TsuInfo Alert

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National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program

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Red Cross and OEM Employees Work Together to Prepare Oregonians for Potential Disaster

By Cory E. Grogan, Oregon Emergency Management, Public Information Officer

Two people from different agencies are working together to help Oregonians become ready for Emergencies by bringing diverse skill sets, and a passion for helping communities and families, to send their message of disaster preparedness.

CeCi Pratt shows an emergency preparedness backpack to an audience at Broadway Middle School in Seaside, Oregon. (Photo by Cory Grogan, Oregon Emergency Management)

March was earthquake awareness month in Oregon, and communities up and down the Oregon Coast got a special presentation from CeCi Pratt, a Red Cross readiness specialist for Lincoln, Clatsop and Tillamook counties; and Althea Rizzo, geologic hazards program coordinator for Oregon Emergency Management. The two said they have been working together since 2006 to make sure communities in Oregon will be more prepared if a large earthquake and tsunami strikes.

Pratt and Rizzo made one of their stops in Seaside, Ore., March 11 for the 4th Annual, 16-day long Tsunami Road Show that happened in 17 coastal communities from March 10-25, spanning the Oregon Coast. The Seaside event, like many others, saw a strong turnout filling the Broadway Middle School library with approximately 60 people for a Tsunami preparation talk.

Dr. Althea Rizzo, geologic hazards program coordinator for Oregon Emergency Management. (Photo by Cory Grogan, Oregon Emergency Management)

Rizzo said the earthquake and tsunami road show concept was her idea, and is only one of its' kind as far as she knows.

"Oregon Emergency Management is mandated by legislature to improve life in Oregon after a disaster, and if something were to happen, I would not be able to sleep at night knowing I had left something undone," Rizzo said.

Rizzo said she is very happy to have Pratt involved because they have different strengths that help create a stronger unified message.

"I have a lot of respect for CeCi, she has great energy and people really relate to her message about taking care of family and community by being prepared," Rizzo explained. "I very much enjoy working with CeCi Pratt of the American Red Cross because she is always so inspiring with her passion and love helping people become better prepared for all emergencies and natural hazards."

Rizzo has a doctorate degree from Oregon State University and has been working as an expert at OEM for five years 5 years. Pratt said the feeling in mutual and that she respects Rizzo's knowledge, as well.

(Story continues on page 3)

Hazard Assessment

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF Natural Resources
Peter Goldmark - Commissioner of Public Lands
Division of Geology and Earth Resources
David K. Norman - State Geologist

News

- Stephanie Earls has taken over as TsuInfo Alert editor and librarian for the Tsunami Library.
- Tsunami Library will soon have a new library catalog.

In this issue:

TsuInfo Alert

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8th Session UNESCO Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Caribbean on Tsunamis/Coastal Hazards

By Bernardo Aliaga (UNESCO)

The 8th session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Tsunami and Other Coastal Hazards Warning System for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (ICG/CARIBE EWS-VIII) was held in Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, from 29 April to 1 May 2013. The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of National Security through the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM). The meeting was attended by 56 participants from 18 Caribbean countries and four observer organizations (United Nations Development Programme - UNDP, Caribbean Disaster Management Agency - CDEMA, Puerto Rico Seismic Network – PRSN and the University of the West Indies Seismic Research Center - SRC).

Delegates that attended ICG Caribbean in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on April 30-May 1, 2013.

The session recognized the increased regional capabilities for tsunami coordination, alerting and monitoring, bringing it up to 94% of National Contacts and Warning Focal Points having been designated and 85% implementation of the seismic network and 44% of the sea level network plans.

The newly established Caribbean Tsunami Information Center (CTIC), hosted by the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) of the Government of Barbados was tasked with holding at least two Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) trainings during 2013. The Member States urged again the US to continue with its phased approach towards the establishment of a Caribbean Tsunami Warning Center in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico.

The evaluation of the CARIBE WAVE 13 exercise demonstrated the usefulness of these exercises and the interest of Member States in further testing the Enhanced PTWC products for the region. As a consequence, the plenary decided to hold annual CARIBE WAVE exercises to regularly test tsunami preparedness in the Caribbean, with the next one being coordinated for March 26, 2014. The IX Session is to be hosted by the Government of the US Virgin Islands on the island of St. Thomas in May, 2014.

