

IAEM Headquarters

201 Park Washington Court
Falls Church, VA
22046-4527 USA

Contact: Dawn M. Shiley, MA, CAE
IAEM Communications & Marketing Director
703-538-3542



News Release

IAEM-USA Announces the 2025 Emergency Manager of the Year Award

Oct. 17, 2025 (Falls Church, Va.) – The Awards & Recognition Committee of the U.S. Council of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM-USA) has selected Andrew Chandler, AEM, as the IAEM-USA 2025 Emergency Manager of the Year. The award will be presented at the 73rd IAEM Annual Conference & EMEX in Louisville, Kentucky.

IAEM-USA Emergency Manager of the Year *Andrew Chandler, AEM*

Since his appointment as emergency management director for Woodford County in 2015, Andrew “Drew” Chandler has transformed the county’s emergency management program into a model of professionalism, innovation, and resilience. Serving a rural population of just over 27,000, Drew has elevated the agency’s capabilities to a level rarely seen in similarly sized jurisdictions.

Under his leadership, Woodford County became the only Emergency Management Agency in Kentucky where all full- and part-time staff hold certifications from IAEM, KEMA, or both. The agency is actively working toward accreditation under the EMAP 5-2022 Emergency Management Standard, demonstrating a strong commitment to best practices and continuous improvement.

Drew has also been a champion of public safety education and professional development statewide. As co-founder and CFO of the Kentucky Emergency Services Conference, Drew has helped raise over \$670,000 in scholarships for emergency services professionals across the state. He has also secured more than \$4.1 million in grant funding since October 2023—funding vital assets such as incident support trailers, radio caches, diesel refueling capability, and hazard mitigation projects that enhance infrastructure resilience.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Drew modernized the county’s Emergency Operations Center by deploying hybrid telepresence tools to ensure continuity of operations. He has also served as Planning Section chief during major responses, including the Western Kentucky tornado outbreak and Eastern Kentucky flooding.

His local innovations include the launch of Woodford Alerts, a unified public warning system now widely replicated across the United States, and the distribution of NOAA Weather Radios to over 3,000 low-income households. In a county without a formal IT department, he also led efforts to enhance cybersecurity and modernize communications infrastructure.

Drew's influence extends beyond his community. He has held numerous leadership positions, including two terms as president of the Kentucky Emergency Management Association, and he serves on multiple state-level emergency response and interoperability committees.

His commitment to excellence has earned him numerous professional accolades, but perhaps most importantly, Drew continues to lead with humility, service, and a steadfast focus on community safety.

For his exceptional contributions to emergency management and dedication to community resilience, Andrew "Drew" Chandler is recognized as the 2025 Emergency Manager of the Year.

The Emergency Manager of the Year Award recognizes an emergency management practitioner for outstanding contributions to the field of emergency management.

IAEM-USA, the nation's largest emergency management professional association, is a non-profit organization representing more than 5,800 emergency management and homeland security professionals for local communities, state and federal disaster officials, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and others involved in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from all types of disasters, including acts of terrorism. IAEM provides access to the largest network of emergency management experts who can provide advice and assistance, the Certified Emergency Manager program, annual scholarships, a comprehensive monthly newsletter, and more.

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