PEORIA COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

THE EMERGENCY CONNECTION

OCTOBER 2026

October is the month of ghosts, goblins, haunted houses, and things that go bump in the night. But for emergency managers, some of the scariest things aren't fictional they are the consequences of a community being unprepared for a disaster. Severe weather, extended power outages, hazardous materials incidents, cyber disruptions, and other emergencies can quickly overwhelm normal systems. The good news is that communities don't have to wait for the “monster” to arrive. Preparedness is a shared responsibility, and the strongest communities are built when public agencies, businesses, nonprofit organizations, schools, healthcare providers, and other community partners prepare together.

A community's preparedness is about much more than emergency plans sitting on a shelf. Preparedness is a behavior demonstrated by organizations every day. Do agencies regularly test their emergency plans? Do businesses know how they will continue essential operations when their employees, facilities, suppliers, or technology are disrupted? Do schools, healthcare facilities, utilities, faith-based organizations, and nonprofit agencies understand their roles during a community emergency? These questions reveal an important truth: resilience isn't created during the disaster. It is created beforehand through planning, training, exercising, communication, and relationships.

Preparedness requires organizations to look beyond their own four walls. A disaster rarely respects organizational boundaries. A severe storm can simultaneously affect roads, power, communications, schools, businesses, healthcare facilities, and public safety operations. A prolonged outage can create challenges for vulnerable populations and place additional demands on public services. The organizations that will perform best are those that have already established relationships with the people and agencies they may need to work with. Sharing information, participating in local emergency planning, attending exercises, and knowing your community's emergency management structure are not administrative tasks they are resilience-building behaviors.

And perhaps the most important lesson this Halloween is this: don't be frightened by the things you don't know, prepare for them. Community preparedness should not be driven by fear, but by a willingness to recognize risk and take responsibility. Public agencies have responsibilities. Private businesses have responsibilities. Schools, healthcare organizations, nonprofits, utilities, and community groups all have roles to play. The strongest response happens when the community's capabilities are connected before the crisis begins.

So this October, while we're thinking about ghosts and monsters, let's make one thing disappear: the assumption that disaster preparedness belongs to someone else. The best communities don't simply have emergency plans they have organizations and people who know those plans, practice them, communicate with one another, and take action. That's the real trick to resilience. Prepare together, practice together, and respond together and the next disaster doesn't have to become the scariest thing your community has ever faced.

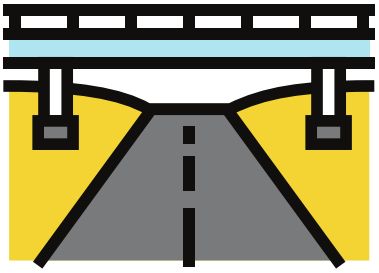
Preparedness is Everyone’s Responsibility!

FEMA Core Capabilities

Emergency management is built on a foundation of shared goals and coordinated action, and FEMA's Core Capabilities provide the roadmap for achieving that vision. These 32 capabilities, organized across the five mission areas of Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery, define the essential elements needed to prepare for and manage the nation's most pressing threats and hazards. They serve as a common language for agencies, partners, and communities, ensuring that everyone is working toward the same outcomes whether it's saving lives, protecting infrastructure, or helping neighborhoods bounce back after disaster.

In each issue of our newsletter we highlight the capabilities exploring what it means, why it matters, and how it connects to our local efforts. By breaking down these capabilities into focused discussions, we hope to show how each one strengthens resilience and contributes to a safer, stronger community. Together, they form the building blocks of preparedness, and by understanding them, we can all play a role in shaping a more secure future.

Critical Transportation



Critical Transportation focuses on providing transportation resources and infrastructure that enables emergency responders, government officials, and the public to move safely and efficiently before, during, and after a disaster. At the local county level, this capability includes maintaining and restoring access to major roads, bridges, highways, public transit systems, and other transportation networks that may be affected by a disaster. A community must be able to identify transportation routes that are essential for emergency response, delivery of supplies, and access to hospitals and other critical facilities, while also coordinating with municipalities and private transportation providers.

