



Getting Ready

Metronews – Statewide

August 31, 2009

MetroNews Talkline

Buckhannon, Upshur County

Jeff Harvey: Emergency Preparedness

West Virginia has to be ready for anything.

That's what JH Consulting out of Upshur County is addressing in many parts of the state. Jeff Harvey's company is working with local emergency responders in some areas to develop emergency plans to deal with worst case disaster scenarios, including everything from a health pandemic to any large scale evacuation of the Washington, D.C. area.

"Emergency preparedness is critical at any time. It's not just after an emergency, a knee jerk reaction," Harvey said on Monday's MetroNews Talkline.

Questions that have to be answered immediately include the following: How to get people through the state? What resources are needed in what areas? How many people will stay? Harvey says they're working with an All Hazard Planning Approach, the idea being when this happens, then A, B and C automatically happen.

"You come up with plans on that," he says.

"You train on it. You exercise it. You practice it and you get to the point where that base line capability is almost automatic and, if you can get on autopilot and be able to provide the base capabilities, that frees up your responders to focus on the more extraordinary circumstances that might surround that incident."

Four years after Hurricane Katrina, Harvey says there are lessons from it that are still being learned.

"In terms of an evacuation, Katrina certainly served as a good example of what not to do." And yes, he says, emergency preparedness is much better than it was prior to September 11th, 2001. "That incident....has brought people together with a common focus."

You can take a quiz to determine how prepared you are for an emergency at <http://www.jhcemergencypreparedness.com/quiz.php>.