For more information:
http://www.ioc-tsunami.org/

TECHNOLOGY—TSUNAMI ALERT SYSTEMS

GPS Solution Provides Three-Minute Tsunami Alerts

by European Geosciences Union

Credit: Stephen Vaughan

Researchers have shown that, by using global positioning systems (GPS) to measure ground deformation caused by a large underwater earthquake, they can provide accurate warning of the resulting tsunami in just a few minutes after the earthquake onset. For the devastating Japan 2011 event, the team reveals that the analysis of the GPS data and issue of a detailed tsunami alert would have taken no more than three minutes. The results are published on 17 May in Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences, an open access journal of the European Geosciences Union (EGU).

Most tsunamis, including those in offshore Sumatra, Indonesia in 2004 and Japan in 2011, occur following underwater ground motion in subduction zones, locations where a tectonic plate slips under another causing a large earthquake. To a lesser extent, the resulting uplift of the sea floor also affects coastal regions. There, researchers can measure the small ground deformation along the coast with GPS and use this to determine tsunami information.

"High-precision real-time processing and inversion of these data enable reconstruction of the earthquake source, described as slip at the subduction interface. This can be used to calculate the uplift of the sea floor, which in turn is used as initial condition for a tsunami model to predict arrival times and maximum wave heights at the coast," says lead-author Andreas Hoechner from the German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ).

Full story: http://www.egu.eu/news/64/

Detecting Tsunami Events Before They Occur

by Cordis News, European Commission

The saying to be 'forewarned is to be forearmed' sums up the principle objective behind the DEWS (Distant Early Warning System) project, which can detect tsunami events before they occur.

It is systems like this, which ensured that warnings were sounded last year in Hawaii of an impending tsunami, spurring residents to stock up on essentials and sending tourists in beachside hotels to higher floors in their buildings. The advance warning gives communities in the path of the oncoming wave critical time to prepare - and could ultimately save many lives.

The DEWS project surfaced after the tragic tsunami event, which hit the countries bordering the Indian Ocean back in 2004. What emerged from the aftermath were the shortcomings in tsunami detection and public warning procedures. Scientists then realised that to avoid a similar event happening again, early warning systems needed to be improved to reduce the time interval between the initial earthquake, and the detection of the tsunami.

Indeed, the 'United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction' (UN/ISDR) identified four important inter-related elements of effective Early Warning Systems (EWS): risk knowledge, monitoring and warning service, dissemination and communication, and response capability.

Full story: http://tinyurl.com/mszjd4o

Red Cross and OEM Employees Work Together to Prepare Oregonians for Potential Disaster

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Pratt, who has been a readiness specialist for 7 years, said she and Rizzo want to give a simplistic message for a practical response.

"We are both passionate about getting the word out to families so they will be safe and we don't want people to become complacent," Pratt said.

Rizzo echoed that sentiment.

"It is my job is to save lives, to protect property, and motivate people to get families and businesses ready to protect their property," added Rizzo. "If people want me to visit I will get them on the schedule and let them know everyone is responsible for their own preparedness."

Rizzo said it is a good idea to have food, water and medicine for a month, to be prepared to camp out if necessary, and to know people in higher places when you live in a low lying tsunami danger zone.

For more information on disaster preparedness visit: http://www.redcross.org/ or http://www.oregon.gov/OMD/OEM.

Pamphlets and emergency preparedness items on display. (Photo by Cory Grogan, Oregon Emergency Management)

TECHNOLOGY—TSUNAMI ALERT SYSTEMS

Warning Siren Face Lift

by Brian Heaton, Emergency Management Magazine May/June 2013

In an era where people rely on mobile devices for information, a warning siren may seem like outdated technology. But in Hawaii, a new retrofit program will ensure that the booming outdoor alarms will continue to serve as the state's primary emergency alert system for years to come.

Hawaii is in the midst of a $25.6 million overhaul of its statewide warning siren network. Once the project is complete, 490 sirens will be spread throughout the state, including 205 on Oahu, the most populous of the Hawaiian Islands. The sirens will operate on a state-of-the-art satellite-cellular communications system.

Credit: Gen Tamura/FEMA

The investment could be seen as a surprise by some, particularly since sirens have increasingly been disregarded by people on the U.S. mainland in favor of other types of alerts.

For example, when a tornado laid waste to Joplin, Mo., in May 2011, resident Jose de Leon told The Joplin Globe that he heard the tornado siren but chose to ignore it, as did many others in the area.

In an interview with Emergency Management in 2011, Jon Martin, professor and chair of the Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, believed approximately 25 percent of the 535 deaths caused by spring tornadoes in 2011 could have been because people failed to heed warning sirens.