Critical Transportation is particularly important because the transportation network connects every other emergency-management capability. If a major roadway or bridge becomes impassable, emergency vehicles may be delayed, utility crews may not reach damaged infrastructure, and food, water, fuel, and medical supplies may be unable to reach affected communities. Communities can strengthen this capability by identifying primary and alternate routes, developing plans for debris removal and road closures, coordinating traffic control and transportation resources, pre-identifying transportation assets and contractors. In practice, the goal is to ensure that people, responders, equipment, and essential supplies can continue to move when a disaster disrupts normal transportation operations.

Mass Care Services



Mass Care Services focuses on providing immediate and sustained assistance to individuals and communities affected by a disaster. This capability includes providing food and water, distributing essential supplies, supporting temporary housing needs, and addressing the needs of individuals who may require additional assistance. Mass care also involves reunifying families, providing basic health and sanitation services, and coordinating resources for people who have been displaced from their homes. The overall objective is to ensure that disaster survivors have access to safe shelter and the basic necessities required to sustain life and begin recovery.

Effective mass care planning allows the county to rapidly open and support shelters, distribute emergency supplies, communicate available assistance to the public, and transition affected residents from immediate emergency sheltering toward temporary and permanent housing as recovery progresses.

Debris Management: Why Planning Before the Storm Determines Recovery After It

Effective debris management is a cornerstone of community resilience and rapid recovery following disasters. As our communities continue to face a range of hazards from severe storms to flooding events it is essential that residents, businesses, and local partners understand how debris is categorized, handled, and disposed of safely and efficiently. In this newsletter series, we break down the key debris management categories, explain why proper separation matters, and highlight how coordinated efforts between the public and emergency management teams help speed recovery, reduce environmental impacts, and ensure compliance with state and federal guidelines.

Putrescent debris deserves particular attention because it can rapidly become a public-health concern following a disaster. Putrescent debris generally refers to materials that are capable of decomposing and producing odors, attracting insects and rodents, and creating unsanitary conditions. Examples can include spoiled food, animal carcasses, certain agricultural products, and other organic materials that have been exposed to flooding, prolonged power outages, extreme heat, or other disaster conditions. Warm temperatures can accelerate decomposition, increasing the potential for strong odors, vectors, contamination, and adverse impacts on neighborhoods and emergency response operations.



Communities should plan specifically for the identification, collection, transportation, temporary handling, and final disposal of putrescent debris. Collection operations should distinguish putrescent materials from other disaster debris whenever practical so that they can be moved and processed through appropriate waste-management channels. Communities may need to establish temporary collection or staging locations, coordinate additional hauling and disposal capacity, and establish procedures for handling animal carcasses and other potentially contaminated organic material. Personnel involved in these operations should be provided appropriate training and personal protective equipment, and transportation and disposal activities should be conducted in accordance with applicable environmental, public-health, and solid-waste requirements. Particular consideration should also be given to locations such as shelters, residential neighborhoods, food-service facilities, nursing facilities, and areas where large populations may be concentrated.



The timely management of putrescent debris also supports the county's broader emergency-management objectives. Removing decomposing materials helps restore sanitary conditions, reduces the attraction of rodents and insects, limits unpleasant odors, and allows residents and businesses to return to normal waste-disposal practices as quickly as possible. Prompt removal also reduces the potential for secondary public-health concerns and helps maintain safe, accessible conditions throughout affected communities. Coordinated debris management further strengthens community recovery efforts by supporting efficient cleanup operations and helping local resources focus on other urgent emergency-response needs.

From a recovery perspective, debris management should be viewed as more than simply removing material from public rights-of-way. It is an organized process that protects life safety, supports continuity of essential services, reduces environmental and public-health risks, and helps restore the community's physical and economic functions. Putrescent debris presents a particularly time-sensitive challenge because its condition can deteriorate quickly. A county that has established responsibilities, collection procedures, disposal options, contracts, monitoring requirements, and public-communication strategies in advance will be better positioned to manage putrescent debris efficiently while protecting residents, responders, workers, and the environment.

