

## **King County Office of Emergency Management Podcasts**

### ***Disasters: Are you ready?***

#### **Pets and Preparedness**

When it comes to trying to motivate people to become prepared for disasters we are always fighting an uphill battle. We have tried any number of ways to motivate individuals and families to become prepared for a disaster.

We've used, love, guilt, and kids to reach out to people to suggest ways in which they can take care of the one's they love by making a disaster plan, building a disaster kit and getting involved in their community by doing things like learning first aid, joining a Citizens Emergency Response Team (CERT).

There is one weapon that we have not used just yet, but will be making a major push on soon.

We are a nation of pet owners. We have dogs, cats, birds, fish, snakes, hamsters, rabbits, gerbils, rats, mice, iguanas and every other creepy crawling thing one can imagine—yes, even tarantulas.

When we had a family dog (McKenzie) she basically ruled the household. At times I felt like my wife cared more about the dog than she did me. And, it is just that type of feeling that we are counting on to motivate pet owners to become prepared for the next disaster. If they won't do it for themselves, or their kids, maybe at least they'll do it for their pets!

It is pretty interesting to watch people interact with their pets. Pets become part of the family. Love me love my dog! If people know you don't like their pet, I think it is hard for them to like you—since pets are in our love circle.

We are counting on this love of our pets to “perhaps” motivate people who have done little or nothing for themselves, to start doing something—if only for their pets.

Watch for a new public service announcement coming to your local television soon that uses talking pets to promote disaster preparedness.