

# The Business Recovery Planners of Southeastern Wisconsin



## From the President's Desk

by Jeff Puetz

Your board of directors will be meeting in the next month to discuss the upcoming programming and fiscal year. Our two top priorities are to:

1. provide programming our members find valuable
2. revamp the web site to make it the valuable tool it can be.

To support these priorities, we are meeting with the chair of the program committee in early August to discuss the program year. Due to her workload, Lorie Alioto will be transitioning out of the chairperson role and Jerry Reick will be transitioning in. Lorie, in her usual gracious manner has agreed to share her knowledge and experience with Jerry to make the transition as smooth as possible. Many thanks to Lorie for the remarkable job she has done in providing quality programming for BRPASW. When you see her next, please express your thanks. Thanks also to Jerry for assuming this pivotal role.

We can always use more volunteers for the program committee, so if you have an interest, please let me know at [jpuetz@wbmi.com](mailto:jpuetz@wbmi.com) or Jerry know at [JReick@rwbaird.com](mailto:JReick@rwbaird.com).

In the next week or so, we're going to start to gather requirements for our revamp of the web site. We will then take those requirements and explore our options for implementing them over time. The board has allocated a significant portion of our budget to redesigning the web site and adding the functionality we think we need as a professional organization. Hiring a firm to do the re-design is certainly within our means. Our goal is to have a functional web site up and running in the next few months.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all this Fall. Have a great summer.

### *The BRPASW Officers*

2008-2009

President - Jeff Puetz  
 Vice-President—Greg Collyard  
 Secretary - Don Groth  
 Treasurer - John Scholz

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## Your Newsletter !

Paul Kamikawa – Editor



I recognize this letter is late. I take responsibility for this. As you see it is a little abbreviated this issue. I need more input. I would like line up articles for the next year—4 issues. We have regular contributors but I know there are others out there that have valuable information to share.

I would like 4 volunteers to offer their member profile for up close and personal articles.

I recognize a reason for not getting company BCP profiles is that it can border on company information confidentiality. We can rework the questions if needed to provide a summary of the your planning efforts without exposing sensitive information. I need 4 companies to review.

Other articles can include, book or video reviews, conference summaries, or unusual situations or lessons learned. I will reprint other articles you may run across if I can get permission.

Please send your content to Paul Kamikawa [pkamikawa@hughes.net](mailto:pkamikawa@hughes.net)

### • MEETINGS

BRPASW meets on the second Tuesday of the month from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Meetings are held nine times a year from January through June, and September through November at various locations in the Milwaukee area. The meeting format usually includes a brief meeting followed by an educational program.

## *RTOs, RPOs, and RTAs* *by Ted Brown, CBCP CBCV*



The Disaster recovery Institute, International defines RTOs and RPOs as follows: Recovery Point Objective (RPO) - The point in time at which data must be restored in order to resume processing transactions. Recovery Time Objective (RTO) - The maximum acceptable length of time that can elapse before the lack of a business function severely impacts the business entity. The RTO is comprised of two components: the time before a disaster is declared, and the time to perform tasks (documented in the disaster recovery plan) to the point of business resumption.

These definitions are generally accepted by the Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Community.

