

# Memorandum

**To:** Director A.J. Gary  
**From:** Arkansas Governor's Earthquake Advisory Council  
**CC:** Hilda Booth, Earthquake Program Manager  
Martha Kopper, Council Chair  
**Date:** January 24, 2023  
**Re:** January 13, 2023 GEAC Meeting

The Arkansas Governor's Earthquake Advisory Council (GEAC) was created in 1991 to advise the Arkansas Division of Emergency Management (ADEM) and the Governor of Arkansas regarding findings, research, problems, and ideas pertinent primarily to the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ). The council has been active since, holding biannual meetings to discuss the various aspects of earthquake hazards. This document summarizes the discussion from the January 13, 2023, Arkansas Governor's Earthquake Advisory Council meeting.

The Arkansas GEAC is made up of subject matter experts in fields such as geology, energy, insurance, and emergency management and includes representatives from the private sector. There were sixty-two attendees at the January 13, 2023, meeting. Below are the issues that were discussed:

## **Arkansas Geological Survey (AGS)**

Arkansas Geological Survey discussed recent earthquakes and the mechanisms used to record and analyze seismic data. Utilizing the most up-to-date scientific data allows communities to understand better the importance of preparing for a catastrophic earthquake.

There were eighty-three Earthquakes in Arkansas in 2022; thirty-two were in the NMSZ. There were thirty-five events in the Eastern Ozarks; Lawrence County was especially active, with twenty-seven earthquakes reported; the strongest was a magnitude of 3.1 on August 21. There were eight events in North-Central Arkansas, six in North and Northwest Arkansas, and two in South and West Arkansas. Of these eighty-three events, twenty-seven were felt. As of January 12, 2023, Arkansas has had two events reported for 2023, both in the NMSZ, and neither was felt.

The AGS discussed their participation in the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) School Safety Conference that was held in Little Rock on July 19, 2022. Seventy-five (mostly School Resource Officers) people attended the breakout session to discuss earthquakes, preparedness, and earthquake drills in schools.

The GEAC Strategic Planning Group introduced the Council's new Vision and Mission Statement:

- Vision Statement: *To advise and engage the Governor and constituents of Arkansas of the effects of seismic activities.*
- Mission Statement: *The Arkansas Governor's Earthquake Advisory Council (GEAC) will provide educational resources, support, and guidance for whole community seismic activity planning, preparedness, mitigation/resilience, and post-activity response and recovery within Arkansas.*

## **Arkansas Division of Emergency Management**

ADEM described the mitigation projects undertaken in 2022 and future projects aimed at encouraging the citizens of Arkansas to prepare for a catastrophic earthquake. The Earthquake Kiosk has been deployed to various locations around Northeast Arkansas. It is available for loan to schools and organizations and is a fun/interactive way to teach communities the history of earthquakes in Arkansas and how to prepare for them. Public Service Announcement (PSA) videos and radio ads geared towards Earthquake Awareness Month (February) and the Great ShakeOut Earthquake Drill on October 19, 2023, will be used to bring focus to Northeast Arkansas, the NMSZ, and the threat of a devastating earthquake in Arkansas.

The National Earthquake Program Managers Meeting will be held March 20-24, 2023, in Portland, OR. The meeting will bring together Program Managers from across the country with guest speakers, FEMA representatives, and the earthquake consortiums to discuss earthquakes and how to better prepare our communities.

ADEM held two Applied Technology Council (ATC) -20 trainings and two Cal OES Safety Assessment Program (SAP) trainings in 2023. These trainings prepare volunteers to rapidly inspect buildings following an earthquake. Information on upcoming trainings and Arkansas' Rapid Visual Inspection Team (INSPRK) can be found at <https://inspectarkansas.org/>.

Jordan Abshire, Operations Branch Manager at ADEM briefed the Council on the 2023-2024 Joint Arkansas/FEMA Region 6 NMSZ Earthquake Plan update. ADEM's Planning Branch will collaborate with a FEMA planner to update and revise the 2018 Joint Plan.

Gary Ragen, Individual and Community Preparedness Coordinator at ADEM briefed the Council on the recent 2022 School Safety Commission's Final Report. He is working to build partnerships with the Board of Education, the Education Cooperatives, County Emergency Managers, and our High Schools to follow the recommendations put forth by the School Safety Commission to implement Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training in Arkansas high schools. He will be meeting with leadership from the Arkansas Education Services Cooperative in January to establish timelines and best practices for moving forward with this project.

## **Central United States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC)**

Jim Wilkerson, Director of the Central United States Earthquake Consortium, briefed the council on several meetings that will take place in 2023. A planning workshop for the CUSEC Multi-State Coordination Annex will be held in June at the Tennessee Emergency Management Association (TEMA) in Nashville. The annual Earthquake Insurance Summit and the National Emergency Managers Agency (NEMA) meeting will be held in Memphis in October 2023.

In coordination with ADEM, CUSEC is conducting a program to screen critical facilities (e.g., police, fire, EMS, etc.) for potential seismic hazards. This program will be conducted over several years in counties most susceptible to earthquakes, such as those in the NMSZ. The purpose of the screening program will be to a) create an inventory of critical facilities, b) identify which of those facilities may be potential candidates for mitigation projects or further evaluation, and c) update mitigation and other plans with the information collected.

*Information on the next meeting will be forthcoming.*