

The Nevada Department of Public Safety's *Division of Emergency Management*

October 2015



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Welcome to the Division of Emergency Management's New Monthly Newsletter

The Nevada Department of Public Safety's *Division of Emergency Management* is proud to announce the launch of our monthly newsletter. As with this first issue, the purpose is to communicate with our statewide partners in the public safety, public administration, and emergency management arenas about the many efforts, innovations, and leaders that aim to make our state and communities safer and more resilient. We hope that this is the beginning of a statewide conversation about emergency management in Nevada so that we can share best practices, work together, and be better prepared ahead of and during the emergencies and disasters that we face together as Nevadans. We also hope that you will help us improve it over time by sending us information that we can highlight, suggestions for improvement, and other helpful ideas. Our contact information and more can be found on our website, <http://dem.nv.gov>. Thanks, and we look forward to hearing from you!



September: National Preparedness Month for all of Nevada's Emergency Management Partners

"Don't Wait. Communicate. Make Your Emergency Plan Today."

September was National Preparedness Month across the country and in Nevada

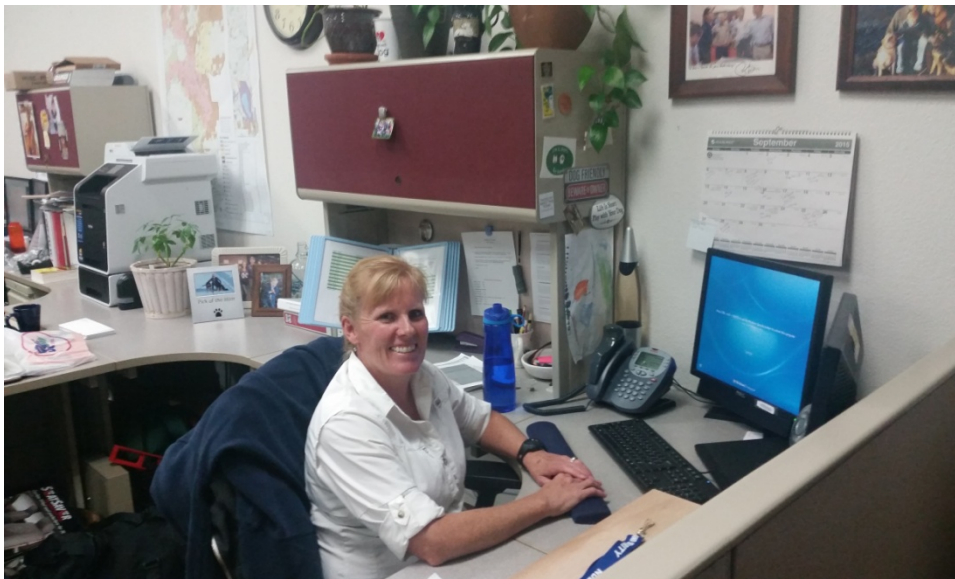
National Preparedness Month, which was originally developed in 2004 in an effort to strengthen the United States' preparedness capabilities, focuses on emphasizing and supporting the national preparedness architecture: prevention, protection, response, and recovery efforts. As all in the Emergency Management community know, preparedness assists the state and nation in helping to manage all emergencies and disasters, whether man-made or natural. This year's National Preparedness Month focused on strengthening our communities through public events and online communities through the theme, "Don't Wait. Communicate. Make Your Emergency Plan Today."

During National Preparedness Month, DEM worked to spread the message of preparedness through various activities and efforts. The DEM PIO worked through traditional media and social media, including press releases and public service announcements, to focus on Nevada's top hazards and the things

that Nevadans can do to be prepared. The highlight for DEM's public outreach was participating in the UNLV vs. UCLA football game recognizing emergency responders and managers on Saturday, September 12, 2015.

DEM also participated with various preparedness or related efforts with local partners throughout September as well. These included multiple exercises with state, local, and federal partners, the Las Vegas area emergency managers' Emergency Kit Cook Off, the Nevada Statewide School Safety Summit hosted by Washoe County Emergency Management, the Governor's Drought Symposium, the quarterly meeting of the Inter-Tribal Emergency Response Commission, and more. Of course, communities throughout the state hosted their own activities, exercises, and events to ensure that Nevada is safe and prepared as well.

