

Be ready for severe weather

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

As the nation marks the first anniversary of one of the largest tornado outbreaks in U.S. history, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Federal Emergency Management Agency are teaming up to prepare the public and help save lives during the first ever National Severe Weather Week, April 22-29.

FEMA and NOAA are encouraging people to know their risk, take action and “be a force of nature” by taking proactive preparedness measures and inspiring others to do the same. While the type and severity of threats vary across the country, the need to be prepared applies regardless of where one lives.

Last April, tornadoes raked the central and southern United States, with a total of more than 300 tornadoes claiming hundreds of lives. The historic outbreak was only one of many weather-related tragedies in 2011, which now holds the record for the greatest number of multi-billion dollar weather disasters in the nation’s history.

“Severe weather can strike anywhere, at any time,” said FEMA regional administrator Robin Finegan. “While we can’t control the forces of nature, we can prepare now to be more resilient in the face of natural disasters.”

To “be a force of nature,” FEMA and NOAA encourage citizens to prepare for extreme weather by following these guidelines:

—Know the risk: The first step to becoming weather-ready is to understand the type of hazardous weather that can affect where one lives and works, and how the weather could impact the family. Check the weather forecast regularly and sign up for alerts from local emergency management officials.

—Take action: Develop an emergency plan based on the local weather hazards and practice how and where to take shelter. Create or refresh an emergency kit for needed food, supplies and medication. Post a plan where visitors can see it. Learn what one can do to strengthen a home or business against severe weather. Obtain an NOAA Weather Radio. Download FEMA’s mobile app so one can access important safety tips on what to do before and during severe

Be ready for severe weather

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

weather. Understand the weather warning system and become a certified storm spotter through the National Weather Service.

—Be a force of nature: Once one has taken action, tell family, friends, school staff and co-workers about how they can prepare. Share the resources and alert systems one discovered with social media network. For more information on how to participate, visit www.ready.gov/severeweather

Holyoke Enterprise April 26, 2012