



# READY RACINE



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## A look back at spring flooding

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Within one year, Racine County has received three presidential disaster declarations. The first was for the flooding that occurred in August 2007, the second was for record snowfall in February and the third was for the recent June floods.

We had urged municipalities to stock up on sandbags in March and we encouraged readers of this newsletter to prepare for spring floods. Little did we know that we would see record flooding along the Root River, in addition to major flooding along the Fox River.

Many of those impacted by the spring floods lost appliances, hot water heaters and furnaces. Many items stored in basements were damaged or destroyed and both homeowners and renters had huge messes to clean up once flood waters receded.

In Racine County, 583 individuals registered with FEMA. While FEMA aid was welcome relief for many who were impacted by the floods, it was not meant to make one whole and many families found themselves facing additional expenses not covered by FEMA assistance.

In addition, there is no guarantee that FEMA aid will be available each time an area floods or a tornado strikes.

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## Preventing home fires

Fire Prevention Week is October 5-11 and the theme this year is **"It's Fire Prevention Week: Prevent Home Fires!"** In 2006, fire departments across the nation responded to nearly 400,000 home fires. Many of these fires could have been prevented.

Every family should do a home inspection, looking for fire hazards. In addition, develop and practice a home fire escape plan. Here are some additional tips from the National Fire Protection Association:

### Cooking with Care

- Stay in the kitchen when you cooking food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period time, turn off the stove.
- Keep anything that can catch fire – potholders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags – away from your stovetop.
- Wear short, close fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire.
- Always keep an oven mitt and lid handy. If a small fire starts in a pan on the stove, put on the oven mitt and smother the flames by carefully sliding the lid over the pan. Turn off the burner. Don't remove the lid until it is completely cool.

### Strike Out Smoking-materials Fires

- If you smoke, smoke outside.
- Never smoke in a home where oxygen is used.
- Keep matches and lighters up high in a locked cabinet, out of the reach of children.

### Candle with Caution

- Keep candles at least 12 inches from anything that can burn.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended. Blow out candles when you leave a room.
- Use flashlights for emergency lighting.

### Safety 101

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home.
- Test smoke alarms at least once a month.
- Replace smoke alarms every 10 years.

For more information on fire safety, go to [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) or contact your local fire department. ❖

For example, there was no presidential disaster declaration for the January tornadoes which struck Kenosha because most of the damage was insured.

In Racine County, most of those impacted by the floods had no flood insurance, even if they lived within a floodplain. This is a problem because homeowner policies do not cover flooding, although in some cases one can get a rider to cover sewer back up in a basement.

Last March, we offered the following tips:

- Elevate the furnace, water heater, and electric panel in your home
- Consider installing "check valves" to prevent flood water from backing up into the drains of your home.
- Make sure your sump pump is in working order and consider having a back-up battery system and an extra motor.
- If feasible, construct barriers to stop floodwater from entering the building and seal walls in basements with waterproofing compounds.
- Talk to your insurance provider about your policy and consider if you need additional coverage. Typically property insurance does not cover flood damage.

Now is a good time to consider implementing these recommendations, especially if you were impacted by either the August 2007 or the June 2008 floods. In addition, one should look at obtaining flood insurance, even if they are not in the floodplain. Sadly, less than 1% of the population purchases flood insurance.

According to FEMA, low-cost National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) coverage is available to homeowners, renters and businesses in every community that participates in the program. Home and business owners can buy coverage for their buildings and contents, and renters can purchase insurance to cover personal property.

Property owners who do not live near bodies of water should not be lulled into a false sense of security. Some 25 percent of flood insurance claims occur in areas not readily recognized as vulnerable to flooding.

The average annual flood insurance premium in Wisconsin is \$320, according to the NFIP. Private insurance companies and agents sell and service the policies, which are backed by the federal government under FEMA's NFIP. Residents and business owners can find a list of agents who sell the coverage in their areas on <http://www.floodsmart.gov> or by calling **1-800-427-4661**. ❖

## Citizen Corps Update

Cathy LaFaive-Markstrom



Greetings Citizen Corps volunteers!

I'd like to introduce myself as the new Citizen Corps Coordinator. My name is Cathy LaFaive-Markstrom, I'm a student at UW-Parkside majoring in Geoscience and Criminal Justice. I'm married and have an 8 year old son named Sam. I am also a ham radio operator with the call sign KC9EOW.