Despite the flippant attitude toward sirens by some people, Tom Simon, systems engineer of Hawaii State Civil Defense, said sirens are absolutely needed in the state. He explained that tourists and residents aren't always carrying a smartphone to receive geo-located emergency notifications and even if they are, signal strength may be suspect in a mountainous or elevated region.

"Because of the amount of time people here in Hawaii spend outdoors and … the potential for tsunamis, we are still putting a lot of emphasis on our siren system," Simon said. "If you're on the beach and you don't happen to have your cellphone, you still need to know that it's time to get away from the beach."

Hawaii won't solely depend on the sirens for emergency notifications, however. The state's alert system distributes messages and emergency notifications over radio, TV and cable. Officials also can send text-like messages to cellphones through broadcast technology using the Wireless Emergency Alert service, formerly called the Commercial Mobile Alert System, deployed in April 2012 by the wireless industry, the FCC and FEMA.

Satellite System

The siren network modernization project consists of two parts. The first step is replacing the old radio-based technology at each siren site with the satellite-cellular control system. The second consists of replacing the sirens themselves. The sirens and control system are provided by Federal Signal.

Work began last year on Oahu, which is home to approximately 40 percent of all the sirens in Hawaii. Simon said they installed and tested the new system successfully on eight siren sites in 2012 and then proceeded with retrofit work on 143 sirens on Oahu. Six new siren sites will also be added in the coming months.

Maui County will be next, where 88 sirens need retrofitting or replacing, Simon said. The entire statewide project should be complete in 2014.

Hawaii's old siren control system ran through VHF wideband radio. All four counties used different types of control systems, which was a drain on state resources. Technicians had to learn how each one worked and how they needed to be maintained.

George Burnett, telecommunications branch chief of Hawaii State Civil Defense, said one of the main reasons the state opted to upgrade satellite-cellular technology was because the separate county control systems were incompatible.

He added that most of the mechanical sirens in operation around Hawaii are 25 to 30 years old and well past their usable life cycle, which was a critical factor in moving forward on the upgrade project.

"The sirens were no longer maintainable," Burnett said. "We were having to go to extraordinary lengths to get parts, rebuild motors and things like that, which were very difficult to accomplish."

According to Simon, the radio system's transmitters also needed constant alignment adjustments to give a clean signal. Technicians were spending an inordinate amount of time on the task. That will no longer be a problem with the new control technology.

The new satellite-cellular system allows the state to standardize siren control and provides redundancy. If the satellite signal has interference, it immediately jumps to the cellular signal as a backup, ensuring that downtime is virtually nonexistent. SkyWave is providing satellite communications, while Verizon will handle the cellular signal.

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TECHNOLOGY—TSUNAMI ALERT SYSTEMS

Warning Siren Face Lift

By Brian Heaton, Emergency Management Magazine

(continued from page 4)

Efficiency Gains

In addition to increased redundancy, workers can now access informative data on the status of each siren's condition. In the past, the only time the state would know a siren was malfunctioning was if a resident noticed that a siren didn't go off during a monthly test and called it in, or during twice yearly preventive maintenance visits.

With two-way communication, technicians can more efficiently track and address maintenance issues as they arise. The sirens are solar powered and each use four deepcycle batteries. Technicians can now be miles away and check items such as battery voltage, whether the charger is working and even receive notifications from the siren if someone tries to break into it.

"I would say our sirens are in much better condition now based on the information we've been able to get through the system and the [technicians] having time to go out and fix them," Simon said.

The satellite-cellular connection also lets the state test the system without disturbing residents. Simon said "quiet tests" can be conducted during which the siren is given instructions to activate at a frequency that's too high for anyone to hear, but give the state a reading on the amplifiers' output. Once complete, the results can be reviewed to determine if the sirens are working properly.

"In the few months we've had this working on Oahu, we've found this additional information has really helped the technicians go out and get more of the sirens fixed more quickly," Simon said. "They're working almost immediately after we find a problem, instead of not knowing."

Looking Ahead

While the installation process went fairly well on Oahu, there were some expected bumps along the way. Since the control system was completely new, there was a bit of a learning curve as technicians became familiar with operating it. Federal Signal also had to tweak the system to address minor connectivity issues.

Since the sirens use satellite signals as their primary source of communication, the area around the sirens must be clear of vegetation. That can be a problem in Hawaii. Simon explained that because there's a lot of rain throughout the islands, certain locations can experience rapid overgrowth.

