



READY RACINE



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Using Social Network Tools

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Last February, I was invited to participate in a Social Network Analysis Workshop funded by the Department of Homeland Security and conducted by the National Academy of Sciences. It was an interesting two day workshop which brought together both academicians and practitioners of emergency management.

Attendees included Eric Holdeman, former King County Emergency Management Director, Ellis Stanley, former City of Los Angeles Emergency Management Director, Darrell Darnell, Washington DC Emergency Management Director and Craig Fugate, newly named FEMA Director.

Because of the diversity of the group, two themes seemed to emerge. How could social networking be used to build disaster resiliency? How could that data be “crunched” or analyzed to predict human behavior?

At times the group got caught up in semantics, and one had to be careful to distinguish between social networks, social networking and social network analysis. Kathleen Carley, a professor at Carnegie Mellon University, wrote up some definitions to help aid the group.

•Social Network–The network of people to people, organizations to organizations mapping who knows, works with, communicates with whom--E.g., the data in

Facebook

•Social Network Analysis–The process of analyzing a social network and identifying key actors, groups, vulnerabilities and redundancies, and changes in these

•Social Network Analysis Tools–The set of tools, technologies, metrics, models and visualization techniques used for social network analysis – includes data extraction tools, link analysis, statistical techniques, and graph theory techniques

•Social Network Theory–The set of theories for forecasting, reasoning about, understanding how the social network forms, is maintained, evolves and the role of social networking tools, media, stress, etc. in effecting the emergence of, utilization of, management of and change in the social network

•Social Networking–The process of creating, maintaining, altering your network and using your network to gain resources or influence, mobilize activity, etc.–E.g., the process of twittering and blogging

•Social Networking Tools–A set of computational techniques that enable individuals and groups to engage in social networking, and to monitor and interact with their “ego” social networks i.e., the set of others with whom they are connected and the connections among those–E.g., Facebook, twitter

Darrel Darnell shared that agencies involved in the inauguration used social media to monitor activity and share information during the inauguration and that they often got information through social media more quickly than through conventional sources.

More recently, social networking tools have been used to mobilize volunteers to fight floodwaters in North Dakota; and FEMA has been using social networking tools including You Tube, Twitter and Facebook to get its message out.

There is, however, some reluctance to embrace social networking tools. Some IT professionals fear that social networking sites are not secure and that these “tools” can be used to deliver computer viruses and micro-bots. And then there is the whole records

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retention issue that government agencies will have to wade through. Boulder County, CO is one county which has embraced social networking and is developing a policy.

Dr. Jeannette Sutton, Research Coordinator at the Natural Hazards Center and another participant at the workshop, was recently quoted as saying emergency management specialists risk irrelevance if they don't embrace social networking. Brit Weber, CIP Partnership, said, "Bottom line: communities who recognize and leverage their social capital are positioned to have a greater impact in crisis management." ❖

County Starts Hazard Mitigation Planning with Municipalities

Racine County Executive William McReynolds announced the launch of a hazard mitigation planning process in cooperation with its 17 municipalities to make Racine County safer and more resistant to disasters.

Racine County received a \$30,000 Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. This grant will fund the update to the Racine County Hazard Mitigation plan.

Wisconsin incurred disaster-related damages totaling nearly \$3 billion in the last three decades, including the severe flooding events of 2007 and 2008. Like the rest of the state, Racine County is vulnerable to a variety of disasters.

This plan will look at the different hazards that Racine County faces and then develop a "roadmap" outlining potential cost-effective hazard mitigation activities, some of which may be eligible for future grant funding. Without an approved plan neither Racine County nor the municipalities within Racine County would be eligible for hazard mitigation grants.

"Over the past two years, I have personally met many of our residents whose homes were badly flooded during flood events," commented McReynolds; "By working together on this plan, hopefully we can identify strategies that will minimize or even prevent a reoccurrence. That is why I have invited all municipalities in Racine County to participate in this process."

County and municipal elected officials and staff will join in a multidisciplinary workgroup to examine disaster-related risks and vulnerabilities within the county, while developing mitigation strategies to reduce future losses. ❖

Citizen Corps update

Cathy LaFaive-Markstrom



Greetings, Citizen Corps volunteers!

It's springtime again, and that means back to Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) classes. I am happy to say that we have a CERT class at the Red Cross this spring.

I have been working with the new Tri-County chapter to offer Racine a CERT Class at its location at 4521 Taylor Ave on April 17-19. I am very excited about this new partnership and so is the Red Cross. The Red Cross is looking for CERT-trained volunteers for its Disaster Action Team (DAT) program for Racine County and to volunteer nationwide.

