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EMERGENCY INFO ONLINE

A resource directory for emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and accessible communications

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Emergency Info Online is a website and printer-friendly resource directory established to provide information regarding organizations involved in emergency preparedness and communications, particularly as they relate to the Emergency Alert System and individuals with disabilities. The directory includes information about and reports from government agencies and commissions, private and not-for-profit organizations, and foreign and international groups pertaining to their work involving response, recovery, and communications during times of emergency, with an additional focus on the accessibility of such communications for people with disabilities.

Emergency Info Online was made possible in part with the resources provided by the American Foundation for the Blind, Bridge Multimedia's project partner in the development of this resource directory.

UPDATES:

06/21/07

Preparations begin for National Emergency Preparedness Month 2007

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security will sponsor the fourth annual National Emergency Preparedness Month this September to promote the importance of preparing for emergencies in homes, businesses and communities. This year's effort has a growing coalition of over 600 national, regional, state, and local organizations offering support for the initiative. Michael Chertoff, Secretary of Homeland Security, said "Personal preparedness is paramount to effectively reacting to the effects of a disaster. By preparing yourself, your family, and your businesses, you allow first responders to prioritize efforts and aid."

For the first time, the month will concentrate on four different areas of emergency preparedness.

- September 1-8; Back-to-School
- September 9-15; Business preparedness
- September 16-22; Multicultural preparedness
- September 23-30; Home and family preparedness, including individuals with disabilities

Homeland Security Committee members, Sens. Joe Lieberman and Susan Collins, and Reps. Bennie Thompson and Peter King, have agreed to serve as honorary Congressional co-chairs of National Preparedness Month 2007 and lead the effort to increase public awareness on the importance of emergency preparedness on Capitol Hill.

Emergency Info Online will be marking the 30 days of National Preparedness Month by highlighting 30 separate Emergency Preparedness resources, over the course of September. Visit www.emergencyinfoonline.org for more information as Preparedness Month approaches.

05/01/07

New Poll Reveals Only Seven Percent of Americans Are 'Red Cross Ready' for a Disaster or Emergency

According to an April 2007 poll, conducted by the American Red Cross and Harris Interactive, only seven percent of the population has taken what the Red Cross considers the three steps necessary to prepare for a disaster or emergency: get a kit, make a plan, and be informed.

The American Red Cross recommends:

- Families assemble or buy a disaster kit containing at least three days of supplies in an easy-to-carry container, like a backpack. It's also important to check that stock every six months and replace expired items.

- As part of your family plan, each person should know how to reach family members and where to meet if they can't go home.
- Families should learn about what types of disasters or emergencies are most likely to occur where they live, work and play, and take first aid and CPR courses -- a vital component of disaster preparedness.

"Even though hurricanes primarily affect coastal states, every region of our country is vulnerable to disasters of some type like flooding, severe storms, high winds, power outages, tornadoes, earthquakes, or wildfires," said Red Cross preparedness expert Darlene Sparks Washington. "Every family, no matter where they live, can benefit from following the preparedness actions of Be Red Cross Ready: get a kit, make a plan, and be informed."

Harris Interactive conducted the online survey of more than 2,500 respondents during April 10-16, 2007. Results also demonstrate that:

- 90 percent of Americans who have a disaster kit feel prepared. Yet, only 28 percent actually have a kit.
- 60 percent of American households own a pet, yet only 37 percent have a plan for their pets during a disaster.
- 69 percent of Americans living in hurricane-prone states don't have a disaster supplies kit, and 60 percent don't have an evacuation plan.
- 64 percent of Americans have no evacuation plan, even though 27 percent have had to leave home for at least one night because of a disaster or other emergency.

