

## United South and Eastern Tribes Tribal Sheltering Exercise

At the Executive Winter Session this past February, the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) requested that FEMA headquarters and regional tribal liaisons from Regions 1, 2, 4, and 6 host a tribal sheltering exercise. Over the past three months, FEMA and the American Red Cross worked together with USET and tribal leaders to create the exercise.

The exercise was held last week at USET's mid-year conference, hosted by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe in Connecticut. Eighty-four tribal representatives took part in the exercise. The sheltering exercise provided participants with an opportunity to assess the compatibility and coordination mechanisms of appropriate establishment, set-up, operations, and breakdown of shelters located on tribal lands. The exercise was set-up as a facilitated discussion which allowed tribal representatives to not only learn from FEMA and American Red Cross program experts, but also from other tribal emergency managers as tribes provided sheltering examples on tribal land during the discussion portion. FEMA RTLs, the American Red Cross, the National Tribal Affairs Advisor, and the participating tribal nations developed interpersonal relationships as a result of collaborating on this exercise, and the agency received positive feedback on the support shown to tribes in a nation-to-nation manner.