Reel Response – *Deepwater Horizon*: When Layers of Safety All Fail at Once

In this installment of the Reel Response: Emergency Management at the Movies series, where each edition examines a disaster or crisis film through the lens of real-world emergency management practice. Across the series, the goal has been to move beyond spectacle and examine how emergency systems actually behave under stress, how warnings are generated, how information moves, how decisions are made under uncertainty, and how organizations and individuals respond when normal operations are no longer possible. Each film becomes a different kind of case study in failure, coordination, resilience, and human decision-making under pressure.

If previous entries explored systemic overload (Contagion), command and coordination under constraint (Apollo 13), rapid-onset weather emergencies (Twister), and fragmented real-time awareness (United 93), Deepwater Horizon shifts the focus to a different category entirely: industrial disaster, where multiple layers of engineered safety, corporate process, and operational oversight converge and fail in a cascading sequence. Directed by Peter Berg, the film dramatizes the 2010 explosion on the offshore drilling rig Deepwater Horizon in the Gulf of Mexico, one of the most significant industrial accidents in modern energy production.



One of the most important emergency management lessons embedded in the film is the concept of normalization of deviance, the gradual acceptance of risk indicators as routine rather than warning signals. Throughout the story, early test anomalies and pressure irregularities are interpreted not as critical failures, but as manageable deviations within operational expectations. This pattern is familiar in many real-world disasters: when organizations operate under time pressure and cost constraints, warning signs can become reframed as tolerable variation rather than immediate hazards. In emergency management terms, this is where prevention systems begin to degrade long before the actual incident occurs.

The film also highlights the complexity of multi-organization coordination in high-risk industrial environments. Offshore drilling operations involve coordination between corporate leadership, contractors, engineering teams, safety personnel, and external regulators. Unlike a unified emergency operations center, authority is distributed across organizational boundaries that do not always share the same operational priorities or risk interpretations. In Deepwater Horizon, this fragmentation becomes critical when technical concerns raised by field personnel collide with production schedules and cost considerations. The result is a slow drift toward decisions that increase vulnerability without full recognition of cumulative risk.

What makes Deepwater Horizon particularly relevant to emergency management practice is its depiction of cascading failure. The disaster does not result from a single error, but from a sequence of interconnected decisions, misinterpretations, and delayed corrective actions. This aligns closely with modern risk theory, which emphasizes that catastrophic incidents are rarely the result of isolated mistakes, but rather the alignment of multiple system vulnerabilities occurring at the same time. In that sense, the film is less about one explosion and more about the structural conditions that made the explosion possible.

Ultimately, Deepwater Horizon presents a sobering view of industrial emergency management: one where safety systems exist, expertise is present, and warnings are issued but where organizational pressures and risk normalization can still converge into catastrophe. The response itself, once the disaster unfolds, is marked by courage, improvisation, and rapid adaptation, but it also underscores a central truth of emergency management: response capability is only one part of the system.

The Other Side of Preparedness: The First 72 Hours – Who Is Coming to Help You?

When disaster strikes, we often picture the people who will come running: firefighters, paramedics, law enforcement officers, emergency managers, public works crews, utility workers, healthcare professionals, and volunteers. These are the people communities depend on when something goes wrong. But there is another side of that response that we don't talk about as often, the human cost to the people doing the helping. Behind every emergency vehicle is a person who may be working long hours, witnessing traumatic events, worrying about their own family, and making difficult decisions under extraordinary pressure. During a major disaster, the first 72 hours can test not only a community's emergency systems, but also the mental and emotional resilience of the people operating those systems.

A major disaster can create an almost immediate imbalance between the number of people who need help and the number of people available to provide it. Communications centers can be overwhelmed with calls. Firefighters and EMS may move from one emergency to another without a break. Law enforcement officers may manage evacuations, blocked roads, accidents, and security concerns. Public works employees may work through the night clearing debris and restoring access. Emergency managers may spend hours coordinating resources, answering questions, and trying to anticipate what the community will need next. Everyone is helping but everyone has limits.





For responders and disaster-assistance personnel, those demands can create a unique kind of stress. The expectation is to remain calm, focused, and professional while circumstances around them may be anything but calm. Responders may encounter injured or displaced residents, damaged homes, death, frightened children, difficult decisions, and people experiencing some of the worst moments of their lives. At the same time, responders may be wondering about their own homes, families, pets, or property. They may be physically exhausted but unable to sleep, emotionally affected but expected to continue working, or reluctant to acknowledge that an incident has taken a toll on them. Being affected by what you experience is not a sign of weakness. It is a human response to extraordinary circumstances.