In spite of this acceptance, we see many problems in our clients with the use of these terms. Problem number one is MOST people talk about their RTOs as if they can achieve them, and that they're all the same. Ask anyone, for example at the next Continuity Insights conference "What are your RTOs?" Often you'll get the following answer: "We have 24 hour RTOs" It is highly unlikely that all the RTOs are the same. We typically find in BIAs that there are at least three different tiers of RTOs say 12 hours or less, 12 to 48 hours, and greater than 48 hours. More likely there are more like six tiers. But the real problem is not whether there are three or six tiers, but rather many talk about them as if their attainable. That's why KETCHConsulting created the term called RTAs or Recovery Time Achievable. This helps Business Units and IT to communicate better. Many of our clients now use all three terms: RTOs, RPOs, and RTAs. As an example, assume that your RTO for a critical process is 12 hours but the best that you can achieve is 48 hours. Then the RTO is still 12 hours and the RTA is 48. That's a 36 hour GAP. Together the Business Units can work with IT on improving the RTAs through technology solutions such as mirroring or through work-arounds. Too often we hear IT professionals state that the Business Units RTOs are too short. What IT is really saying is that the RTOs are too expensive to achieve. This is almost always the case in Health Care. Nurses say that I need patient care recovered in minutes. As patients, we'd all agree. But IT says that's unrealistic. What they really mean is that this "not for profit Hospital is not about to spend the money to do mirroring." Notice that the DRII definition of RTO said nothing about technology. The DRII definition says "lack of business function." That's why the Joint Commission requires hospitals to have "Down Time Procedures," so that the patient care process can be restored before the technology is. This can work in every industry for every business function, some better than others. This whole scenario of IT saying that the RTOs are too short, illustrates another reason why BIAs should be executed by Business Units, not IT. We frequently identify, during BIA workshops, the possibility of "Work arounds" to address the expected GAP between RTOs and affordable RTAs. In other cases, where the RTOs have been defined before our arrival, we suggest workshops to get the Business Units to identify solutions to improving RTAs. It's not just IT's responsibility.

Another phenomenon that we find interesting is how often the RTOs are defined by the solution. For example, your Hot Site contract guarantees access within 24 hours, therefore the RTO is 24 hours. Talk about "the tail wagging the dog." We realize of course that this is almost always incorrect. But with our new term "RTA," IT can now communicate with the Business Units more accurately, when they say our RTA is 24 hours, "What are the Business requirements?"

In conclusion, we would humbly suggest that the DRII might want to add RTA to their lexicon. They've already defined it: The RTA is the Recovery Time Achievable and "is comprised of two components: the time before a disaster is declared, and the time to perform tasks (documented in the disaster recovery plan) to the point of business resumption.

<sup>\*)</sup> About the author: Edward (Ted) B. Brown III, CBCP CBCV is President & CEO of KETCHConsulting. He has 40 years experience in IT and 20 years of experience in DR & BCP. You can reach him at PO BOX 641, Waverly, PA 18471 or 1-570-563-0868, tedbrown@ketchconsulting.com

## *Continuity Insights Conference Review April 27-29, 2009*

### *Jeff Puetz*

I thought the Continuity Insights conference in Chandler, Arizona was well run. It had fewer attendees than the DRJ conferences I've attended (about 500 to 600 attendees). The speakers were very knowledgeable and there were more breakout sessions per time slot than at DRJ conferences. For each breakout session, I found a topic that interested me. Speaker quality varied, but for the most part, there were no speakers to whom it was painful to listen. I also found presentations to be slightly less basic than at the DRJ conferences. Some sessions did get me thinking about a few changes to consider for our program. I didn't come away with new ideas I'd never heard before.

From a personal perspective, the resort where the conference was held was very well appointed, but too expensive, especially given the current economic downturn.

### *Ray Krukowski*

The Continuity InSight Conference was held on April 27-29, 2009. This is the third time I've went to this conference. I enjoy these conferences more than DRJ and CPM due to the presentations being more oriented to those with some experience in the BC/DR field.

This year I noticed they had more tracks and concurrent sessions than in the past. This offered more opportunities to find a presentation of particular interest to me. The vendor exhibits are a little light compared to other conferences but still there were enough of them to conduct some good research or just ask questions.

A couple of sessions were really good. One was titled "Your Program Starts And Ends With Crisis Management" by Jim Goble, National City Corporation. The session centered on building a Crisis Management Team and Plan as a starter for a complete BCP. The speaker provided some good examples and a couple of forms on how he went about using this process.

Another session was "Who's Really In Control?" by William Mortoz, Schneider National, Inc. His presentation centered on making sure your emergency response plans take into consideration the reactions by Government Emergency Services (Police and Fire) when they respond. If you don't know what their plans are you may be in for a surprise at the wrong time. This was a good presentation on cooperation in planning for emergencies with the Public and Private sectors. Mr. Mortoz works in Green Bay and might be worthwhile having him speak on this subject at one of our future meetings.

