specialists who coordinate emergency aviation response during disasters. Our primary mission is to assist governments and NGOs by moving people and supplies to where they are most needed. Since Operation Katrina and Operation Haiti, we have incorporated and been granted 501c3 non-profit status by the IRS and have established and met many objectives to make the next emergency response more efficient, more effective and safer.

Primary among those objectives is the establishment of five major logistics bases in the United States, which will allow us to begin initial response efforts as rapidly as possible. To do this we are continually forming new working relationships with FBOs, NGOs, Government agencies and aircraft owner/operators. The coordination of effort and intelligence that these relationships provide will serve to ensure that the assets pledged to us are utilized to maximum effect in time of need.

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