12/01/06

Committee formed to help schools use technology to deliver instruction in case of a pandemic

A group of educational technology experts has formed a committee to explore how schools across the nation can use technology to ensure that student learning isn't disrupted in the event of a pandemic. The Hurricane Education Leadership Program (HELP) Team, a consortium of more than 30 ed-tech providers, associations, and foundations, was created in late 2005, in the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The group has currently turned its attention to pandemic preparedness as well. Chaired by Susan Patrick, president and chief executive officer of the North American Council for Online Learning, the Pandemic Preparedness Committee has set four important goals:

1. Develop a team of education professionals who have experience in helping with education disasters.
2. Analyze the resources available for schools in a pandemic-related emergency.
3. Develop a guide and framework for schools to follow in preparing for such a contingency.

4 Provide assistance to the education community, in the event of a pandemic, by providing curriculum and instruction to enable learning to continue when school campuses are closed.

The committee held its first meeting Nov. 20 and is now in the analyzing stage of its work. HELP wants to ultimately ensure that when a pandemic outbreak results in the closing of schools, be it for one day or a month, the schools will have identified ways for their students to continue the learning process away from the traditional campus. One possible scenario is to use online learning and other educational technologies. The committee hopes to have its research and analysis completed before its next meeting, and to have some sort of guide or action checklist available by January.

9/25/06

The Department of Homeland Security announces a \$5 million program to boost emergency preparedness: Schools to get hazard warning radios

On Sept. 25, 2006, The Department of Homeland Security announced that it will provide \$5 million to make sure that hazard warning radios are in every public school in the United States. These battery-operated radios are activated automatically when the National Weather Service broadcasts a signal indicating an emergency for a specific geographic area.

The National Weather Service, part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), operates more than 950 short-range radio stations. It has encouraged schools, businesses, and homeowners to buy warning radios that are activated with a broadcast signal that automatically turns a radio on and announces a potential hazard. Originally conceived as a means to deliver weather warnings, the system now covers all hazards.

Distribution of the radios is expected to begin in October and should take a few months. Federal officials hope the program will better prepare the nation's schools for emergencies. The NOAA radio system covers about 97 percent of the country, with only a few gaps in some sparsely populated mountain areas.

7/12/06

FEMA develops a Digital Emergency Alert System (DEAS)

On July 12, 2006, the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Association of Public Television Stations (APTS) announced the completion of Phase II of the Digital Emergency Alert System (DEAS).

The DEAS would allow the transmission of emergency alerts directly to citizens and responders without the need for a special receiver. These alerts would be sent to users of computers, mobile phones, pagers, and other devices. Transmission of data over
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the digital broadcast signal is nearly instantaneous and can be distributed simultaneously to thousands of sites.

"Digital capabilities will improve the reliability, flexibility, and security of the emergency alert system," said David Paulison, Director of FEMA. "This more efficient system will better serve first responders and government officials, as well as provide the American public timely information so they can safeguard themselves and loved ones in times of emergencies."

FEMA has put \$1 million into the project to date. Last week it kicked in an additional \$4.5 million to give all licensees the equipment needed to relay the federal alerts. The federal agency will also provide \$1 million a year to maintain the system. For More Information About DEAS, Please [Click Here](#).

7/11/06

HHS Announces Additional \$225 Million for State and Local Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Efforts

Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Michael Leavitt announced an additional \$225 million in funding for state and local preparedness, as part of the White House plan to mobilize the nation and prepare for an influenza pandemic.

"Earlier this year HHS joined the nation's governors for a series of state pandemic influenza summits," Secretary Leavitt said. "These funds will build on the work begun at the summits and help local, tribal, territorial and state public health officials as they undertake critical preparedness planning that communities must do themselves."

The funding announcement is part of \$350 million included in recent emergency appropriations for upgrading state and local pandemic influenza preparedness passed by Congress in December. In February, the first phase of \$100 million was awarded to states for planning and exercising of pandemic response plans and to identify gaps in preparedness. This second phase of funding is being awarded to begin addressing those identified gaps in pandemic influenza preparedness planning.

For a Table Outlining Available Funds, Please [Click Here](#).

For More Information on Pandemic Preparedness Efforts, Please [Click Here](#).