As a community, we should therefore change the question we ask during a disaster. Instead of only asking, “Who is coming to help?”, we should also ask, “How can we help the people who are coming to help us?” That might mean preparing before an emergency, following official instructions, avoiding unnecessary demands on emergency services, being patient when response times are longer than normal, supporting local responders, or simply recognizing that the person helping you may have been working for many hours before arriving at your door. Compassion goes both ways during a disaster.

The first 72 hours are not simply a test of emergency equipment, plans, and procedures. They are a test of people. Communities need responders who are capable of making sound decisions, providing care, and continuing operations under difficult conditions but those responders also need a community that understands their humanity. Preparedness helps create that space. When we prepare, we reduce unnecessary pressure on the response system. When agencies plan for the mental health and well-being of their personnel, they strengthen their ability to serve. And when communities remember that the people coming to help are people themselves, we build something just as important as an emergency plan: a culture of resilience, compassion, and care for those who stand ready to help us when we need them most.

Double Puzzle

Solve the scrambled clue words, then use those letters to form the final answer. Answers found on the page 12.

OAUYIMCANTTMLCISBPEII

CRTATPSOCARNRIOITTNIAL

AEASSECSMERRVSCI

RPEETSIURBECTNDS

AFIAEEOCNIOARNZMOVLTIND

SGAARIADUFICLNCE

IHUORSRTFS

7 2

EHTRIITRMWECAATENBNYSOUSNYAEALOCNSR

SOPNITMHAHINPHGS

FIICGASRUTSIE

FNCAANNNYIIIIGNINCPNLUTLOTA

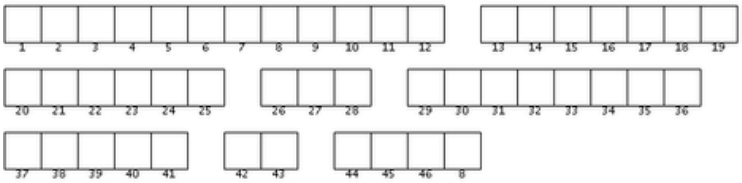
NRIETBSTIYCAA

RVSAEIOSSLNO

GTOANFROASMINNIIHR

EEDAIATGWNEINMRTGNTRA

BACRCSANOLTBIUISNFMIIOP



Beware the Phishing Phantom: Don’t Let Cybercriminals Haunt You This Halloween

October brings pumpkins, costumes, haunted houses and Halloween decorations, but it also brings an important reminder that deserves our attention: October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month. While ghosts and goblins may be imaginary, the threats lurking in our digital lives are very real. Cybercriminals are constantly looking for opportunities to steal information, access accounts, take money and disrupt our lives. This Halloween, take a moment to beware of the “Phishing Phantoms” that may be hiding in your inbox, text messages, social media accounts and even QR codes.



Phishing is one of the most common tactics used by cybercriminals. A phishing message is designed to look like it came from someone you know or an organization you trust. It may appear to come from your bank, a delivery company, your employer, a government agency, a friend or even a family member. The message may ask you to click a link, open an attachment, provide personal information, confirm a payment or send money. What makes phishing so dangerous is that the message may look completely legitimate at first glance. Like a Halloween phantom hiding in the shadows, the threat may not reveal itself until you've already taken the bait.

One of the biggest warning signs is urgency. Cybercriminals want you to react before you have time to think. A message might claim that your bank account has been locked, your package cannot be delivered, your payment is overdue or your account will be deleted unless you act immediately. Other scams may use curiosity or excitement, such as telling you that you've won a prize or that someone has posted a photograph of you. If a message makes you feel frightened, rushed or unusually excited, stop and take a closer look before doing anything. Pay attention to who is actually sending the message. A familiar name displayed in an email or text does not necessarily mean the message is legitimate. Look carefully at the email address, phone number and website address. Cybercriminals often use addresses that look very similar to legitimate ones, sometimes changing just a letter, number or punctuation mark. A suspicious message may also contain unusual wording, spelling mistakes, unexpected attachments or requests that don't sound like something the person or organization would normally ask you to do.

