

Businesses urged to tackle preparedness in September

DES MOINES – As football season kicks off, businesses and their employees throughout Iowa are being asked to tackle preparedness in September.

“In football, you have to be prepared when you go out onto the field,” said Tyler Sash, former Iowa Hawkeye, and spokesman for this year’s Preparedness Month campaign. “But we all need to make sure we’re prepared to take care of ourselves and our families during an emergency.”

The theme for this year’s Preparedness Month is “Let’s Tackle Preparedness.” During September businesses statewide are being encouraged to participate in activities that will increase the preparedness of their employees and their workplace.

Preparedness Month is sponsored by the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department (HSEMD), the Safeguard Iowa Partnership (SIP) and the Iowa Emergency Management Association (IEMA).

“This year, we’ve made a special effort to reach out to businesses, asking them to promote preparedness in the workplace through a variety of activities,” said Jami Haberl, executive director of the Safeguard Iowa Partnership. “Our hope is employees will not only take steps to be more prepared at work, but will also use what they’ve learned to be more prepared at home.”

Businesses are being asked to become involved in a variety of preparedness activities, from distributing preparedness information to employees and hosting lunch-and-learn sessions, to hosting a Tackle Preparedness Day on September 11.

“Preparing for disasters should be fun. To encourage a fun learning environment we created Tackle Preparedness Day on Sept. 11. Many businesses already plan activities in light of the annual Hawkeye/Cyclone match up, so this year we are asking businesses to use the big game as an opportunity to train their employees on what to do in the event of a disaster while at work.” said Haberl. “Every employee has a position to play during a disaster, and we can all be winners if we practice.”

Preparedness information and tips for businesses, including a template to start a business continuity plan, can be found at www.beready.iowa.gov.

Businesses that pledge to tackle preparedness will have a chance to be recognized by Gov. Terry Branstad. Ten businesses that have pledged to tackle preparedness will be chosen in a random drawing to be recognized in October by the Governor for being a team player and taking actions to make their employees and places of business more prepared for emergencies.

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During Preparedness Month, individuals are also encouraged to make a preparedness game plan to ensure they and their families are prepared for any disasters. Individuals who take a pledge to prepare will be eligible for a drawing for prizes to include items signed by Sash.

Citizens and businesses can take the Tackle Preparedness Pledge and get preparedness information at www.beready.iowa.gov. Preparedness Month information can also be found on Facebook (www.facebook.com/letstacklepreparedness), Twitter (<http://twitter.com/tklpreparedness>) and Instagram (www.instagram.com/letstacklepreparedness), hash tags #IAPM and #tklpreparedness.

Iowa's Preparedness Month is held in conjunction with National Preparedness Month, which was created by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in response to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in an effort to educate the public on how to prepare for emergencies.

The Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department leads, coordinates and supports homeland security and emergency management functions in order to establish sustainable communities and ensure economic opportunities for Iowa and its citizens.

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Note to media: "Let's Tackle Preparedness" public service announcements featuring Tyler Sash are available to download for broadcast. Audio versions of the PSAs can be downloaded at www.beready.iowa.gov/resources/PSAs.html. Video PSAs are also available; contact HSEMD public information officers at HSEMDPIO@iowa.gov or **515.715.3231** for instructions.

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