There were several other good sessions I attended. But the most interesting turn of events at this conference was the H1N1 influenza outbreak occurring during this time. I was surprised at one of the late afternoon sessions by the small attendance, only three attendees (including me) and the speaker. The person came in to do the speaker introduction and stated the WHO had just raised the Pandemic Phase from 3 to 4. Most people were on their phones or PC's determining this impact back home.

While not completely taking over the conference there were many conversations between attendees about what was going on and what they were doing. It was good to get this type of feedback from these different perspectives. The last keynote address at the end of the conference included an update from a FEMA/Homeland Security representative on the ongoing situation and the latest Federal response.

As stated above, I prefer this conference to some of the others. While DRJ is great for the number of vendors and attendees (you can really do some great networking) it seems most sessions lend themselves to those new to the field. Based on my past experience, if you have never been to a Continuity Insight conference and you have the opportunity I would recommend attending.

## *2009 BRPASW Program Year Draft*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Topics and Presenters</b>
September 8, 2009 Lunch Mtg	Radisson Mayfair 2303 North Mayfair Rd Milwaukee, WI 53226	Topic: How your BC Program can pay dividends in uncertain times How to evaluate and re-tool your BC program and plans to get maximum benefit from your investment. Presenters: Jerry Reick Topic: Social Networking Relationship guru and social networking expert Phil Gerbyshak discusses. Presenters: Phil Gerbyshak
October 13, 2009	Citizens Bank 5450 S Moorland Road New Berlin, WI 53151	Topic: CERT Overview Lisa Sherman will talk about Emergency Management and give an over view of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program Presenter: Lisa Sherman Topic: HSEEP Overview. An introduction to the Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program
November 10, 2009	Citizens Bank 5450 S Moorland Road New Berlin, WI 53151	Topic: Exact topic still being developed, but something focused on using Intelligent Risk Systems Presenter: Maureen French – iJet Intelligent Risk Systems

***Web Sites of Interest******by Ray Krukowski***

I've come across a few good web sites with information about business continuity, business resiliency, disaster recovery, risk assessment, or other areas related to these fields. I would like to share some of these with the members.

In each edition of this newsletter I will try to have a small article about one of the sites. It may be about some of the more popular sites which every business continuity person should have bookmarked. Or it may be about some obscure site which has one or two points which may be of interest.

**FEMA – Lessons Learned Information Sharing**

While walking through the Vendor Exhibits at the Continuity Insight conference I was in the last row, furthest from the entrance, were you tend to find those vendors who are not the usual high profile BC/DR vendors. At one small booth (OK, just a table with some pamphlets) two ladies were handing out brochures. At first glance they just seem to be advertising FEMA. Since I was aware of FEMA, what they do, and have been to their web site I just kept walking. Luckily for me they stopped me and started talking.

I quickly found out while they were from FEMA they had a particular program they were advertising to those involved in Emergency Management/Disaster Recovery. The program is FEMA Lessons Learned Information Sharing, or LLIS. LLIS is the US Department of Homeland Security/FEMA's national, online network of lessons learned, best practices, and innovative ideas for the emergency response and homeland security communities.

This information sharing community contributes to a one-stop resource for after-action reports, plans, templates, guidance and original research from various federal, state, and local emergency agencies. While access to this online resource is free, you do need to apply for membership and provide information you are working in a related field or area. This is not open for general public viewing.

I've applied and received membership. You just need to answer a few questions. Since we are all involved in BC/DR you should have no problems. A sample of what is available is listed below:

Besides access to online information you will also receive a monthly newsletter via e-mail. The newsletter provides information recently added to its collection.

For further information please contact LLIS at [www.llis.gov](http://www.llis.gov) or you can e-mail them at [help@llis.dhs.gov](mailto:help@llis.dhs.gov).

