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SPRING 2005 SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS
Citizens of Ohio need to prepare themselves and their families for severe weather

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Every year the lives and property of Ohio's citizens face the threat of devastation wrought by severe weather. While we cannot control weather occurrences, we can, through education and awareness, lessen the damage and disruption upon lives and property. That is why Governor Bob Taft has proclaimed March 13-19, 2005 as the Spring Severe Weather Safety Awareness Week. Ohio's citizens should use this week to increase their awareness to the risks associated with severe weather.

“Planning and preparedness are crucial steps in readying ourselves and our families for severe weather. That is why every Ohioan should have a disaster preparedness plan and a disaster preparedness kit,” said Nancy Dragani, Executive Director for the Ohio Emergency Management Agency. Dragani recommends that families practice their plans monthly. In addition to having a disaster preparedness plan, everyone should maintain a well-stocked disaster preparedness kit, which contains enough supplies to sustain every member of the household for 3 days.

Since March of 2003, federal disaster relief funds given to assist Ohioans in their recovery efforts have approached \$200 million. Jan Odeshoo, Acting Regional Director for FEMA Region V, said “Ohioans know firsthand the importance of preparing for severe weather. I encourage everyone to test their preparedness plans.” Odeshoo reminds Ohio's citizens to look to electronic resources such as www.ready.gov for guidance in building disaster preparedness kits.

The Ohio Emergency Management Agency coordinates the state's response and recovery from the State of Ohio Emergency Operations Center. One of the primary focuses of the agency is to ensure that Ohio citizens are prepared to respond to and recover from an emergency or disaster and to lead mitigation efforts against the effects of future disasters. During times of disasters, Ohio EMA coordinates activities of responding state agencies and maintains liaison with similar agencies of other states and of the federal government.

FEMA prepares the nation for all hazards and manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, trains first responders, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration.

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