Last May Linda Botts moved on to new opportunities and we wish her the best of luck. Since then, a lot of exciting changes have happened to an already great program. The Southeast Wisconsin Citizen Corps program is now located within the Volunteer Center of Racine County (VCRC). The VCRC has a lot of resources available that will make Citizen Corps even more successful.

For example, they have the volunteers and space needed to assist me with the everyday task of running the programs and there are more opportunities to get CERTs involved with various activities as well.

Even though I didn't start until the end of August, I already have my plate full and I couldn't be happier.

We have many things coming up such as a new CERT class in October and various requests for CERT volunteers.

I am going to be starting a bi-weekly email newsletter to all CERTs and Citizen Corps volunteers who are interested in volunteer opportunities as well as the latest news going on with Citizen Corps.

To get on the list, or to contact me with any questions, I can be reached at [cmarkstrom@volunteercenterofracine.org](mailto:cmarkstrom@volunteercenterofracine.org) or at 262-886-9612.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### 2008

Nov 2 Standard Time begins  
Nov 10-14 Winter Awareness Week in Wisconsin  
Dec 5-6 SKYWARN Recognition Day

### 2009

Mar 08 Daylight Savings Time begins  
Mar 16-20 Flood Safety Awareness Week  
Apr 20-24 Tornado & Severe Weather Awareness Week  
April 23 Statewide Tornado Drill  
Apr 27-May 1 Air Quality Awareness Week  
May 13 NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards Day  
May 16-22 National Safe Boating Week  
May 32-Jun 6 National Rip Current Awareness Week  
Jun 11 Heat Awareness Day in Wisconsin  
Jun 27-28 Amateur Radio Field Day  
Jun 21-27 National Lightning Safety Awareness Week  
Nov 1 Standard Time begins  
Nov 9-13 Winter Awareness Week in Wisconsin  
Dec 4-5 SKYWARN Recognition Day



### Did you Know...

***"...ABOUT 50 PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATIONS ARE MADE EACH YEAR THAT RESULT IN FEMA PROVIDING DISASTER ASSISTANCE, AND ON AVERAGE ABOUT \$2.6B A YEAR IS MADE AVAILABLE TO DISASTER STRUCK COMMUNITIES."***



## Volunteer Spotlight



### Kathy Coates

**Note:** The Racine County Office of Emergency Management relies on volunteers to help carry out their mission. Periodically, this column is used to highlight one of those volunteers. This month we look at Kathy Coates who helps develop the monthly preparedness campaign.

"Volunteering is a way to give back to the community. There are so many ways to help and I want to be part of that," says Kathy Coates. She is a member of the Senior Corps, RSVP, an organization that has more than 500,000 volunteers 55 and over, across the nation. It's an opportunity to put a lifetime of skills and talents to good use their own communities.

Kathy has always been active in volunteer and non-profit organizations in Racine. In the last year, she has stepped up her contribution to our community by taking on the newsletter for the Volunteer Center of Racine County and more recently the monthly bulletin for the Racine County Office of Emergency Management. She has also participated in working with Junior Achievement teaching fifth graders about business in America.

Kathy has lived in Racine for more than 20 years. She has owned and operated her own business, Smart Works Marketing Communications, in Racine for the last 10 years. She has worked for a variety of companies providing services to companies in the Racine area.

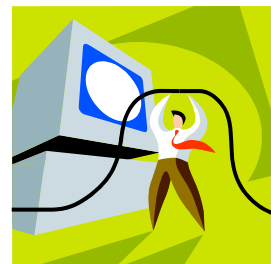


**TOP 10 CYBER SECURITY TIPS**  
**2008 CYBER SECURITY AWARENESS MONTH**  
**Cyber security is our shared responsibility.**  
**Here are ten things you can do to take action today!**

1. Use strong passwords at work and at home. Update your password frequently and encourage others to do the same.
2. Update your anti-virus software and firewalls. New threats are discovered everyday. Keeping your software and firewalls updated is one of the easiest ways to protect yourself from an attack. Set your computer to automatically download and install updates for you.
3. Back up your important files. Files stored on your computer can easily be lost, stolen or corrupted. To safeguard these files, copy them onto external storage devices or removable discs, and keep them in a safe place.
4. Suggest or sponsor an event at your local school or University designed to increase student and staff cyber security education and awareness. Download EDUCAUSE's cyber resource kit online at [www.educause.edu](http://www.educause.edu).
5. Reach out to people that you know – your co-workers, friends, even your kids – and remind them to practice good online safety and security habits, including protecting their personal information and their online reputation. For more information and tips go to [www.staysafeonline.org](http://www.staysafeonline.org) and [www.us-cert.gov](http://www.us-cert.gov).
6. Use regular communications like your website, newsletters, and email alerts to reach your organization's stakeholders and promote your commitment to cyber security. Useful newsletter topics might include: updating software processes; protecting personal identifiable information; and securing your wireless

network. Download and brand your own newsletter at [www.msisac.org](http://www.msisac.org).