Other classes scheduled include:

Randall Fire Department #2, Bassett
Friday- Sunday April 24 6-9pm, April 25 & 26 8am-5pm 2009

Location: HALO, Racine
April 28-30 9am to 4pm

Salvation Army, Kenosha
Thursday- Saturday May 21 & 22 5-10pm. May 23 8am-6pm 2009

Prayer House Assembly of God, Kenosha
Thursday- Saturday June 18 & 19 5-10pm. June 20 8am-6pm 2009

Remember, this is the time of year for floods, tornadoes and other forms of severe weather. During this time CERT is often asked to help out, and the Red Cross is also very active. Both programs are always looking for volunteers to help out.

I have been presenting the program to local college student groups this spring. We now have students from Gateway and UW-Parkside, as well as members of Neighborhood Watch groups throughout Racine, attending upcoming classes. And I have plans for presentations with Kiwanis and various amateur radio groups, as well.

If you have a business or group that would like to hear about Citizen Corps and CERT training, please contact Cathy Markstrom at 262-886-9612 or cmarkstrom@volunteercenterofracine.org.



Flood Awareness

Last June, flooding throughout Racine County resulted in millions of dollars in damage to public and private property, as well as displacement of residents from their homes. Residents should consider taking the following precautions:

- Avoid building in a flood-prone area unless you elevate and reinforce your home.
- Elevate the furnace, water heater, and electric panel, if susceptible to flooding.
- Install "check valves" in sewer traps to prevent floodwater from backing up into the drains of your home.
- Seal the walls in your basement with waterproofing compounds to avoid seepage.
- Raise appliances and utilities like the hot water heater and the furnace.

If you must evacuate and have time, you should do the following:

- Secure your home. Bring in outdoor furniture if you can safely do so. Move essential items to an upper floor.
- Turn off utilities at the main switches or valves if instructed to do so. Disconnect electrical appliances. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.

If you have to leave your home, remember these evacuation tips:

- Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you have to walk in water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.
- Do not drive into flooded areas. If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground if you can do so safely. You and the vehicle can be quickly swept away.

The following are important points to remember when driving in flood conditions:

- Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars, causing loss of control and possible stalling.
- A foot of water will float many vehicles.
- Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles including sport utility vehicles (SUV's) and pick-ups. ❖

Eagle Scout Awarded Heroism Medal

Last year, a rare E-F3 tornado destroyed 27 homes in Kenosha County and damaged another 78. As the tornado ripped through the townships of Wheatland and Brighton, one young man directed his brother and brother's friend to safety and then shielded them from falling debris.

For his heroic actions, Alex Rupp was awarded the Heroism Award by the Boy Scouts of America. The Heroism Award may be awarded to a youth member or adult leader who has demonstrated heroism and skill in saving or attempting to save life at minimum risk to self.

When he was awarded this medal, Alex recalled a mock emergency drill held in 2002 at Camp Oh-Da-Ko-Ta. He recalled a "tornado" hit the camp but never thought he would experience "the real thing." In a Kenosha News article, Alex credited the disaster drill and the training he received with helping him react to the tornado warning that afternoon in January 2008.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2009

Mar 16-20	Flood Safety Awareness Week
Apr 20-24	Tornado & Severe Weather Awareness Week
April 22	Regional Tornado Recovery Exercise
April 23	Statewide Tornado Drill
April 23	Crisis Leadership Seminar
Apr 27-May 1	Air Quality Awareness Week
May 13	NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards Day
May 14-15	Advanced IC/UC course
May 16-22	National Safe Boating Week
May 22	Mercury Waste Tabletop Exercise
June 2-4	Critical Incident Management course
June 2-6	National Rip Current Awareness Week
June 10	Sturtevant Tabletop Exercise
June 11	Heat Awareness Day in Wisconsin
June 17	Red Dragon Exercise
June 27-28	Amateur Radio Field Day
June 21-27	National Lightning Safety Awareness Week
September	National Preparedness Month
Sept 21	Mercury Waste Functional
Nov 1	Standard Time begins
Nov 9-13	Winter Awareness Week in Wisconsin
Dec 4-5	SKYWARN Recognition Day



Get Flood Insurance

Racine County Executive William McReynolds is urging homeowners in Racine County to get flood insurance. "Over the past two years, I have personally met many of our residents whose homes were badly flooded during flood events. Most of them did not have flood insurance," commented McReynolds.

Unfortunately, damage from a flood is not normally covered under a standard homeowner's policy. Therefore, residents need to review their homeowner's policy and consider their risks for flooding and the need for flood insurance.

Homes and buildings in high-risk flood areas with mortgages from federally regulated or insured lenders are required to have flood insurance.

Homes and businesses located in moderate-to-low risk areas that have mortgages from federally regulated or insured lenders are typically not required to have flood insurance. However, flood insurance is highly recommended because 25% of all flood claims occur in moderate-to-low risk flood areas.

Flood insurance protects two types of insurable property: building and contents. The first covers your building, the latter covers your possessions; neither covers the land they occupy.