**If Document Library including:**

- After Action Reports
- Improvement Plans
- Federal Guidelines
- State and Local Plans
- Training Documents
- Planning Templates

**Original Research including:**

- Best Practices
- Lessons Learned
- Practice Notes
- Good Stories

**Collaboration Tools including:**

- Message Boards
- Secure Email
- Topic Specific Channels

you find any interesting web sites you would like to share with the members please let me know.

Ray Krukowski

Manager of Business Continuity

Metavante Corporation

***Conferences****By Paul Kamikawa*

<b>Conference</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Website</b>	<b>Description</b>
Disaster Recovery / Business Continuity High Availability/Resilient Infrastructure Stephens Convention Center Rosemont (O'Hare) Illinois	September 10, 2009	<a href="http://camconferences.com/events/2009/disaster2.htm">http://camconferences.com/events/2009/disaster2.htm</a>	Strategies and tactics to successfully build a highly available/resilient DR/BC infrastructure The content of this one day conference will help you in determining the right level of availability protection, how to design, implement, test and get management buy-in for a highly reliable network infrastructure.
Disaster Recovery Journal's Fall World 2009 - Disaster Recovery Journal Strategies for a Successful Business Continuity Program San Diego, California USA	September 13 - 16, 2009	<a href="http://www.drj.com">www.drj.com</a>	Fall World 2009 is the place to strategize with industry experts and continuity planners from around the globe. Take on the tough challenges and win. Attendees learn real-life solutions to put them ahead of the game.
Corporate Security, Business Continuity and Crisis Management Conference Strategies to Limit Risk and Protect Core Assets: Human, Financial, Reputational, Physical and Technological InterContinental The Barclay New York, NY	October 14 – October 15, 2009	<a href="http://www.conference-board.org/conferences/conference.cfm?id=1981&amp;utm_source=tcb&amp;utm_medium=print&amp;utm_content=conf_cal&amp;utm_campaign=2009security">http://www.conference-board.org/conferences/conference.cfm?id=1981&amp;utm_source=tcb&amp;utm_medium=print&amp;utm_content=conf_cal&amp;utm_campaign=2009security</a>	The prerequisites for catastrophic incidents to occur are rapidly emerging. Financial, pandemic, and terrorism events are poised to continue disrupting businesses worldwide. Like never before, business leaders are recognizing the dire need to be prepared. Research from reputable universities has quantified the single most important component for survival during crises is “preparedness.” There is simply no substitute. This conference will provide unparalleled best practice and benchmarked components for comprehensive organizational preparedness and crisis leadership.
CPM 2009 East Contingency Planning & Management - CPM Group  Waldorf Astoria Orlando,	October 3 – 7, 2009	<a href="http://cpm-east.com">http://cpm-east.com</a>	CPM will demystify crisis response - equipping you with the knowledge and skills to confidently respond to the inevitable disruptions to your organization.
2009 International Conference on Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity International Convention Center Jeju, Jeju Island, Korea..	December 10~12	<a href="http://www.sersc.org/DRBC2009/">http://www.sersc.org/DRBC2009/</a>	DRBC 2009 will be the most comprehensive conference focused on the various aspects of advances in Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity. Our Conference provides a chance for academic and industry professionals to discuss recent progress in the area of Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity.

## ***SWHSP and BRPASW June 9, 2009 Tabletop Exercise Lessons Learned Notes***

### **Scenario: Severe thunderstorms hit Milwaukee county.**

Widespread impact. Damage and injuries are being reported.

Hospitals are reporting an increase of walk-in patients with injuries related to the storm

#### **Phase I - Assumptions**

- This is a county wide disaster
- Incident has occurred during a work day between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.
- School is in Session
- Extent of damage and injuries are unknown, requests for help continue to be received
- Trees are down in many areas
- Hospitals are reporting an increase in walk-in patients with injuries related to the storm (lacerations etc.)
- Some information regarding the extent of the damage is being provided via Mass Media
- All business that are participating have been directly affected.
- Windows have been blown in, roofs have holes, and minimal flooding in basements.

