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Emergency director leaves after 20 years

BY PAUL MCKIBBEN • PMCKIBBEN@NKY.COM • JULY 1, 2010

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One particular emergency in Boone County Dan Maher remembers involves Florence Mall being turned into a truck stop and housing a Rottweiler at a Boone County High School locker room. That was all during a winter storm in 1994.



Maher took those memories and others with him as he retired after 20 years with Boone County's emergency management department on June 30.

Maher said officials had to open up Boone County High School as a shelter for travelers in 1994. He said about 200 travelers were stranded because the interstate highways were closed. For about five days approximately 200 people resided in the school's gymnasium. A wedding even took place during the ordeal and Maher said a minister was brought in.

The mall was closed during the storm. But its food court was open for truck drivers who Maher said were sleeping all over the mall.

"That was probably the most involved event. We had so many things going on at one time that had to be managed in terms of just scale," he said.

Maher's first job with the department was being its only deputy director. He said he started when he was 23 years old and just out of college. Ten years later, Maher became director.

Maher, a Union resident, is able to retire now because he is considered a hazardous duty employee under the state's pension system. He doesn't know what he's going to do next. He said he has a little boy who will turn 3 so retirement will give him an opportunity to spend a lot of time with him.

"And I'm sure I'll have some opportunities to do different things and I'm just going to keep my doors open and see what I want to go into," he said. "I don't know if I'll stay in the same field. Twenty years is a long time to do one thing."

Mark Ihrig, a deputy director in the department since 2000, took over the following day. Ihrig, who lives in Hebron, said he sees no need to change what is not broken.

"The department's been well run," he said. "Dan leaves a legacy of a department that's a leader in emergency management not only in the commonwealth but in the region."



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Paul McKibben/Staff

Mark Ihrig, left, took over as Boone County's new emergency management director on July 1 replacing Dan Maher, right, who retired the day before.

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