

FEMA Monthly Preparedness Call – April 2012
April 3, 2012
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. EST

Good afternoon everybody and welcome to FEMA's monthly preparedness call for April 2012, thank you very much for joining. A few technical considerations before we begin. Please make sure that your computer speakers are turned up to their maximum potential so you can hear the audio proceedings efficiently. The audio will be playing through your computer speakers. After our presenters finish, we will be having a brief Q&A period towards the end of the webinar. After the webinar concludes, the audio recordings, as well as any important links and the captioned transcript will be posted on the Citizen Corps website within 48 hours. Additionally, this webinar is free and open to the public.

Once you are able to visit the Citizen Corps website for access to the recordings, please feel free to forward the links and the recordings to your colleagues and peers. With that, I would like to turn the call over to Ms. Aretha Carter from ready.gov to kick us off.

Welcome to the FEMA preparedness call, my name is Aretha Carter, campaign specialist with the ready.gov campaign. We'll highlight the best practices to leverage sustained public engagement year-round. In addition, we will give tools to enhance preparedness for getting the public involved. First I would like to introduce a very special guest from the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration, who is co-leading efforts for awareness week such as severe weather awareness week. Chris Mayer is the national warning coordination meteorologist at the NOAA National Weather Service office of climate, water, and weather services. Chris?

The national severe weather awareness week is the latest example of a partnership. As you know emergency management, the weather service and other agencies such as the USGS work to protect lives and property with warning messages and other disaster risk reduction activities. The more prepared communities are for destructive weather, the less of the human and economic toll we will experience in the future as you saw with the devastation we have experienced over the last year due to tornadoes, the nation is about building community resilience with increasing our ability to stream weather. The only way for those efforts to be effective is through the local community leading the way, a major component of FEMA's whole committee approach.

That is exactly what Citizen Corps brings to the table and why I am really appreciative to be able to talk to you today. The strength of our organization is our local National Weather Service forecast offices that serve your states and local communities. I know many of you have already formed local working partnerships with our forecast offices, but if not, I would encourage you to explore those relationships. The national weather service is a willing partner in this team and I look forward to expanding our partnership with you, through our national level efforts, but more importantly, the local community level.

Thank you, Aretha, back to you.

Thank you Chris for your opening remarks and I would now like to introduce Sgt. Brisbane with the Michigan State Police Department which will go over how states can engage the public

during severe weather awareness week. Sgt. Paine is the coordinator for the state of Michigan's emergency management and homeland security division. Sgt. Paine?

Good afternoon and thank you so much for having me. I just wanted to talk quickly about one of the campaigns we have here in Michigan. Michigan uses the severe weather awareness poster contest as a fun way to engage communities to have kids start at an early age to become more informed about the severe weather that affects our state.

Some of the partnerships that we have in the severe weather awareness committee is the Michigan State police, emergency management and homeland security division, Michigan department of natural resources, the National Weather Service, Michigan Earth science teachers Association, consumers energy, and insurance Institute of Michigan, State Farm insurance, Michigan sheriffs Association, and Lapeer County emergency management and WDIV TV out of Detroit. This includes individuals, elected officials at the federal, state, and local employees, volunteers, planners, and consultants. The committee is very grateful for the continued support it receives from the members' organizations especially the generous participation of State Farm insurance for supporting the development of the severe weather awareness week poster campaign.

On average, Michigan experiences roughly 60 tornadoes a year and our deadliest tornado was back in 1953. We had 116 Michigan residents that were killed and 844 individuals injured throughout the tornado and it was the most devastating tragic scare throughout Michigan, and we have already had one tornado touch down in Dexter, as in southeast Michigan in March of this year. Michigan is the only state that experiences all four seasons in the same day and in addition to tornadoes, we experienced flooding, especially in springtime during the thaw, blizzards, ice storms, heat waves, we get pretty much a gamut of all kinds of severe weather here in Michigan.