#### **Phase I - Questions and Participant Responses**

##### **Public How will you manage resources with county-wide event?**

- A unified command post (EOC) would be established, members would be comprised of public and private sector participants
- Leverage Southeast emergency management structure and systems
- Call in additional resources as necessary from other support teams (i.e. DNR, etc.)
- CERT certified employees of private companies would be leveraged if necessary.
- Communication
- Push Information out to the public. Leverage any and all of the following which were mentioned:
  - Media, Web - Sites, Weather broadcast system, Emergency broadcast system.
- Within the public service structure, leverage the flow of information upwards or downwards as necessary
- Structure for info flow - State <---> Country <--> Local <--> Private
- Business would be advised to work with their local jurisdictions for the most immediate assistance
- Local jurisdictions would assist in damage and injury assessment / control SWHSP and BRPASW June 9, 09 Tabletop Exercise

##### **Private Since you are affected, what are your first priorities?**

- Life Safety first
- Shelter In Place
- Assess personal injury and obtain necessary support for the injured.
- Use trained First Responders to triage the injured
- Control access to damaged areas to prevent additional injuries
- Remove debris or other materials from damaged areas to prevent further damage or incidents
- Bring up back-up generators if available
- Establish (ICS or Crisis Team)
- Assess property damage
- Based on the viability and safety of the building structure, either advise employees to shelter in place or evacuate.
- The comment was made that the decision to shelter in place or evacuate is situational and cannot be pre-determined and defined in a plan.
- It was shared that although you may advise employees to shelter in place you cannot prevent them from leaving the premises.
- There was a suggestion that if employees are leaving that they call back and report any significant findings if possible (i.e. what roads are blocked, or areas to avoid, etc.)
- Communication
- Leverage whatever communication is still available based on impact to the infrastructure to PUSH info out.
- Possible Methods
  - e-mail, phone, cell phone, web-sites, pre-established 1-800 numbers for reporting emergency info for employees
- If the company's building management or security team participates in the Downtown Security Network or something similar, they could leverage sharing information via that system.
- Possible Audience for Info
- Key Customers, vendors, employees on other shifts, etc.
- Leverage Media and Emergency Broadcast Systems for GETTING info

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### **PRIVATE / PUBLIC - what are you expecting the other sector to do/provide?**

#### **Private**

- Expecting 1st responders to be available to assist as necessary.
- Expect that people would have a plan in place for themselves for use immediately after a disaster

#### **Public**

- Resources may be limited. It was advised that companies encourage employees to become CERT trained and certified to assist during a crisis if necessary.
- Expect that the private sector understand that they may need to “self-sustain” until the public sector can get to them to assist (which may not be as fast as they might expect)
- Expect that people would have a plan in place for themselves for use immediately after a disaster
- Have some ability to begin damage assessment/containment
- Evacuate as necessary and determine who may be missing and where they may have been located prior to the disaster

#### **Phase II - Assumptions**

- Power has been lost to entire county
- Street flooding is present on all main thoroughfares, some are impassable
- Telecommunication coverage is spotty
- Businesses are reporting inability to leave buildings;
- employees are demanding reunification with children
- Mutual aid is minimal as storm has affected surrounding counties.

#### **Phase II - Questions and Participant Responses**

##### **Public - Business are requesting assistance in evacuation how will you respond?**

- Obtain local and or state declarations of emergency (State declaration signed by the Governor)
- It was asked if these were difficult to obtain and the answer was no.
- Utilize EOC to manage shared resources
- Wait for requests for assistance to come in
- Send a mass email notifying of activation of internal resource sharing is already in place
- Roles and responsibilities are already identified and defined. Resources only need to be drawn upon
- Mobilizing is the time consuming part of setting up the shared resources
- These declarations free up and make resources available to support a crisis.
- Resources include but are not limited to: (National Guard, DNR, minimum security prisoners, etc.)
- Note: minimum security prisoners are used on a volunteer basis and have been helpful for such tasks as removing debris following a disaster, sand bagging, etc.
- Note: The benefit of having a declared state of emergency was recently recognized by Jefferson County in so far as they will now proactively process a request for a state of emergency declaration so that they can take immediate action. (They invoked this approach for a threat of flooding this year, however, did not end up having to use it)
- Utilize eSpender - web based software tool to manage and record all emergency management activities