The work is not done as National Preparedness Month comes to an end, though. All partners throughout Nevada understand that the year ahead will require just as much attention, collaboration, and coordination as years past have, if not more. DEM looks forward to finding ways to support local efforts, share best practices, and coordinate resources whenever possible. 🌟



Meet Kirsten Sherve, Operations Officer at the Division of Emergency Management

Raised in Susanville, California, Kirsten Sherve studied to be a children's counselor at St. Olaf College in Minnesota. Even with her training as a counselor, she decided to become a firefighter to help pay for school. The pull of her passion for counseling would be strong, but the pull of fighting fires would prove to be stronger over most of the years ahead.

"I started working on a hotshot crew, where I worked for seven years," Sherve says. "It was the best job I've ever had," she adds, because she got to work with great people in a profession she loved, and she got to see the world. She went back to counseling at a children's treatment facility in Reno for a time, but it wasn't long before she would be back to fighting fires.

This time, though, her contribution to fighting fires would be in offices instead of on the line. She worked at Western Great Basin Coordination Center in Reno for four years, then Eastern Great Basin Coordination Center for three years, and then as the Assistant Center Manager at the jump base in McCall, Idaho. In the end Kirsten worked for BLM for 16 years and the Forest Service for three, and her career eventually brought her back to Nevada and DEM, where she serves today.

"Every day here at DEM is different," Sherve says, stating that she works to fill resource requests throughout the year. During fire season, though, she mainly works to mobilizing the local government fire resources around the nation. Key to her ability to serve communities around the state and region is her ability to build relationships, and keeping those relationships through communication, support, responsiveness, and accessibility is just as important. "Customer service goes a long way," Sherve notes, describing her approach to maintaining relationships.

That desire to best serve her customers comes from her long career in fighting fires, whether it was out in the field or in an office coordinating resources. Knowing what it was like on both sides of the job was imperative to being able to do the best possible job for those she now supports. Doing what it takes to keep communities safe is as personal to her today as it was nearly two decades ago when she decided to start fighting fires herself. 🌟

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Henderson Emergency Management and Safety Wins Two Major Awards for their Preparedness Campaign

In September, Ryan Turner, the Manager of the City of Henderson's Emergency Management and Safety team received word that a preparedness effort his team, developed won two major awards. We talked to them about their successful campaign not only to share the good news of their success, but also the details of their effort for others to follow.

Nevada Division of Emergency Management (DEM): What is your vision for emergency management in Henderson?

Henderson Emergency Management and Safety (HEMS): To be America's Premier Office of Emergency Management.

DEM: How does your preparedness program, "Get READY! Stay READY!" help you to achieve that vision?

HEMS: We take a whole community approach. Emergency Preparedness is important for individuals, families, businesses, schools, and the entire community. In the beginning we focused on raising awareness among our city staff. We encouraged them to have a family plan, build a home emergency supply kit, and know how to stay informed and get involved during emergencies. Most of our city staff could be called to work during large-scale emergencies or disasters and we reminded them that their families had to prepare as well so that they could perform their duties even during a crisis. We also educated the public on the importance of emergency preparedness through live presentations at schools, libraries, civic

groups and through information booths at our largest mall and community events. Realizing that social media and the internet are powerful tools for spreading the emergency preparedness message, we developed 12 videos on emergency preparedness topics and released them via our website, social media and email. In our first year, we held over 55 events and reached more than 100,000 people.

DEM: Tell us about the awards you recently received for "Get READY! Stay READY!"

HEMS: Recently, the City of Henderson's "Get READY! Stay READY!" campaign was honored with FEMA's "Awareness to Action" award. This is one of their annual Community and Individual Preparedness Awards for the "effective use of outreach and messaging techniques not only to raise awareness about hazards and disaster preparedness, but also to persuade member of the public, organizations, and whole communities to take action to prepare." We received the award in Washington, D.C., where we were able to share our story with a policy advisor from the White House and senior leaders at FEMA. We were also recently informed that we will receive the International Association of Emergency Managers' (IAEM) 2015 IAEM-USA Public Awareness Award for our "Get READY! Stay READY!" campaign, which will be presented at the IAEM Annual Conference in Las Vegas, in November 2015.

DEM: What was the best part about receiving the awards?

HEMS: The best part about receiving these awards is that it shows that our campaign is a highly recognized brand within our city, across the Las Vegas valley, and beyond. The awards validate our efforts and motivate us to do even more. These awards have allowed us to

"Emergency Preparedness is important for individuals, families, businesses, schools, and the entire community."

share our best practices and lessons learned with other award winners/communities and to learn best practices from them in order to improve our own campaign.

DEM: How did you come up with the idea for this initiative?

