



https://www.theet.com/bridgeportnews/news/emergency-reach-out-offers-help-with-disasters/article_9b4d3924-e991-11e2-a7e7-001a4bcf887a.html

Emergency Reach Out offers help with disasters

by Kim Payne CORRESPONDENT Jul 10, 2013



Storms can cause power outages that can last for days, or even weeks. Flash floods require immediate action. But thanks to Bridgeport's Emergency Reach Out event, residents can be prepared for disaster.

"Thunderstorms, Tornadoes, Lightning — Nature's Most Violent Storms" will offer information on how to recognize severe weather, and suggest life-saving actions to keep one's family and home safe during a weather emergency.

The event will be held 6:45 p.m. Tuesday in Council Chambers at Bridgeport City Hall.



**When I say
"good,"
you say
"neighbor."**

Carl Andrick, Agent
27 Trovato Street Suite 104
Bridgeport, WV 26330
Bus: 304-622-1212
www.carlandrick.com

Now that's teamwork.
CALL FOR A QUOTE 24/7



P097314.1 State Farm Home Office, Bloomington, IL

According to Shaunda Rauch, director of the Bridgeport Emergency Services Department, the Emergency Management program begins at the local level.

That level starts with the individual citizen, and the neighborhood in which he or she lives. From there, it goes on to the city, the county, the state and the federal government.

"The Emergency Reach Out events were designed to empower the individual citizen with knowledge regarding what threats or hazards might affect their community and the tools they can use to help prepare for such an event," Rauch said. "By focusing on only one event at a time, disaster preparedness becomes an easily manageable and successful program for protecting our citizens."

Rauch encourages parents to bring the children to the Emergency Reach Out Event, where they can participate in "Ready Kids" and learn about safety and disaster preparedness. She also stressed the importance of discussing emergency procedures with the children now, because there may not be time once severe weather hits.

She said that in an emergency, each resident needs to be prepared to care for themselves for a minimum of 72 hours. The Emergency Reach Out events help the citizens of Bridgeport to meet that federal preparedness recommendation.

"The city of Bridgeport has taken a proactive preparedness approach regarding our disaster programs," Rauch said. "With each disaster/emergency event that occurs here, or across the nation, we

evaluate it to the plans, procedures and goals we are establishing for the city. We are consistently advancing our programs in concert with the lessons learned from actual events.”

She noted that during the derecho of 2012, more than 2,000 of Bridgeport’s homes and businesses were without power and under extreme heat warnings due to escalating temperatures.

“Gas stations, restaurants and many of the other service providers that we have grown to be dependent upon were also affected by the storm and subsequent power outages,” Rauch said. “Mitigation and preparedness efforts allow us to better use our resources — to be more aware of potential cascading events and develop strategies to continue essential functions even when catastrophic level events, such as the derecho, occur.”

Because severe weather can develop quickly, it sometimes strikes when parents are at work or when children are visiting or playing elsewhere. Therefore, it is important that the entire family knows how to prepare for a weather emergency.

Jason Parrish, head meteorologist for WBOY, will be at the event to talk about severe weather conditions and how to recognize them. He will offer advice on how to handle the dangerous situations that can occur during storms, floods and high winds.

“I’ve taken part in several of these programs, and they are really neat,” he said. “I talk about how to recognize the threat and what safety tips you need to know to prepare.”

Parrish noted that while West Virginia isn’t exactly “Tornado Alley,” the Mountain State has had several tornadoes, including the very destructive Shinnston tornado.

“I think we can always be a little more prepared,” Parrish said. “The threat is always there. We have had several tornadoes, and flooding is probably the most common weather emergency in West Virginia.”

According to Rauch, Jeff Harvey of JH Consultants in Buckhannon will share simple risk-reduction measures families can take to ensure that their homes stay safe and secure during a weather emergency.

For example: A simple way to prevent water damage is to check storm drain lines to make sure they are clear of debris and roots, or raising electrical system components, including the wiring, at least one foot above the base flood level.

COMMUNITY PHARMACY
of Bridgeport
 *Affiliated with Town & Country Drug Store*

304-842-3223
FREE DELIVERY!

1212 JOHNSON AVE, BRIDGEPORT
Hours: Monday-Friday 9am-6pm
Saturday 9am-2pm

"Any steps taken to reduce the impact of a disaster, no matter how small or extensive, will greatly benefit the homeowner as well as the community," Rauch said.

Harvey added that bad weather is such a common occurrence that people get used to it. They don't feel an urgency to take the extra steps to prepare.

"We are so used to technology, heat, air conditioning, that we take it for granted, and don't realize we are so dependent on it until suddenly we're without it," he said.

Last year's derecho, Harvey said, shook people up.

"It is a very current example of what can happen, and it is still fresh in our minds," he said.

According to Harvey, many people aren't prepared for weather emergencies because they think preparedness will be in depth and tedious.

"They don't realize that there are very simple preparations they can do, one step at a time, that will help them to be prepared," he said.

"Businesses can also take precautions, such as making sure they have surge protectors and that their data is on a back-up system offsite that can be accessed if no one can get to the office."

From individuals and families making emergency plans and safeguarding their homes to the city designating shelters and keeping communications open, disaster prevention is a community effort. Rauch believes that the Emergency Reach Out Event will encourage citizens to be proactive regarding severe weather emergencies.

“Planning and preparedness activities allow us to have a seamless response that is flexible and resilient so we can get Bridgeport back to pre-event activities as soon as possible,” she said.



NINJA FUN CAMP
JULY 24-28TH
8:00AM-NOON

Lego Day, Game Day,
Nerf Battle Day,
Pool & Water Slide Day
and Vote for Your
Favorite Day

Limited Space
Available
SAVE \$30⁰⁰
when you mention this ad

304-842-KICK
Bridgeport ATA Martial Arts
214 E. Main Street, Bridgeport



Same great company.
More innovative than ever.

[Learn More](#)