Now as far as the poster campaign that was developed, it was designed to encourage students to think about the importance of being prepared in the event of severe weather. Now, the committee was actually formed back in 1991 by the governor of the state of Michigan and the mission of the committee is to provide information and advice that keeps Michigan residents prepared when severe weather strikes. As I just talked about, the severe weather awareness campaign, one of the most successful activities the committee has had has been this awareness campaign. Now this contest is open to all Michigan students who are enrolled in the fourth or fifth grade. In 2011 we received over 400 entries into the contest.

Now, we want to target kids because weather safety is important to kids as well as adults because kids more often are at risk for severe weather because typically, they spend more time outdoors, and they need to know what to do when severe weather is approaching and they need to know the signs. That is why the campaign has been so successful here in Michigan. As of the committee's efforts in developing the severe weather poster campaign contest and severe hazard awareness campaign, issued and actually received the national weather Association public education award in 2000.

Now the NWA is presented annually to individuals, groups, or organizations that provided significant contributions to increase the public weather awareness. As far as 2012, we did

experience a record number of entries. As you can see, we received 1389 entries and that was compared to over 400 entries that were received for 2011. You can see that the interest and the desire from the kids to be involved in this campaign is just increasing year by year.

As you can see on your screen, that is a first-place winner for 2012. As far as a celebration of winners, the kids actually come to the state capital here in Lansing for the awards ceremony and they get a tour of the capital. The first, second, and third place winners, they received savings bonds. All the other entries received honorable mentions. This campaign here in Michigan, it receives statewide attention from the media. And the senators and representatives and state and local officials sent letters of congratulations to all who participated in the contest. Also, the students get a tour of the state emergency operations center.

As far as that, it is a very successful campaign we've had in Michigan. As I said earlier, it is just a way to get our young people engaged at an early age about emergency preparedness, especially as it relates to severe weather here in Michigan. Websites are up. If you would like further information on the Michigan committee for severe weather awareness you can see the website and there is also additional information at the Michigan State police emergency management and homeland security division website. Back to you. Thank you.

Thank you Sgt. Paine. What a great way to engage the public and the entire community. Again, I just want to remind those who just jumped on the call that this webinar, and all the webinars are recorded and will be posted on the CitizenCorps.gov website, as well as the ready.gov website within the next few days. Now I would like to introduce our cohost Paulette Aniskoff, the director of the individual and community preparedness division.

Hello, can you hear me on the phone okay?

Yes.

Okay. I want to be sure that you had a chance to look at some of the tools for the upcoming national severe weather awareness week which is April 22 through the 28th. We're teaming up with NOAA here at FEMA to make sure that we are encouraging citizens to take those proactive actions to make sure that folks are aware. In part, we want to make sure, and part of the reason we paired up with NOAA is the severe weather that impacts everyone. We have a force of nature initiative which is building up that public awareness and it is supported by FEMA and other federal partners. So NOAA and FEMA are going to be encouraging that take an action step as much as we can to promote awareness is always good. What we really want to do is have people take a real action towards preparedness to start sharing information about the possible hazards in the area, what you do during a disaster, and make sure that we have that neighbor to neighbor contact going.

A really, really great way of course for people to share information nowadays is social media as we all know. We want to make sure that we're spreading the word and give you all the tools that you need to help us out. We really want to make sure that we are encouraging folks to take the pledge to keep their families and friends, and the people they know, informed, and that they would share information before and after any kind of disaster event.

So we will have this coming out to you again, I just want to have a look at this hyperlink here. www.ready.gov/pledge. Social media is a great, fast, and cheap way for us to connect with each other so we will be sending you all some sample tweets and Facebook posts and links that would be viable to share this information in a really quick way. I will turn us to the next slide. I think this will not surprise you. Certainly we have done a lot of surveys, and we wanted to point out this 2011 survey that was conducted by the American Red Cross and the Congressional management foundation. Half the respondents who said they would use social media in the event of a disaster to let people know that they were safe. I'm sure that you have heard this, sending a text message or potentially having a tweet go out can reach a ton more people, or use less cell phone coverage and most of the folks on the phone I am sure have been in some sort of disaster aftermath. I would say that we all know having cell service and relying on phones is never an ideal option.