Although that typically doesn't affect cellular communications, it can interfere with satellite coverage. So existing siren sites had to be evaluated, and when looking into new locations, officials had to factor vegetation into consideration.

In addition, using satellite communication causes a delay from the time the siren is activated by state personnel until it actually goes off. The state synchronizes its monthly test of the siren system with a radio broadcast. But once the siren is activated, it takes 30 to 45 seconds before it sounds, which could be confusing to the average resident.

The delay shouldn't matter during an actual emergency, however. Since disasters are usually unexpected, people wouldn't know when the button was pushed, so an extra 30 to 45 seconds before the siren starts would likely have a negligible impact on safety.

The U.S. military has also taken note of Hawaii's siren upgrade. The Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines all have bases in Hawaii and depending on the branch, either work in conjunction with the state to issue emergency warnings or use their own system.

Simon said Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam has its own radio control system, but one of the siren sites activates automatically off the state's signal. The Army, he said, is in the process of doing something similar.

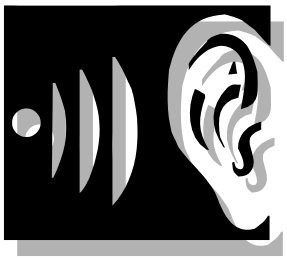
See story online: http://www.emergencymgmt.com/back-issues/

An Earthquake Sonic 'Signature' Could Warn of Impending Tsunami

By United Press International

(continued from page 4)

PALO ALTO, Calif., June 6 (UPI) -- U.S. scientists say the acoustics of an earthquake can indicate its potential to cause a tsunami, a finding that could lead to a tsunami early warning system.



Researchers at Stanford University say they have identified key acoustic characteristics of the 2011 Japan earthquake that strongly suggested it would cause a large tsunami, and that the sound waves in the ocean produced by the earthquake probably reached land tens of minutes before the tsunami.

If correctly interpreted, they could have offered a warning that a large tsunami was on the way, they said.

Various systems can detect undersea earthquakes but can't reliably tell which will form a tsunami, or predict the size of the wave, and while there are ocean-based devices that can sense an oncoming tsunami they typically provide only a few minutes of advance warning, the researchers said.

Since the sound from a seismic event can reach land well before the wave itself, the researchers suggest identifying the specific acoustic signature of tsunami-generating earthquakes could lead to a faster-acting warning system for massive tsunamis.

"We've found that there's a strong correlation between the amplitude of the sound waves and the tsunami wave heights," geophysics Professor Eric Dunham said in a Stanford release Thursday. "Sound waves propagate through water 10 times faster than the tsunami waves, so we can have knowledge of what's happening a hundred miles offshore within minutes of an earthquake occurring. We could know whether a tsunami is coming, how large it will be and when it will arrive."

Full story: http://tinyurl.com/mzxlqer

FEMA for Kids: Know the Facts

By FEMA

FEMA for Kids

Are you ready to put your planning skills to good use? Are you ready to help your family get prepared for the unexpected? Your family can go to the kids section of ready.gov to create a plan that will help you be ready for different kinds of unexpected situations.

You're already a great planner. Every day you get your homework done, get to music or sports practice on time and plan where and when you'll meet up with friends. But how do you get prepared for emergencies?

Know the Facts

Do you know about different kinds of weather events and other unexpected situations? The words and terms you hear during emergencies can be confusing. Follow the link to find the most common terms used for disasters.

http://www.ready.gov/kids/know-facts

These agencies can also help finding out more information on what to do in different disasters.

http://www.ready.gov/kidsknow-facts/find-out-more

Making a Plan

Make a family emergency plan today, before the unexpected happens. Gather your family to sit down together and decide how you will get in contact with each other, where you will go and what you will do in an emergency.

Download and print out Ready's easy Family Emergency Plan form. Answer the questions, fill in the blanks and then place a copy of this plan in your emergency supply kit or another safe place where you can access it in the event of a disaster.

http://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/Family_Emegency_Plan.pdf

Building a Kit

Just think about all the things your family uses every day. Clothes, money, TV or radio, books, and don't forget about food. Learn how to build an emergency supply kit that includes everything your family needs.

http://www.ready.gov/kids/build-a-kit

Flat Stanley and Flat Stella

Flat Stanley and Flat Stella have been asked to serve as ambassadors to promote preparedness. How great is that?

Children and their parents can build

their own FEMA Flat Stanley or Flat Stella, and then share with other children and classrooms the steps they have taken to support preparedness throughout their homes, schools and communities.