Links deserve special attention. Before clicking, consider where the link is taking you. If you receive an unexpected message from your bank, for example, don't click the link provided in the message. Instead, open your bank's official app or type the organization's known website address into your browser yourself. The same principle applies to email, text messages and social media. When in doubt, go directly to the source rather than following the path provided by a suspicious message. QR codes have also become a popular tool for cybercriminals. We see QR codes everywhere from restaurants and parking meters to advertisements, event posters and mail. A QR code can be used to direct you to a malicious website just as easily as a traditional link can. Be cautious when scanning an unexpected QR code, particularly if the resulting website asks for passwords, financial information or other sensitive information.



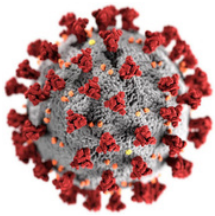
This Halloween, we may enjoy pretending that ghosts and goblins are lurking around every corner, but there's no need to let real-life cybercriminals haunt us. A little awareness and a few simple precautions can go a long way toward protecting our information, our finances and our families. So while you're carving pumpkins, checking your smoke alarms and preparing for the trick-or-treaters, take a few minutes to strengthen your digital defenses, too.

Don't click in the dark. Beware of the Phishing Phantoms. Stop, think and verify—and have a safe, secure and happy Halloween!

The Preparedness Paradox: The Covid Effect

Emergency management has never had better weather forecasts, more sophisticated warning systems, stronger building codes, or greater scientific understanding of disasters. Yet many emergency managers across America share a common frustration: despite all our advances, getting people to prepare seems harder than ever. Has something changed? The Preparedness Paradox is a monthly opinion series that explores why preparedness has become one of the greatest challenges facing emergency management today. Each month, we'll examine a different aspect of our nation's relationship with risk, personal responsibility, government assistance, and community resilience. These articles are not intended to criticize disaster survivors or government programs. Rather, they ask difficult questions that deserve thoughtful discussion as we work together to build more resilient communities.

COVID-19 changed far more than public health. It changed how Americans view emergencies themselves. For nearly three years, the nation lived in a constant state of crisis. Daily news reports, emergency declarations, changing guidance, shortages, financial assistance programs, remote work, school closures, and economic uncertainty became part of everyday life. When the pandemic finally eased, something else remained: emergency fatigue.



For many people, the word “emergency” no longer referred only to tornadoes, floods, or other sudden disasters. It became associated with prolonged disruption, uncertainty, conflicting information, and the feeling that another crisis could emerge at any moment. Years of living with elevated levels of uncertainty also changed expectations about preparedness. Some Americans became more interested in emergency planning, while others became overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information and warnings they encountered.



This shift matters because emergency preparedness depends not only on having supplies and plans, but also on how people perceive risk. When warnings become routine, it can become harder to distinguish an immediate threat from background noise. The challenge for communities today is therefore not simply to prepare people for the next disaster, but to help them recognize credible risks, understand what those risks mean locally, and know what actions are appropriate when an emergency occurs. In a post-pandemic environment, effective preparedness must account for both disaster risk and emergency fatigue.

Today, emergency managers often find that preparedness messages simply don't resonate the way they once did. People aren't necessarily denying disasters, they're tired of hearing about them. Psychologists have long recognized a phenomenon called "crisis fatigue." After prolonged exposure to stress and uncertainty, people begin tuning out warnings not because they don't care, but because they simply have no emotional capacity left to process another potential emergency. When every new warning feels like another demand on already limited attention and energy, disengagement can become an understandable response. Unfortunately, disasters don't pause because people are exhausted.

One of emergency management's biggest challenges today is finding ways to motivate preparedness without contributing to anxiety. Instead of asking people to prepare because disaster is coming, perhaps we should encourage preparedness because it reduces stress, protects finances, and provides peace of mind. Simple actions can make preparedness feel manageable rather than overwhelming. Knowing where important documents are, having a few days of essential supplies, making a communication plan, and understanding the risks in your community can all provide a greater sense of control when circumstances change unexpectedly. When people have a plan, they are better positioned to protect what matters most, help those around them, and recover more quickly when something does happen.

