

# MC, CHS grad stays on the front lines as a FEMA official

Special to The Clinton Courier

Richard Morris runs from one disaster to the next as a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) official.

Based in Texas, the Clinton High School and Mississippi College communication graduate stays on the front lines in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis.

The pace picked up the past two months for Morris, a FEMA emergency management specialist. His vast FEMA region supports citizens in Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico and Oklahoma.

Officials are teaming to provide a nationwide response “to the COVID-19 pandemic to protect the health and safety of the American people,” he says.

Morris moved to Dallas in September 2019 to accept a new position with FEMA’s regional office in Denton.

He’s one of the staffers assigned to FEMA’s Regional Response Coordination Center. Employees provide response and recovery efforts to all five states and tribal governments. He began staffing the office on March 21 as COVID-19 cases soared. He’s the FEMA voluntary agency liaison leader and mass care lead officer.

Morris works in the FEMA region to “collect information and maintain situational awareness of what their current needs are,” says the 2015 MC alumnus. He examines current needs and sizes up future challenges.

His work in emergency management began taking shape as an MC student.

“Richard has amazed me!” says communication professor Mignon Kucia. “When I first met Richard, he was unsure about what he wanted to do. Once he completed a required internship with MEMA [Mississippi Emergency Management Agency], he was hooked on disaster preparedness.”

Before long, the Mississippi native landed a position with FEMA. “That fits him well.”

Morris assisted Texas families as a FEMA official in 2017 after Hurricane Harvey battered the Houston area and other parts of south Texas. There were more than 300,000 applications for individual assistance to help survivors. At the time, he brought in volunteer agencies to

support FEMA officials working with the state of Texas.

“What I do will and has helped the survivors indirectly through the voluntary organizations providing support,” Morris said in October 2017.

Morris worked for FEMA in West Virginia when the state was hit by flash flooding. He spent a year with the federal agency in Louisiana following widespread flooding in 2016.

Morris is among many professionals working daily amid the COVID-19 crisis. He joins an army of nurses, doctors, physician assistants and first responders offering help, to name a few. An MC graduate and adjunct instructor at the Baptist-affiliated university, Steve McCraney serves as deputy director at the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency. He’s the former public safety director at his alma mater.



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MC communication graduate Richard Morris

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