

## **KEN GRAHAM, NOAA'S NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE**

### **Message from the Director of the National Weather Service**

#### *IAEM Annual Conference Bulletin*

I'm honored to join you at this year's IAEM Annual Conference—one of the most valuable opportunities to engage directly with emergency management professionals. The partnership between the National Weather Service (NWS) and the emergency management community is foundational to our shared mission: protecting property, saving lives, and navigating every storm—together.

This year marks a pivotal moment for NWS. In July, the Presidential Memoranda, "Ensuring Accountability and Prioritizing Public Safety in Federal Hiring," designated NWS a Public Safety agency, and we've been granted Direct Hiring Authority. These developments streamline our ability to recruit top talent and reinforce our role as a critical national asset. We're deeply grateful for the support from the Administration and our partners in the field, on Capitol Hill, and across the public sector.

These changes come at a time of extraordinary challenge. In 2025 alone, we've faced devastating wildfires, tornado outbreaks, hurricanes, and hailstorms. Catastrophic flash flooding in Texas claimed more than 130 lives. Our hearts remain with those affected, and we commend the tireless efforts of NWS staff, IAEM members, and our partners who responded with urgency and compassion. These events underscore the life-saving importance of timely forecasts and early warnings—and our unwavering commitment to improving them.

We are committed to a comprehensive organizational transformation—one that positions the NWS to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving world. This restructuring will enhance our capacity to deliver life-saving forecasts and warnings, expand Impact-Based Decision Support Services, and strengthen our presence with decision-makers at every level.

When I began my tenure as the NWS Director in 2022, my conversations with employees led to "Ken's 10," a set of ten initiatives designed to move the NWS towards being more nimble, flexible, and mobile, sitting eye-to-eye with decision makers. Building on this, I am launching the next phase of Ken's 10, which focuses on modernizing technology, strengthening our workforce, and changing our operations model to better serve the nation. These efforts will also deepen collaboration with our core partners across the weather enterprise, ensuring that together we deliver the best possible information to protect lives and property.

Emergency managers are the backbone of this work. Your leadership on the front lines ensures that communities are prepared, informed, and resilient. Being here at IAEM allows me to hear your stories firsthand—insights that shape how we evolve NWS to meet your needs and support your mission.

Through every transformation and every storm, one constant remains: our partnership with IAEM. Whether in calm or crisis, we stand shoulder to shoulder, united by purpose. On behalf of the entire National Weather Service, thank you for your steadfast support. We remain

committed to delivering the information you need—when you need it, how you need it—to empower your decisions and protect the public.

I look forward to seeing you in November!