Community Dependencies: What Happens When the Financial Systems We Rely On Fail?

In this second article in our emergency preparedness series on community dependencies we take a closer look at one dependency that often receives little attention until it is suddenly unavailable: financial systems. Electronic banking, payment processing, payroll, accounting, purchasing, and access to financial records are essential to keeping an organization running. A disruption to these systems whether caused by a cyber incident, power outage, internet failure, software problem, or broader disaster can quickly become an operational challenge. In this edition, we'll consider how organizations can prepare to maintain essential operations when normal financial processes are temporarily unavailable.

Financial continuity planning should begin with identifying which financial functions are truly essential to the organization and how long each can operate without normal systems. Organizations should consider questions such as: How will employees be paid if payroll systems are unavailable? How will emergency purchases be authorized? Can critical vendors be paid if online banking is down? Who has access to financial records, account information, and purchasing authority if key personnel are unavailable? Documenting these processes in advance—and identifying backup methods, alternate contacts, and appropriate authorization procedures—can help prevent a financial disruption from becoming an operational shutdown.



Just as important is having a practical financial continuity plan that can be used during an extended outage. This may include maintaining secure offline copies of critical financial information, establishing alternate payment and purchasing procedures, identifying emergency spending limits and authorities, and ensuring that more than one person understands essential financial processes. Organizations should also coordinate with banks, payroll providers, accounting firms, vendors, and insurers to understand their continuity capabilities and emergency procedures. The goal is not to duplicate every normal financial process, but to ensure that the organization can continue paying people, obtaining essential goods and services, documenting transactions, and meeting its most critical financial obligations until normal systems are restored.

Notable Quotables

Change the behavior today, change the outcome tomorrow!

"I've lived here my entire life, this is just Nature's way of saying "Hold my beer."

Don't announce good news unless you've confirmed it. Not heard it or hope it, but confirmed it!

Generators have a sixth sense for drama. They'll quit right before you need them then start purring again five minutes after the grid's back.

The longer your disaster leads the national news, the worse it's going to get. Wait for the "exclusive" interviews with the neighbor who "saw it coming."

The Wisdom of Preparedness – Rethinking Risk: How Cognitive Bias is Costing Us in Disaster Funding

In emergency management, experience is invaluable. Our seasoned leaders, department heads, and elected officials have guided communities through weather events and public health crises. Yet despite decades of lessons learned, we continue to see the same disaster funding mistakes repeated: underinvestment in mitigation, delayed action until after catastrophe strikes, and overconfidence in outdated risk assumptions.

Insights from *Thinking, Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman provide a powerful lens for understanding why this happens. Kahneman's research into human judgment and decision-making, conducted in part with Amos Tversky, reveals that even highly educated, experienced professionals are vulnerable to predictable cognitive biases. Two of the most influential in public-sector disaster policy are certainty bias and loss aversion. Ironically, once a disaster occurs, the same leaders may overcorrect, temporarily inflating funding while memories are vivid only to let preparedness funding erode again as the sense of certainty returns.



Certainty bias is our tendency to overweight outcomes that feel certain while discounting those that are probabilistic even when the probabilistic risks carry catastrophic consequences. In local government, this often manifests as:

- Prioritizing guaranteed short-term projects over mitigation investments whose benefits are statistical.
- Deferring infrastructure upgrades because "we've never had a 500-year flood here."
- Treating past experience as proof of future safety.

Kahneman's research shows that humans systematically underestimate low-probability, high-impact events when they are abstract. Ironically, once a disaster occurs, the same leaders may overcorrect, temporarily inflating funding while memories are vivid only to let preparedness funding erode again as the sense of certainty returns.

Loss aversion, the principle that losses loom larger than gains is one of the most robust findings in behavioral science. People experience the pain of losing something roughly twice as strongly as the pleasure of gaining something equivalent. In public finance, this translates into powerful inertia:

- Elected officials fear the political loss associated with raising taxes or reallocating funds for mitigation.
- Agencies resist shifting budget lines away from established programs.
- Decision-makers focus on avoiding immediate criticism rather than preventing future catastrophe.