Social media will be a big part of his campaign coming up on April 22. And all week we're going to make sure that we are promoting the social media tools. One thing that folks have also done surveys on is that when there is a disaster, people tend to check in with folks when it comes to things like evacuation. It is not so much letting relatives and friends know that they are safe, but generally, I'm sure that you guys have heard this; people check in and have that milling capability, when they are looking to know what other people are doing. Are you going to evacuate in as a couple people know they are? They determine it is the time to take action. You hear it from the government and from the TV and local news, but until you check in with some people, generally via social media or telephone, a lot of people will not take action to actually get out of danger.

There are countless examples of emergency management on all the social media channels so we want to share some new concepts and ideas and give you some tools to take a look at. Here are a couple of good starters if you are looking for ideas. There are some really good ones on here. These links we're giving you. I will talk about a couple of my favorites. These webpages, we take a look at this PowerPoint later on. A lot of them have some concepts, a number of tools that you can cut and paste and tweet out, announcements about new programs and services and tools, and a lot of great things that can provide feedback. You might want to give us some advice on how we can do better for those.

They also give some ideas and examples on messaging that you may want to develop yourself because we are positive not all of us have the same types of weather and that kind of thing. One thing I really want to highlight for you all that I think you would really enjoy is that the CDC put out a really helpful social media tool kit that I think will give a lot of great advice if you are looking for better ways and more effective ways through social media so I would definitely encourage you to check that out.

I also think, one thing with a limited budget and limited time that we have, definitely make sure that you all are just looking at all of the webinars on the webinar list that we have got, you can just send a link out and say here is a great webinar on how to prepare your pets, here's a great one on school preparedness, whatever it might be. Please feel free to scroll through a lot of these and take what you need and send it out and recycle it.

The other thing I would say is that the national preparedness coalition site is up year round and it has really great tools, including things like sample tweets that you can edit and make your own so if you go to [community.FEMA.gov](https://community.fema.gov), you can get access to these tools and you can have other people sign up as well. There is a great way to learn and you can go on there and we'll be refreshing that. So much of this information is very good to have year round. Please feel free to go there for tools too.

A couple of other things we want to make sure that you knew were coming up, I think most of you have probably heard this over the past year, but in addition to national severe weather awareness week, the month of April is national financial literacy month.

Again, I think folks who have a lot of disaster experience know how financially devastating a disaster can be. 40% of businesses generally do not reopen after a disaster, but also the financial worry on places of faith organizations, nonprofit, individual, families; the entire community gets really impacted financially. So we have promoted this toolkit every April because it is really important to do so. Just to make sure that folks have sources for financial recovery so we have a link, and there is a money matters preparedness page and I think you will want to take a look at those if you want to promote that as well at some point in April. We think it is really critical to take a look.

On April 10, just so you know, Operation Hope, which is a fantastic nonprofit that does a lot of work with financial literacy and emergency financial first aid, they and the USDA, the extension networks, will co-host a webinar with us to make sure that we have the information to you all to financially prepare communities. What resources are available to help folks with preparedness and also during recovery? Be sure to join us if you get a chance. We want to make sure that we put that up there. Another quick update, I know that we always mention youth and we want to make sure that you know what is going on. We are wanting to make sure that FEMA is not clueless going along without any students and youths actually advising us on what it is that appeals to them.

So we have come up with a youth council and we're going to have 12 to 17-year-olds who really help guide us about what is going to work for you. We know a lot about emergencies, we know a lot about preparedness, we know a lot about response and recovery, but very few of us can ever know exactly what teenagers want to hear. We will get some help from them and this coming Friday is the deadline to get those nominations in. So if you know someone who is service oriented who has been impacted by disaster and you think they would be really interested in offering some insight to us on how to get the younger generation involved, please let us know and the link is there to a power point. It is a great opportunity I think for government to really be listening to youths in a serious way and I think it will really be a lot of fun.