Download Flat Stanley and his sister Flat Stella and start your adventure today:

http://www.ready.gov/flatstanley

For fun and games to help kids learn more about what to do in the event of a disaster:

http://www.ready.gov/kids/fun-games

For more detailed information, visit http://www.ready.gov/kids.

Individuals with Access & Functional Needs

By FEMA

Each person's needs and abilities are unique, but every individual can take important steps to prepare for all kinds of emergencies and put plans in place. By evaluating your own personal needs and making an emergency plan, you can be better prepared for any situation.

A commitment to planning today will help you prepare for any emergency situation.

Credit: FEMA

- Consider how a disaster might affect your individual needs.
- Plan to make it on your own, at least for a period of time. It's possible that you will not have access to a medical facility or even a drugstore.
- Identify what kind of resources you use on a daily basis and what you might do if they are limited or not available.

Build A Kit with your unique consideration in mind. What do you need to maintain your health, safety and independence?

If you or someone close to you has a disability or other access or functional need, you may have to take additional steps to protect yourself and your family.

Find out about individual assistance that may be available in your community. Register in advance with the office of emergency services, the local fire department, other government agencies or non-profit groups. Tell them of your individual needs or those of a family member and find out what assistance, help or services can be provided.

Who are Individuals with Access & Functional Needs?

- Those who are deaf or hard of hearing may need to make special arrangements to receive emergency warnings.
- Single working parents and those with limited English proficiency may need help planning for disasters and emergencies. Community, faith-based and cultural groups may be able to help keep people informed.
- People without vehicles may need to make arrangements for transportation.

People with special dietary needs should take precautions to have an adequate emergency food supply.

For more information: http://www.ready.gov/individuals-access-functional-needs

Practical Stories—Gender in emergency management policy

By Australian Emergency Management Institute

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) is developing a gender in emergency management strategy which aims to reduce the negative consequences of gender-blind practices.

Evidence shows that the incidence of family violence increases post-disaster. Men are more likely to die in floods and bushfires than women and men strongly influence family decisions to stay and defend homes during bushfires, sometimes with tragic results. To positively affect such outcomes, the influence of gender roles and differences must be understood and addressed.

The MAV's strategy will help councils improve their understanding of gender differences and incorporate gender considerations into their emergency management policy, planning, decision making and service delivery. As a first step a fact sheet is being developed to raise awareness of how gender and emergency management interact, and to provide practical advice to help councils make this interaction positive.

Local government's role in emergency management

Local government plays an important role in emergency management, both in partnership with others, and through its own legislated emergency management obligations. Councils are not emergency response agencies, however they currently have the following roles:

- developing emergency management plans
- undertaking mitigation activities
- communicating with, and providing information to, communities
- providing support to response agencies
- co-ordinating relief and recovery for the community, and ensuring business continuity.

Why is gender relevant to emergency management?

Women and men experience disasters differently. Gendered roles such as caring for children and the elderly or knowing how to operate a generator, water pump or communication radio network affects how women and men will experience and recover from natural disasters. Gender often shapes how people perceive what is risky, who makes decisions and how we get support or help following disasters. Ignoring or being blind to these different needs can have serious implications for the protection and recovery of people caught up in crises.

Addressing gender issues in emergency management will result in more resilient and equitable communities that are stronger in the face of disaster.

Benefits of integrating gender into emergency management

Emergency management is more effective when based on an understanding of the different needs, vulnerabilities, interests, points of view, capacities, contributions and coping strategies of women and men of all ages before, during and after disaster. All people benefit when gender issues are addressed in times of disaster.

Integrating gender into emergency management decision-making, policy development and service delivery will contribute to:

(Story continues on page 8)

Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Australian Emergency Management Institute

Seniors

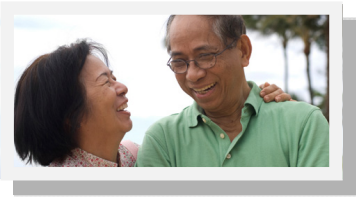
by FEMA

The likelihood that you and your family will recover from an emergency tomorrow often depends on the planning and preparation done today. While each person's abilities and needs are unique, every individual can take steps to prepare for all kinds of emergencies. By evaluating your own personal needs and making an emergency plan that fits those needs, you and your loved ones can be better prepared.

There are commonsense measures older Americans can take to start preparing for emergencies before they happen.

Create a network of neighbors, relatives, friends and co-workers to aid you in an emergency. Discuss your needs and make sure everyone knows how to operate necessary equipment. If appropriate, discuss your needs with your employer.