Consider a proposal to invest in flood mitigation. The "gain" is a probabilistic reduction in future damage. The "loss" is immediate with fewer discretionary funds, delayed capital projects, or higher local taxes. Even when data shows that mitigation yields a 4:1 or greater return on investment, the immediate budgetary "loss" dominates the decision calculus.

If these biases are predictable, they are also manageable. Research suggests several practical strategies:

1. Establish fixed percentages of capital budgets for resilience projects before disasters occur.
2. Require budget discussions to include modeled loss scenarios and expected annual loss comparisons.
3. Reframing Investments: Present mitigation funding not as a "cost" but as avoided loss with quantified long-term savings.

By recognizing certainty bias and loss aversion in ourselves and our governing bodies, we can move from reactive spending cycles to proactive resilience strategies. Leadership at the local level is not just about managing emergencies, it is about managing the cognitive traps that quietly shape our budgets long before sirens sound. In the end, the most effective disaster funding decisions are not simply data-driven; they are bias-aware.

Recent Happenings

Peoria InfraGard Leader Wins National Award

Dave Johnson, Peoria InfraGard Chapter, was recently awarded the prestigious Ivan Wolkind IMA Leader of the Year Award, the highest individual honor for chapter leadership given by the InfraGard National Members Alliance. The award evaluation focuses heavily on exceptional collaboration with local FBI Field Offices and demonstrating distinct local impacts in threat-mitigation programs. We are pleased to recognize Dave for receiving a well-deserved award in recognition of his outstanding contributions and commitment to the community. This accomplishment reflects his dedication to strengthening partnerships, sharing knowledge, and supporting efforts that help organizations better prepare for and respond to emerging challenges.

This award is a true testament to Dave's commitment to the organization's mission of bringing together the public and private sectors to share information, strengthen relationships, and enhance the security and resilience of critical infrastructure. His involvement demonstrates the value of collaboration and information sharing among professionals across different organizations and sectors. We congratulate Dave on this recognition and appreciate his continued service, leadership, and commitment to building stronger partnerships

National Weather Service - Lincoln Integrated Warning Team Meeting

Staff recently attended a day long Integrated Warning Team Meeting at the National Weather Service in Lincoln, IL. The meeting brought together public safety personnel with the goal of finding the best ways to communicate a consistent warning message during an event.

The Integrated Warning Team (IWT) is a collaborative coalition that bridges the gap between scientific forecasting and public action during high-impact weather events. Comprised of National Weather Service meteorologists, emergency management personnel, broadcast media professionals, and public safety stakeholders, the team works in tandem to ensure that critical weather information is not just distributed, but deeply understood. By aligning their operational strategies, sharing real-time insights, and unifying their public safety messaging, the IWT removes communication silos to deliver clear, consistent, and actionable warnings that ultimately save lives and protect communities.

L105: Public Information Basics Course

Recently, our team hosted a Public Information Basics Course designed to strengthen participants' ability to communicate clearly, accurately, and effectively before, during, and after an emergency. The course provided practical instruction on the fundamentals of public information, including identifying audiences, developing clear and timely messages, working with the media, communicating during rapidly changing situations, and understanding the important role public information plays in emergency management and community preparedness.

The training also provided an opportunity for participants to practice and strengthen their communication skills in a collaborative environment. By working through realistic scenarios and discussing common challenges, attendees gained a better understanding of how to coordinate information, maintain consistency across agencies and organizations, and provide the public with information they can use to make informed decisions. Ultimately, the course helped build a stronger network of professionals who are better prepared to communicate with the community when accurate, timely, and trusted information matters most.

Double Puzzle

Answers to the puzzle found on page 06.