7. Create a separate section for cyber security tips on your website. Download online buttons and banners about phishing, identity theft, file-sharing, and other cyber security topics at [www.msisac.org](http://www.msisac.org) or [www.OnGuardOnline.gov](http://www.OnGuardOnline.gov) and place on your organization's home page.
8. Print cyber security posters and cards from [www.OnGuardOnline.gov](http://www.OnGuardOnline.gov) and post them in workrooms, hallways, and other employee gathering places. Print and post cyber security tips near your computer at work and at home near the family computer. Review them with your colleagues, classmates, employees and family members.
9. Subscribe to the National Cyber Alert System from the US Computer Emergency Readiness Team at [www.us-cert.gov](http://www.us-cert.gov). Through the Alert System, you can receive timely information about current cyber security problems to protect home and office computers. This information includes weekly bulletins with summaries of new vulnerabilities, patch information when available, and tips on common security topics, such as privacy, and wireless security.
10. Ask IT security specialists at your workplace to report any potential cyber incident, threat, or attack to the United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team (US-CERT) at 1-888-282-0870 or [www.us-cert.gov](http://www.us-cert.gov).



## NEWS BRIEFS

### **Office Depot Survey of Small Businesses on Disaster Preparedness**

A recent Office Depot survey found that:

- Four out of 10 (42 percent) of business owners do not have a disaster plan in place
- Of those without a plan, nearly a third (27 percent) claim to have no plans to create one; and
- A full 25 percent of business owners describe their attitude towards disaster preparation as "live and let live," explaining they would rather deal with a disaster when it occurs rather than get ahead of a potential problem.

To help educate small businesses on the importance of disaster preparation, Office Depot developed this guide - "*Expecting the Unexpected: Disaster Preparedness Strategies for Small Business*" - to provide small businesses with simple and affordable solutions. For more information, <http://www.officedepot.com/promo.do?file=/promo/disaster/main.jsp>

### **Walgreens Weather Alert System**

The electronic outdoor signs at Walgreens stores across the country are now a source of critical weather updates. Walgreens has teamed up with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association's (NOAA) National Weather Service to alert customers and passersby of impending severe weather. Under the agreement Walgreens is able to access data about approaching storms, then post updates to any of its 3,300 electronic outdoor signs in affected areas. The drugstore chain will link to NOAA's data feed every five minutes to provide timely and pertinent details as severe weather draws near. Walgreens locations with electronic signs represent more than half of the company's 6,443 stores nationwide. Walgreens weather alert system is just one of the ways it's using its electronic signage to provide important information to local communities. In 2005, Walgreens launched its Amber Alert initiative that posts regional bulletins on recent child abductions

### **Helping Families Get Ready**

"*Sesame Street's* Rosita And Friends Recognize National Preparedness Month By Helping Families Get Ready For Emergencies. This bi-lingual (Spanish-English) initiative will help families with young children between the ages of two and five prepare for an emergency with basic information and ways in which they can best respond to an emergency and help them develop a sense of resilience and self-confidence. The program was created in collaboration with DHS's *Ready Kids* and the Ad Council's ongoing preparedness effort, which helps parents and teachers educate children, about emergencies and how they can help their families prepare. The *Let's Get Ready!* kits will be available to download online at [www.sesamestreet.org/ready](http://www.sesamestreet.org/ready) and [www.ready.gov/kids/sesame](http://www.ready.gov/kids/sesame).

### **School Safety News**

A web site, called School Safety News, shows announcements, alerts, breaking news, and nationwide school safety and security incidents which track school violence across the United States. It is a very user friendly map of the United States with icons on each state in the general area to represent the type of security incident which has occurred. The map automatically reloads approximately every 15 minutes. Each user can personalize their map to track the specific type of school event they're interested in, i.e., shootings, bus accidents, severe weather, earthquakes, fires, lockdowns, etc. In addition, a complete listing by type of incident is included with a brief summary. If further information is needed, the user can pull up another summary as well as go to newspaper articles concerning the incidents for complete details on the incidents. The web address is: <http://www.safeplans.com/schoolmap>.