Building coverage includes:

- The insured building and its foundation
- The electrical and plumbing system
- Central air conditioning equipment, furnaces, and water heaters
- Refrigerators, cooking stoves, and built-in appliances such as dishwashers
- Permanently installed carpeting over unfinished flooring

Contents coverage includes:

- Clothing, furniture, and electronic equipment
- Curtains
- Portable and window air conditioners
- Portable microwaves and dishwashers
- Carpeting that is not already included in property coverage
- Clothing washers and dryers

For more information on flood insurance, go to www.floodsmart.gov.

The mock emergency drill held at Camp Oh-Da-Ko-ta was one part of a weekend "Disaster Camporee" sponsored by the Southeast Wisconsin Council's Lighthouse District (Boy Scouts), but coordinated by the Racine County Office of Emergency Management, along with assistance from fire and law enforcement agencies from Racine and Kenosha counties.

Although 25 different agencies participated in the drill, the size and scope of the incident quickly overwhelmed their manpower and resources. Many leaders and scouts mobilized with first aid kits and began searching for the missing. At the triage area, scouts and leaders worked beside trained EMTs, helping to splint broken limbs and to bandage the wounded.

As emergency managers, we know that public education and training are two components of the preparedness phase, but it is not always easy for us to quantify their effectiveness. Initial feedback is often positive, but most people never put their training into practice. Therefore, it was encouraging to hear that a training program conducted in 2002 for 250 Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts was credited six years later by a young man who remembered what he was taught, took charge in a time of crisis, and put the welfare of his brother and brother's friend before his own.

For more information on the Boy Scout Disaster Camporee conducted in 2002, check out http://www.racineco.com/emergencymanagement/e_camporee.aspx.



Tornado Awareness

County Executive William McReynolds has joined with Governor Jim Doyle in proclaiming April 20-24, 2009 as Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week in Wisconsin.

Tornadoes are nature's most violent storms. Spawned from powerful thunderstorms, tornadoes can cause fatalities and devastate a neighborhood in seconds.

In 2008, 38 tornadoes in Wisconsin were reported, including rare tornadoes in January in Kenosha County that damaged or destroyed over 100 homes and buildings. In addition, the May 18, 1883 tornado which hit the north side of the City of Racine still ranks as one of Wisconsin's top ten killer tornadoes.

Racine County Emergency Management recommends that every household and business take the following steps to prepare for tornadoes and severe weather:

1. Get a NOAA Weather Radio. Weather radios broadcast official National Weather Service warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazard information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When watches and warnings are issued, an alarm goes off.
2. Have a plan. Designate shelter areas in the home and workplace. The safest place is generally the basement. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside.
3. Practice tornado drills at home and work. On April 23, 2009, a statewide tornado drill is planned. A mock Tornado Watch will be issued at 1:00 PM and at 1:20 PM a mock Tornado Warning will be issued.
4. Finally learn all you can about tornadoes and severe weather. Racine County Emergency Management, in conjunction with the National Weather Service, will be conducting a Tornado and Severe Weather Basic and Advanced Spotter Seminar on Wednesday, April 22, 2009. The "Basic" seminar will be at 2:00 PM and the "Advanced" will be at 6:00 PM. Both seminars will be held at Gateway Technical College's Racine Building-Great lakes Room, 901 Pershing Dr, Racine. While there is no charge to attend, pre-registration is necessary by calling 262.636.3513.

Free Disaster Training



Free!

There are a number of free training resources out there including:

Emergency Management Institute (EMI) offers self-paced courses designed for people who have emergency management responsibilities and the general public. All are offered free-of-charge to those who qualify for enrollment. <http://training.fema.gov/IS/>

EMI offers a wide range of resident courses including the ever popular Integrated Emergency Management Course, Debris Management, and Hazard Mitigation classes. <http://training.fema.gov/>

The National Emergency Response and Rescue Training Center (College Station, TX) is the perfect place to hone your Incident Command System (ICS) skills and knowledge through training and exercises. <http://www.teex.org/ogt/>

Energetic Materials Research and Training Center (Socorro, NM) a/k/a "Bomb School." Participants learn how to recognize different kinds of bombs, what to do and what not to do, as well as see the effects of detonated bombs. Most participants are law enforcement or fire fighters. <http://www.emrtc.nmt.edu/training/>❖

New Course Addresses Special Needs

IS-197.EM Special Needs Planning Considerations for Emergency Management is designed for emergency management and first responder personnel to enable them to better understand the special needs population and teach how to partner with persons with special needs as well as their support providers and organizations. Students will be able:

1. To better understand the impact of different types of hazards on the special needs population.
2. To be made aware of the challenges faced by emergency managers during the different phases of the disaster.
3. To learn how to develop emergency plans for the special needs populations and plan with special needs persons and their organizations during the planning process for your local community.

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS197EM.asp>