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Buckhannon Consultant Advocates Emergency Preparedness

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Jeff Harvey is an advocate of the theory there is no such thing as being too prepared. Whether the crisis is of manmade origin, such as the attacks of 9/11, or a natural disaster such Hurricane Katrina, he said it pays to be ready for anything. Emergency preparedness is what Harvey offers through his Buckhannon-based JH Consulting LLC. Founded in 2006, the company offers planning advice to a list of public and private sector clients that include county 911 centers, school districts, hospitals and industrial facilities. "We tell our clients that we are selling them a product that we hope they will never need," Harvey said. "We deal mostly with clients on the local government level." Planning steps include monitoring government guidelines, preparing emergency evacuation plans ranging from a small facility to an entire community and stay up-to-date on chemical decontamination protocols. Harvey's educational background includes a degree in technical writing from West Virginia University and the strategic leadership program offered at Mountain State University. He serves as the resource and planning officer for the Upshur County Office of Emergency Management. He and co-worker Derek Eskew are members of the Lewis-Upshur Local Emergency Planning Commission. His emergency situation training has been acquired through courses offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Department of Homeland Security programs on both the state and federal levels. Harvey said the company provides a three-step emergency preparedness process. "First, we deal with the risk assessment or vulnerability of a client," he said. "Then we go into operations planning by analyzing capabilities and designing a response. The third step is training, drills and exercises." The key word is planning, according to Harvey. "There is always going to be emergencies whether it's flooding or a tanker roll-over accident," he explained. "That's why we take an all-hazards approach that could be employed in a variety of situations." With the proper planning and training in place, steps A, B and C will happen automatically. Without it, the result could be an unpredictable knee jerk reaction. The company Web site, www.jhcemergencypreparedness.com, offers a quick quiz with follow-up questions for management to determine the level of preparedness at their site. Do you have a plan in place to ensure the maintenance of your business during emergencies? Have you identified the personnel necessary to your business operations? Have you identified critical electronic and paper records? Have you completed a risk analysis to determine where your business might be vulnerable? Do you have security measures in place at your business?