HEMS: Through our strategic plan we identified a major challenge area for Emergency Preparedness. Then we developed strategies followed by goals and objectives to improve the major challenge area in our city. The "Get READY! Stay READY!" campaign assisted the city on its internal and external focus of increasing preparedness across the city to create a more resilient community.

DEM: What kind of community involvement helped make this program such a success?

HEMS: The community was very receptive to our campaign. Most of our citizens that we talked with did not know about the hazards that we have in Henderson. It has really been like a snowball rolling down a hill. The campaign started small and relied on our staff to reach out to request to speak at venues. Now, people are calling us to have us visit with them and provide our "Get READY! Stay READY!" information. It has been a true "grassroots" effort that is now becoming a highly sought after program. Our citizens make the program possible and their eagerness to learn and be prepared is the cornerstone. Our challenge is to continue to reach out to share information in an exciting and informative way.

DEM: What kind of outcomes do you expect from "Get READY! Stay READY!"?

Interview continued on next page.



HEMS: Our goal is to have a better-prepared and resilient community. We hope to have a city staff that is responsive and diligent in their response to emergencies. In short, we want to be as ready as we possibly can be for disasters and foster a strong sense of cooperation and trust amongst our entire citizenry.

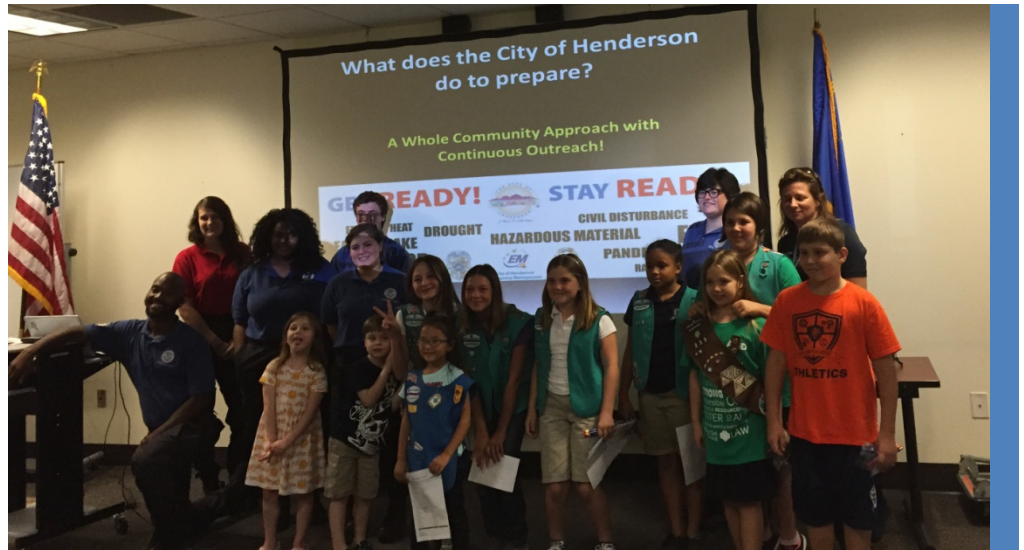
DEM: What was the hardest part of making “Get READY! Stay READY!” happen?

HEMS: Ideas are always limited by resources. We have a minimal staff and budget to conduct the “Get READY! Stay READY!” campaign. The people that are involved believe in the campaign and are willing to volunteer extra time to accomplish our preparedness goals. We all know that many hands make light work so we created the READY Crew. The READY Crew is a volunteer group consisting of city employees and community volunteers that now conduct “Get READY! Stay READY!” events and are taking the campaign to new heights.

DEM: What advice would you give to other Emergency Managers who want to do something similar?

HEMS: Our advice is to start small and keep it simple. Initially focus on groups that will help spread the emergency preparedness message. Partnerships are key to our success and are essential in any outreach program. You also have to make it a priority for your staff. In Henderson, we have a three guiding priorities in our emergency management program: 1) Emergency Management Program Accreditation and Maintenance, 2) Training and Exercises, and 3) Community education and outreach. If it isn't a priority then it will never be successful. It has to have support up and down the chain of command.

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DEM: What major initiatives are you working on next?

HEMS: We are working very diligently to increase the number of volunteers in our READY Crew so that we can continue to share the “Get READY! Stay READY!” message. Our hope is that the “Get READY! Stay READY!” campaign is only coordinated by city staff and that our READY Crew becomes a self-sustaining organization that carries out the campaign. Our focus is shifting to partnerships with our schools and sharing “Get READY! Stay READY!” information with elementary and middle school students. Reaching out to our children will help ensure readiness and awareness into the next generation. 🌻

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