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**September is National Preparedness Month
“Don’t Wait. Communicate.”**

(RACINE) County Executive Jonathan Delagrave has joined in proclaiming September as National Preparedness Month and is urging those who live and work in Racine County to work together toward creating a more prepared community.

This year’s theme is **“Don’t Wait. Communicate. Make Your Emergency Plan Today.”** Taking time now to discuss with family, friends and neighbors about what to do in an emergency and then building an emergency kit for your home and vehicles.

“Whether it’s flooding, tornadoes, extreme heat or winter storms,” commented Delagrave, “emergencies and disasters do impact us in Racine County. So it’s important that we all take steps to prepare. That means developing a plan that includes information on where to go during an emergency and how to communicate with your family in case you get separated.”

Simple preparedness steps that families can follow include:

Family Communications – Many families are constantly on the “go” and often separated because of multiple functions occurring at the same time. What if something happens and your family is not together? How will you communicate? What will you do? Where will you go? We are often told that the first thing to fail is cell phones so then what?

In a disaster, it may be easier to communicate via text messaging than it is by calling someone. We also recommend having an out of state contact who everyone can check in with. Put together an emergency card with important names and phone numbers and make sure everyone has one. Include out-of-town family members or friends, as well as a central meeting place. You can download a card on our website www.readyracineco.com.

Create a Family Plan – Develop an emergency plan for the common hazards that may affect you and your family. These may include fires, chemical spills and severe weather like tornadoes,

flooding and winter storms. Know what to do and how to react to each hazard. Decide whether you will need to shelter in place or evacuate. And if you have to evacuate, determine where you would go. Finally practice the plan.

Making a Kit – Depending on the situation, help may not be quickly on the way. Therefore, how will you survive? What do you need to get by on your own for 24, 36 or 72 hours? Basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment, and telephones may not work or you might have to evacuate your home immediately. That’s why it is important to have your own fully-stocked disaster kit ready.

A disaster supplies kit is a collection of basic items that members of a household may need in the event of a disaster. Supplies such as food and water should last for at least three days. Other items to consider include flashlights with fresh batteries, radio, medications and first aid kit, pet food and supplies, and other necessities. Also make sure you put an emergency kit in every vehicle as well that contains non-perishable food and water, jumper cables, and extra coats, blankets and gloves.

And make sure you have a NOAA Weather Radio! “Every home, school and business should have an all-hazard NOAA Weather Radio,” commented David Maack, Racine County Emergency Management Coordinator, “they should be as common as smoke detectors.”

NOAA Weather Radios will alert you to storms headed your way. In addition, they may be used to broadcast other types of emergency information. Emergency messages are also delivered directly to your cell phone through Wireless Emergency Alerts. These alerts are free and the software is preloaded on most cell phones. Through these alerts you’ll receive a short text message about the pending danger. Finally sign up for text alerts and download emergency apps.

“By taking these three easy steps, you are on your way to being ready for the type of emergencies that may impact us here in Racine County,” commented David Maack, the County’s Emergency Management Coordinator. “Individuals and families are the most important members of our emergency management team. Being prepared can save precious time and save lives. **“Don’t Wait. Communicate. Emergency Plan Today!”** Maack added.

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