The last thing I would share with you is IdeaScale and FEMA think tank calls. These are a great way to allow not just the emergency management community, but the public to really contribute to, and comment on what we are doing at FEMA and across emergency preparedness, so really on the federal, state, and local level. Lots of great topics and people vote on what topics they are most interested in seeing and those that receive the most votes, frankly just get more attention

from leadership and we have our administrator post a few calls and then walk through what FEMA is doing and what the plan is so I think it is very democratic and a great way to get input.

We wanted to share with you some of the ideas that have come up, and you can login and agree or disagree or make a comment. We thought you might be interested in a few of these and one is a 2013 national preparedness grant that is coming out. You can actually click on it and say what you like and what you do not like about it and make commentary on our program. Get on to be heard.

Crowd sourcing for situational awareness, this is surprising me; it is a fascinating topic I think. Another social media one, preparing for the unthinkable. Another interesting topic and I think is really relevant for us. And then supporting civilian initiatives for recovery gaps. I know that Citizen Corps and our other partner programs are not just doing preparedness, but certainly helping in the other parts, response, recovery, and beyond and I wanted to make sure the data sample what was happening on these calls and to take a look and see if there is anything, if there is a really critical topic that you feel like is not on there, go for it. Definitely feel free to add them and if not, feel free to comment on others.

We wanted to make sure that we mentioned the Utah shakeout and part of the reason I'm so fascinated by this, they have almost 30% of their entire state population doing an earthquake drill on the same day and we are talking about resilient communities and making sure that you are giving folks the opportunity to participate and it is something for the whole community, I frankly have never seen something that is 30% of the state doing it and this effort is really taking off here and I'm sure that folks have heard about the California shakeout and they are spreading to other states now, the Midwest has a certain huge stakeout. But I have got to say, I don't think anyone has beat Utah as far as size and scope when it comes to percentage of population, it's amazing. I want to recognize Utah and put it out there as a goal for all of us.

If we were getting 30% of our community involved with something, I think we would've made some huge strides when it comes to making more resilient communities. Beyond that, as usual, we want to make sure that if there's a topic you would like to see addressed on these calls, we hope that you will let us know about it and if there is a topic that has already been covered, there may have been, so please take a look at the webinar at will. Our next webinar will be that financial literacy one which is on April 10, which is next Tuesday and we look forward to seeing you all again. Have a great April, happy spring, and thank you for joining us today.

Thank you Paulette. Now I would like to follow up by sharing some additional updates from the Ready campaign before we get into our Q&A time. Again, my name is Aretha Carter, campaign specialist with ready.gov. I want to share with you the Get Ready page, which is where you can go and sign up to receive preparedness text messages. We have tips for how to get connected, how to get organized, as well as emergency resources.

Next, we have two new pages that will be up towards the end of this week. They will be space weather, as well as a drought page. It will look very similar to our other natural disaster pages. They will have the before, what to do before a disaster, during a disaster, as well as after. There will also be some key information.

Just get a quick look at the space weather page. The term space weather was first a variable condition on the Sun and the space, the influences, the performance of technology that we use on earth. Extreme weather could potentially cause damage to critical infrastructure, especially the electrical grid highlighting the importance again of being prepared. And of course, the Sun is the main source of space weather with sudden injections of plasma and magnetic field structures from the sun's atmosphere called coronal mass ejections, with sudden bursts of radiation turned solar flares which all cause effects of the earth. This is primarily provided by NOAA, as well as the US Air Force weather agency.

Here, we look at the space weather scales from NOAA and they report three categories of solar effects. These skills to make it current and future space weather conditions, and their possible effects on people and systems. You can see that it ranges from minor to extreme. And if you want to learn more you can go to the website below there for more information.

Also on the space weather page, we will have publications where you can read more about severe space weather. We'll also have related websites as well. And of course you can listen to local officials to learn about the emergency plans that have been established in a specific area. Our other piece that we have that will be coming out is our drought weather page. And nearly every part of our country is experiencing drought and reduced rainfall. So the strategies for drought preparedness focus mainly on water conservation. For example, do not water your lawn, washer car, or other nonessentials to help ensure there is enough water for general use.