Seniors should keep specialized items ready, including extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, food for service animals and any other items you might need. Keep a list of the type and model numbers of the medical devices you require. Be sure to make provisions for medications that require refrigeration. Make arrangements for any assistance to get to a shelter.



Credit: FEMA

For more information, read Ready.gov's Preparing Makes Sense For Older Americans or visit the Red Cross website.

Full story: http://www.ready.gov/seniors

Practical Stories—Gender in emergency management policy

By Australian Emergency Management Institute

(continued from page 7)

- Better targeting of council resources
- Increased understanding of support and Services by community members
- Reduced incidents of domestic violence
- Reduced levels of risk taking during and after an emergency
- Greater community participation and equality, and increased social, economic and community resilience.

How can local government take gender into account in emergency management?

Emergency management committees and decision-making processes

- Include gender specific organisations and groups.
- Develop a pre-disaster action plan with a contact list of gender specific support organisations.
- Address gender inequities in representation.

Relief centres

- Ensure there is a safe space for women and children e.g. consider breastfeeding needs or managing violent relationships.

Communication

- Tailor disaster risk and recovery information for women and men when needed e.g. the likelihood of increased incidents of family violence, risky behaviour in floods and deciding when to leave during a bushfire incident.
- Take notice of who attends community meetings and make it easier for women and men to participate e.g. to hear advice and provide points of view.

Policies and plans

- Understand the make-up of the community when developing policy and plans by using gender disaggregated data.
- Involve women and men, boys and girls in identifying and addressing local hazards.
- Take into account different needs and capacities of women and men, girls and boys.
- Identify groups of women and men who may be particularly vulnerable in the community.
- Ensure disaster recovery packages are gender equitable e.g. support women's and men's employment.

Evaluation and performance measures

- Ask questions about whether and how gender is considered in emergency management policies, plans, activities and the use of resources.
- Analyse results data by gender.
- Include a gender focus in research.

Volunteers

- Recognise how gender stereotyping affects the development and sustainability of emergency management volunteer groups.
- Partner with existing women's and men's groups as the networks and expertise may already exist.
- Extend the volunteer opportunities and roles available to women, men, girls and boys.

Programs

- Ensure support is available in ways that men and women will find useful.
- Provide women-friendly and men-friendly activities and outreach services.
- Provide mental health and family violence information in formats and places where women and men already meet and support each other.

Local government activities

Family violence and natural disasters training

Research shows that family violence increases during and after disaster. Victorian local government areas affected by floods in 2011-Moira, Shepparton and Wellington-have improved the knowledge and skills of local disaster recovery workers to recognise and effectively respond to family violence. This has been achieved by providing family violence and natural disasters pilot training.

Disaster recovery staff who support communities post-disaster can undertake Common Risk Assessment Family Violence training—free until the end of 2013 (www.dvrcv.org.au/training) or Family Violence and Natural Disasters training (www.whealth.com.au).

Through Women's Eyes: disaster resilience project

The Alpine Shire partnered with Women's Health Goulburn North East in early 2012 to bring together 31 women from 16 to 80+ years of age from across the Shire to identify how disaster resilience can be improved. Women met in small groups in Kancoona, Mt Beauty, Myrtleford and Rosewhite to identify the strengths of women and the different ways men are affected during and after disasters. The project was supported by the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal. Project findings are available at www.whealth.com.au in the form of videos, posters and information sheets.

Evenings with Rob Gordon

People affected by disaster have been helped to understand how they, their families and friends may be feeling and responding through information sessions provided by local government disaster recovery programs. Psychologist, Dr Rob Gordon, provided information about the dynamics of communities after traumatic events such as bushfires and floods.

Feedback from people attending these sessions identified that the style of information delivery was particularly useful to men. The sessions were informative and matter of fact and offered new 'words' (e.g. 'fire brain') and ways to understand what people experience and feel in the wake of disasters. Information was also provided about ways people can help each other and find the support available when it all gets too much. Information about managing emotions in emergencies is atwww.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency.

MAV gender in emergency management strategy

The MAV recognises that gender is important and is developing a strategy to improve emergency management in local government and reduce the negative consequences of gender-blind practices. The strategy aims to ensure gender differences are considered and incorporated into emergency management policy, planning, decision-making and service delivery.

Further information

W: www.mav.asn.au/policy-services/emergency-management

E: emergencymgt@mav.asn.au.

See original article online: http://tinyurl.com/ms4puns