



MONTEZUMA COUNTY, COLORADO

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS NEWSLETTER

June 1, 2011

The recent disasters in Japan, Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas and a host of other areas has spurred interest in how citizens can prepare themselves for a large-scale disaster.

We live in the “9-1-1” age; simply call for help and wait, right?

Wrong! Even a moderate sized incident will quickly exhaust the emergency resources of most regions. Your call for help may result in emergency responders arriving hours, or even days, later. While we have systems in place to call for help from outside the County, the hard fact is that for the first 24 to 48 hours, you will probably be on your own. So, what can you do?

Your first and best option in a disaster is to *shelter in place*. This means that you and your family remain on your property in a secure location: storm cellar, basement, etc. However, you will need to sustain yourself for an extended period. You’ll need water, food, emergency power, medicines, first aid supplies and communications.

Some disasters, such as floods or wildfires, will require you to evacuate. You’ll be directed to an emergency shelter: we currently have 9 designated sites in our County. From there, you may choose to move to another site, such as family or friends in a neighboring area. It’s important that if you do this, you have a plan ahead of time. Remember, roads may be blocked,

power may be out, and things will seem chaotic. It may be difficult or impossible to make phone calls. So, talk to your family and friends beforehand, and decide where you (and they) can go in the event of an evacuation. Emergency shelters are critical assets, but they are not the only, or even best, solution when you are displaced.

The bottom line is this: surviving and recovering after a disaster depends in large part on *personal preparedness*.

For basic information about family preparedness, sheltering in place, survival supplies and “Grab and Go” kits, go to: www.fema.gov/plan . You can also download a copy of “Are You Ready?” a comprehensive guide to emergency preparedness, at this site. It’s a large document in Adobe format, but worth the wait.

Until next month.

Be Prepared!

Doug