



MEDIA RELEASE

Emergency Management Agency

Ohio Emergency Management Agency • Nancy J. Dragani, Executive Director
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O-H-I-O is *Ready* for National Preparedness Month

COLUMBUS, OH – The Ready Ohio campaign will join forces with The Ohio State University at the OSU vs. Miami game on September 11 in recognition of National Preparedness Month. This year, NPM will focus on encouraging citizens to work together to take concrete actions toward emergency preparedness. The Ready Ohio Campaign has identified five Ohioans who encourage others through their leadership in volunteer response to disasters.

National Preparedness Month and the Ready Campaign are encouraging all Americans to join the readiness team and to help themselves and each other to be *Ready* for any incident that could occur, natural or manmade.

Saturday's game will begin with a moment of silence for the lives lost on September 11, 2001. Following the first quarter, five Ohioans identified to represent the thousands who volunteer and are first responders throughout the state, will be recognized on the field for exemplifying the ultimate team spirit through volunteerism.

“The honorees know the importance of emergency preparedness and the team work necessary to bring a community back after a disaster,” said Ohio Department of Public Safety Director Thomas J. Stickrath. “These individuals are being honored for their commitment and work to keep Ohioans safe, but they are just a few of the dedicated first responders and volunteers we have throughout Ohio.”

Volunteers recognized:

- **Chief Joseph Morbitzer**, both Police Chief and Community Emergency Response Team program manager in the city of Westerville and Ohio Citizen Corps State Council member.
- **Jim Ditzler**, founding member of Ohio Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD), which was established in Ohio in 1991 mobilizing more than 30 organizations to respond to the 1997-1998 floods.
- **Shirley Brooks-Jones**, former Ohio State University administrator and community activist who was one of hundreds stranded in Newfoundland's schools, churches and private homes after the terrorist attack of Sept. 11, 2001.
- **Chief Dale Krause**, retired fire chief of Rocky River and provisional fire chief of Westlake, Ohio and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program coordinator for more than 300 volunteer members.

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- **Marvin Gilbert**, committed 50 years of service to the Union County Office of Emergency Management (EMA). Beginning his career as a volunteer for Civil Defense in 1959.

Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) was established nationally in response to the challenges many disaster organizations experienced following Hurricane Camille, which hit the Gulf Coast in August, 1969.

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program helps train people to be better prepared to respond to emergency situations in their communities

As part of the campaign, in observance of Patriot Day, the Ohio Statehouse Lawn will again display its Field of Flags: 2,999 American flags decorating the west lawn, outlining the World Trade Center Towers and the Pentagon. Each flag represents an American life lost on that fateful day, September 11, 2001. National Preparedness Month is an initiative of the federal Department of Homeland Security sponsored by FEMA's Ready Campaign and Citizen Corps. Visit ReadyOhio's Web site at www.ready.ohio.gov for safety and preparedness information on incidents that typically occur in Ohio.

Ready Ohio partners include: the Ohio Department of Public Safety (Emergency Management Agency, Emergency Medical Services and Homeland Security), the Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Department of Transportation, Citizen Corps, American Red Cross, Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness, Central Ohio Transit Authority, Hands on Central Ohio and the Emergency Management Association of Ohio.

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