Also, you will see related websites on the drought weather page. The full listing as you can see on the screen, the FEMA, Red Cross, national integrated drought information system, the US drought Monitor, the US economic costs of drought, national drought mitigation Center, and how to save our water as well as the US Environmental Protection Agency. That is all of the ready updates that we have. Now we will go into our Q&A session. I will pass this back over to Steve Crocker who will discuss how the Q&A features work. Steve.

Thank you very much Aretha. We will now enter our Q&A session. All participants should be able to see a check box on the screen in front of them with a blinking cursor. You can feel free to type in a question and submit. We will then do our best to pick them up and publish them for our presenters to answer. We're actually about; we're making very good time. We have 30 minutes at which we can take questions.

If we do not get to your question on here, please feel free to e-mail Citizen Corps and you can visit the Citizen Corps website and contact us and please submit your question, we will ensure that it will get to the right person for an answer. So please submit your questions as you think of them. Thank you.

Please stand by for real-time captions.

The first question is for Paulette, they were wondering more about the youth corps programs and resources for these groups. We will provide a link as well Paulette.

Sure. Sorry, I don't see the question, youth corps, I don't get that one. I think the youth preparedness council.

I think they can get all the information by looking on our website, the youth preparedness information, there are a lot of specifics incorporated. I will just say that FEMA is inviting you to nominate someone to become part of a youth council to then give us guidance on what it is that is the most engaging way that we can incorporate youths and work with them as we work on your preparedness programs. On that one, there is so much information and FAQs which are up on that site and if you go to our website, CitizenCorps.gov, it is the main banner. Steve, I don't know if you have the ability to put that up.

He just put it up now.

Great.

Someone was looking for the information on the phone and text message alerts.

I can take that one. We do have a question on how to get the ready.gov text messages. If you go to www.ready.gov/get-tech-ready, that is where you can sign up to receive preparedness messages on your cell phone; it is not just weather alerts, but you will see preparedness messages going directly to your cell phone.

Great, thanks Aretha. Question for Sgt. Paine. How did the idea of the posters come about?

Are you there Sgt. Paine?

Yes sir.

I lost you there for a moment. The poster idea came about through the Michigan committee for severe weather awareness. It was a joint idea between the committee, and also the State Farm insurance Company. It was the culmination of ideas that actually brought this poster campaign to reality.

Great. Thank you Sgt. Paine. Next question, is there a place to order pamphlets or other materials? For using in community presentations like neighborhood watch groups or youth program groups or faith-based organizations?

Aretha I don't know if you want to take this first, then I can talk about ours.

You go ahead first.

The FEMA warehouse has a lot of different documents and I think we would have to look up the website on where to order them and we'll put it up there in the Q&A, but they're certainly are. If you have publications, there are a ton of FEMA publications, there are a ton. We'll put them on the site.

There are several publications, just to piggyback Paulette, many, every business has a plan, there is also the prepare and make sense for older Americans, get ready now, preparing your pets for emergencies, all of these publications are available to order through the FEMA warehouse.

And the website we are posting is www.ready.gov/publications, Citizen Corps as well and we will pull up that link.

Sure, we are looking at a how-to guide for youths; we have quite a lengthy guide that folks can use as a reference guide to walk through any kind of hazard, and looking at the best way to prepare for that hazard and what to do immediately following that disaster. We certainly have a catalog of all the youth programs that exist around the country so folks can take a look at the one that appeals to them. That is an example. You could easily get a longer list by going to the link that I put up.

Great. I also want to give mention to some of the preparedness activity for communities everywhere, and there are 16 short modular activities or you can conduct trainings. It is about taking simple steps such as making a plan, developing a communications plan, creating a low-cost disaster kit, and we will post that link up as well.

