

## **Iowa communities are prepared for emergencies and disasters**

DES MOINES – During September’s Preparedness Month, when individuals and families are urged to take steps to be ready for emergencies and disasters, it’s important to know that communities are also taking steps to be more prepared.

During an emergency or disaster, the preparedness of a community has a direct impact on its ability to respond and recover. In Iowa, local emergency managers, volunteers and businesses are taking a variety of measures to ensure their citizens, businesses and neighborhoods are prepared.

Local emergency management agencies are the backbone of the state’s emergency management system. They ensure the emergency responders in each county have adequately planned, and are well-equipped, trained and exercised for emergencies and disasters. Local emergency managers serve as a vital link with state government to ensure needed resources are delivered during disasters, and to assist in recovery efforts.

Volunteers are another valuable resource for communities impacted by disasters. A Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is comprised of volunteers who are trained in basic disaster response skills, such as fire suppression and first aid. CERT members become an important part of a community’s response in the aftermath of a disaster when emergency services may not be immediately available to every neighborhood. Iowa currently has 41 CERTs throughout the state to assist local first responders. For information on Iowa’s CERTs, visit the [Ready Iowa website](#). In addition, the Iowa Disaster Human Resource Council, comprised of faith-based, voluntary and government agency representatives, helps to identify and address the unmet needs of citizens impacted by disasters and assists with the coordination of volunteers and donations. More on the IDHRC can be found on the [Iowa Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster \(VOAD\) website](#) and on the [Ready Iowa website](#).

Businesses also play a vital role in the preparedness of communities. Through the Safeguard Iowa Partnership (SIP), more than 200 businesses in Iowa have taken steps to ensure their businesses, and their employees, are prepared for disasters. During disasters, SIP supports government and business communication and coordination through the private-sector liaison program in conjunction with the local and state emergency operations centers to provide resources and share critical information between government and businesses. Find out more about the Safeguard Iowa Partnership and free preparedness resources on the [Safeguard Iowa website](#).

There are many more emergency resources in place in Iowa communities. For more information, contact your local emergency management agency. Contact information is available on the [HSEMD website](#) under the “County EM” tab.

***Continued: Iowa communities are prepared for emergencies and disasters – Sept. 15, 2014***

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.

For more information on Preparedness Month, visit the [Ready Iowa website](#).

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