#### **Private**

##### **- Public sector resources are limited, what can you do to assist in evacuation?**

- CERT certified employees could initially assist with persons on-site and then could be requested by Public entities to assist with their needs.
- It was recommended that private companies establish relationships in advance of an emergency with key 1st responder and other emergency management public entities.  
(i.e. police, fire, Milwaukee Emergency Management Coordinator, etc.)
- Error on the side of caution
- Make logical decisions regarding where / if to evacuate

##### **- With streets impassable and public sector assistance minimal, sheltering-in-place is an option. Are you prepared?**

- The prevailing feeling was that this event would not last long enough to significantly impact those employees who ended up sheltering in place.
- It was suggested that there is likely enough food stashed in employees, desks, refrigerators, vending machines, etc. throughout the facility that it would not be a big concern if someone would need a snack.
- Some companies that have on-site cafeterias had additional advantages to support personnel in the event they needed to stay on-site for a prolonged time.

##### **- How do you account for everyone?**

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- In this scenario, it proved to be a significant challenge and there were no absolute solutions.
- Some companies have role call lists that they would use to identify who is present
- Once a list of who may be missing is established, they would then use managers and co-workers to try to determine who is unaccounted for and where they may have been when the disaster occurred
- One company indicated that they plan to leverage their managers to know who was supposed to be at work or not.
- One participant indicated that they are in the process of implementing security badge scan in / out at a room level and will be able to identify the location of individuals within a building at any given time

**- If you evacuate, how would you handle this and where would you go?**

- In the event of having to evacuate employees, they would consider sheltering employees in large public facilities (i.e. churches, schools (if available), malls, etc.)
- Public transportation
- Note: if a company needed the assistance of public transportation for their entire employee base, they would initiate the request through their on-site first responder who in turn would contact the necessary persons to organize it.

**Phase III - Assumptions**

- The weather system is passing
- Power has been restored to some parts of the county
- Some streets are still impassable
- Public transportation busses are limited in ability to move throughout communities
- Some businesses are still unable to leave buildings, since cars have been affected.
- Public sector resources are beginning to free up, staffing will soon reach limitation of workable hours.

**Phase III - Questions and Participant Responses**

**Public - Businesses continue to request assistance in evacuation of buildings, how will you respond?**

- Plan for this phase is essentially the same as for Phase II (continue with plan established at that point)
- Continue to support the community focusing on critical and life threatening issues first.
- Note: resources by this time would likely be exhausted and operating at a minimum. Private companies may be asked to support their own concerns as much as possible unless they were life threatening.
- Public evacuation plan would be activated
- Publicly defined and supported evacuation sites would be established and operational.
- Establish public transportation to support evacuations.

**Private**

**- Will you provide assistance to employees with transportation back to homes?**

- When asked what plans were in place to make sure employees are able to get home, there were varying answers:
- 2 companies stated that they have contracts in place with private busing companies.
- The most common answer was that the employer is really not responsible for making sure the employees get home, but would support the effort in some of the following ways:
  - Try to ensure that the employee is safe and protected from the elements until they have arranged a way home
  - Encourage employees to work together and ride share • Ask for volunteers that have larger vehicles to consider assisting. (this raised the issue of liability on the part of the employer, but it was felt that if the employer did not require the employee to use their vehicle, the employee was assuming liability)
  - A number of companies emphasized that they would not elect to take this approach because it seemed touchy to perhaps utilize private transportation and were concerned about liability issues.
  - Additional support that could be offered by an employer is to assist with qualifying employees by area of the city so try and organize rides for people based on where they live.
  - Public transportation as available.