Our next question is does the youth council include ways to assemble groups and communities to help prepare for and perform in disasters? And this is from Deb Garriott.

We do not have a youth corps that I know about. I think that we do have CERT team, which would be a very good answer to what you are looking for. In this you would go through your CERT program locally and if you were to go to that website, you can find a program in your area and see if they have a program as well.

I just put it up.

Thank you Marcus.

You're welcome.

Are there any new materials in the works for national preparedness month?

So many. I will take this one. I would say that the number one thing is that no one ever tells us what else they want. So I would challenge each of you to shoot us an e-mail and tell us exactly what else you are looking for. I would say that our toolkit is being revised and there is a ton of templates for posters, press releases, and sample tweets, that sort of thing. We just launched new discussion boards on preparedness, CERT, and youth. We'll keep those coming out probably every few weeks; we'll have a few new tools and templates coming out. We would love to know who and what else you are looking for. If you think the most helpful thing would be to have more poster templates that you can plug-in your own information, and if you think what you really need is a social media kit, whatever it is, please let us know. We have a lot coming up. I was at last year's 2011 toolkit is in great shape and you can still access that I believe on community.FEMA.gov and there are a lot of tools already up there so please take a look. And the

discussion board, we just started. So if you have topics on preparedness or use of CERT, please feel free.

Thanks Paulette. If I were to start a youth preparedness group for our community who would I contact?

Thank you. There are a couple places to start. If you are not already part of the Citizen Corps or CERT program, I think that is definitely an awesome place to start. What we have, we are collecting a bunch where programs currently exist. A lot of CERT programs, there are also a ton of youth programs that already exist and a lot of communities that people had not known about. I would actually go to our website and we have a how-to guide that will give you a checklist on where to get started. I don't know what state you live in, though we have done nine youth preparedness workshops that link people in with the people in the community who actually have CERT'd or they want to start a youth program, so that is a great opportunity and it is all there on the site.

In addition, I also provided the link for people to be able to find their local Citizen Corps Council or local CERT worker by zip code, as well.

Marcus, it would be great as well to add this is the corps website, I will e-mail it to you, the one page of all of the resources that we have.

Great, thanks Paulette. The next question is from Dorry Wilner, what is the best working information to share with four through six year olds concerning severe weather safety? We have a specific resource that might help for ages four through seven if you don't have anything Paulette.

I don't have anything off the top of my head to be honest.

Out of the Citizen Corps program, we created a publication that is probably our ready, set, prepare activities and it is actually a publication you can order from our FEMA warehouse for ages four through seven that does discuss with that age group how they can be prepared for emergencies in their household. I will put up a link to that as well. Go on CitizenCorps.gov. There is also the kids' page which will provide additional information you can use to communicate with four through six year olds on severe weather safety.

With that, I think it will do for the day. There are a few more questions, but we will be respectful of everyone's time. I really want to thank Sgt. Paine who provided one of the ways to get youths involved and severe weather awareness week and for Paulette and Teresa for talking about different ways to empower social media. Do any of you have any parting comments?

I would say that our website has a ton of information. I do see a couple of questions popping up, and if you do go to CitizenCorps.gov, if you dig around you often find some of the resources that you're looking for. The last thing I would say is that when it comes to severe weather, and making folks aware of it when it comes to financial literacy, as much as we can do from here, we would love to know what tools you will need, because to be honest, no matter what we do here, it

doesn't matter quite as much as the folks in their local community. Folks listen to what you're saying and the folks who do so much work on disaster response, we are very, very grateful for you jumping on this call and sharing information. Please let us know what else it is you are looking for, whether it be severe weather, financial literacy, national preparedness month, these programs on preparedness, do let us know because we are creating tools for you to use and we want to make sure that you're getting you everything you need to get your job done, because that is where the work is happening. So thank you very much for taking the time today.

Thank you all for joining today's call. Again, please join us for our next FEMA preparedness monthly call which will be coming up on the first Tuesday in May and that will be May 1, for our next FEMA preparedness call. Thank you.

Thank you everyone.