OAUYIMCANTTMLCISBPEII

COMMUNITY CAPABILITIES

CRTATPSOCARNRIOITTNIAL

CRITICAL TRANSPORTATION

AEASSECSMERRVSCI

MASS CARE SERVICES

RPEETSIURBECTNDS

PUTREST DEBRIS

AFIAEEOCNIOARNZMOVLTIND

NORMALIZATION OF DEVIANCE

SGAARIADUFICLNCE

CASCADING FAILURE

IHUORSRTFS

FIRST 72 HOURS

EHTRIITRMWECAATENBNYSOUSNYAEALOCNSR

NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

SOPNITMHAHINPHGS

PHISHING PHANTOMS

FIICGASRUTSIE

CRISIS FATIGUE

FNCAANNNYIIIIGNINCPNLUTLOTA

FINANCIAL CONTINUITY PLANNING

NRIETBSTIYCAA

CERTAINTY BIAS

RVSAEIOSSLNO

LOSS AVERSION

GTOANFROASMINNIIHR

INFORMATION SHARING

EEDAIATGWNEINMRTGNTRA

INTEGRATED WARNING TEAM

BACRCSANOLTBIUISNFMIIOP

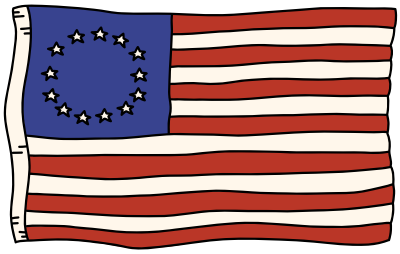
PUBLIC INFORMATION BASICS

PREPAREDNESS REDUCES

STRESS AND PROVIDES

PEACE OF MIND

America 250, Month by Month a Look Back to 1776



October 1776 was one of the most challenging months of the American Revolution. The United States had declared independence only a few months earlier, but independence did not mean security. American forces were fighting a larger and better-equipped British military, struggling with shortages, transportation problems, communications challenges, and the difficult task of protecting territory while keeping the Continental Army intact. ess have remained remarkably constant.

On October 16, Washington ordered his forces to withdraw from Manhattan as British pressure increased. Although losing territory was a significant setback, withdrawing preserved the army and allowed it to continue fighting. Emergency management faces similar decisions during disasters. Relocating an emergency operations center, closing a road, moving equipment out of a floodplain, or temporarily shutting down a vulnerable facility can sometimes appear to be a failure because normal operations have been disrupted. The objective of emergency management is not to protect a particular location at any cost; it is to protect lives, preserve critical capabilities, and position the community to recover and continue essential services.

The Battle of White Plains on October 28 was another difficult moment for Washington's army. American forces faced a determined British and Hessian attack and eventually withdrew. Washington continued to reorganize, reposition his forces, and prepare for what came next. This illustrates an essential emergency-management principle: disasters do not end when the immediate threat has passed. A tornado may last only a few minutes, but debris removal, temporary housing, infrastructure repairs, and recovery can continue for months. Effective emergency planning therefore needs to extend beyond the first operational period and address the second day, the first week, the first month, and the longer-term recovery process.

Perhaps one of the most interesting connections between October 1776 and modern emergency management can be found in General Washington's orders of October 30. Washington was dealing with practical readiness problems involving supplies, personnel accountability, and the need for his forces to be prepared to respond quickly. His orders addressed the importance of maintaining provisions, keeping personnel properly accounted for, and being prepared to respond when an alarm was received. Although the language and circumstances were very different from those of today's emergency operations centers, the basic concept is remarkably familiar: prepare resources before they are needed, know where your people are, keep essential equipment usable and mobile, and be ready to act when conditions change.

As we look back at October 1776 nearly 250 years later, the most important lesson is not that preparation guarantees victory. Preparation gives people and organizations options when conditions become difficult. The Americans fighting in 1776 could not control the size of the British Army, the weather, the terrain, or every battlefield outcome. What they could control was their ability to organize, communicate, maintain supplies, adapt their strategy, and continue operating after setbacks. Emergency managers in 2026 face a different collection of threats, but the fundamental challenge remains remarkably similar.

The question for today's communities is therefore the same one that confronted Washington's forces in October 1776: Will we be ready when the alarm sounds? Readiness means understanding that resilience is not the absence of disaster. Resilience is the ability of a community to withstand disruption, protect its people, maintain essential functions, adapt to changing circumstances, and recover afterward. The events of October 1776 remind us that while the technology of emergency management has changed dramatically, the fundamental principles of preparedness have remained remarkably constant.