**- How will you continue operations?**

- Large Companies with fully established off-site or redundant operational recovery would execute these plans as necessary.
- Small to Medium companies that do not have established alternate location plans would focus initially on communicating to their key customers and other external key contacts to notify them of the event and limitations on their operations.

**- Life/safety issues aside, how will your business operations recover from this disaster?**

- Recovery:
- Situational no real detail was shared on this.

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## ***Business Continuity and Motorcycling***

*by Paul Kamikawa*



As a relatively new motorcycle rider and a Business Continuity Professional I have pondered, how I can partake in an activity that involves great risks while practicing in a field that promotes protecting our assets. There are some similarities and I will expand on some of my thoughts.

As a motorcyclist who recently finishing the Harley-Davidson Riders Edge education program, I took one statement to heart, “This course will keep you alive for the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 years.” This means what you learn here will get you through the apprentice period if you practice the basics you have developed here - but there are no guarantees.

In Business Continuity there are some basic principles that should keep your business alive.

- Know what needs to be protected.
- Protect the critical assets with viable recovery strategies and plans
- Practice your procedures

These will keep your business viable. They will not prevent all destructive incidents but will help you heal faster.

Driving defensively is a priority when riding on a machine without any structural protection. As with your business you need to know your environment, which will change over time, same as road conditions change over the time. Anticipate the road ahead. A driver will pull out in front of you and if you are already considering your escape routes you could prevent injury. Look ahead to see what is coming up. Is there a re-organization in the near future? How will that affect the existing plans and strategies? How will you remain covered during the transition? On the road if you see a storm coming up it usually pays to get the rain gear early. People have developed incident specific plans such as Pandemic plans for anticipated situations. Spend your time and resources on the most likely situations that can happen. Rank your threats short term and long term and plan accordingly.

When planning for a trip I look at the timeframe and locations I will be going to. Is it all expressway or will it be city driving? I know most motorcycle accidents happen at intersections. Is my travel environment intersection rich or not. Are you heading into a disaster rich period, like the upcoming flu season or storm season? Do your BCP plans take into consideration the peak business periods and do your strategies need to be tweaked during this period. Have you scheduled exercises with scenarios that challenge the upcoming situations or identified weaknesses in your plans? Part of our responsibility is to get others in the company to plan defensively. Is that application implementation recoverable? Can we find a replacement for that hardware? Are we losing our backup strategy by consolidating these locations? If we can get others to think and plan with business continuity in mind it helps our efforts.

I evaluate the resources I will have available when planning a trip. I cannot carry everything for every situation just as you do not have the budget and resources to bulletproof everything in your company. I look at weather forecasts, investigate historical data, and rely on past experiences. The trip to Sturgis this year was not my first trip. I knew the trip was a possibility so I went to the State Hog Rally to see what a rally was like and a short camping trip to see what I may need to bring and how to pack my motorcycle. I checked the long range weather forecasts, the proposed route, and the resources at the campgrounds besides talking to bikers who have been there. I took all of that information and developed a strategy and supply list. I kept my raingear handy and dressed in layers to handle the temperatures that ranged from 60-110 degrees. Disasters can be planned for similarly. Examine past disasters and lessons learned and integrate them in your plans. An office or datacenter move or hardware migration can offer opportunities to practice and review recovery procedures without having to go through the expense and time of an exercise. Tradeoffs in strategies should be based on situations most likely to affect your business and on past experiences. Each year or planning cycle you should review what has changed and what can I get done given the resources available.

Be prepared for the worst. I still wear a helmet with a face shield. I feel it reduces my risks. I wear my leather jacket when possible to protect me from the pavement. I recognize the threats and determine the level of risk I am comfortable with at the time. Since we do not have everything we need all the time our businesses accept some risks at times, for me I am aware when I am taking on additional risks. Part of our jobs is to make the business aware of the risks that are present in the environment. Businesses do take risks and should be aware the depth and impact of the risks at any given time.

These are some thoughts after traversing some potential disasters and 2,500 miles in 8 days. Be safe and plan ahead.

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