

September 8, 2015

**National Preparedness Month Observed for Twelfth Year;  
“Don’t Wait. Communicate. Make Your Emergency Plan Today.”**

Brewster, NY—This September is the 12<sup>th</sup> observance of National Preparedness Month and Putnam residents are being encouraged to act on what the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has designated as this year’s theme: “Don’t wait. Communicate. Make a plan.” The fact is sad but true; most Americans still remain unprepared for most types of disasters more than a decade after 9/11.

“We are fortunate in Putnam County to have first responders and highway departments that take the safety and well-being of our residents very seriously,” said County Executive MaryEllen Odell. “Residents also need to be knowledgeable and prepared when there is a storm or an emergency. That is why National Preparedness Month is so important.”

The County Executive further advises that residents be prepared to manage three days without utilities such as electricity and water, and access to supermarkets or other local services. “They should also be prepared for the possibility of limited response from police, fire, and emergency medical services or rescue, as they may need to focus first on large, widespread problems,” said County Executive Odell.

Most people view emergency preparedness as a large undertaking, but being informed and having emergency supplies on hand are two steps in addition to formulating a plan that can make a big difference. One of the best resources for preparing an emergency kit can be found at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

“Getting accurate information during an event is a key part of the process,” explains Anthony Sutton, Commissioner of the Bureau of Emergency Services (BES), “and NY Alert is a good way to start.” This free service available from the State of New York provides both local and state announcements. Individuals who sign up can get real-time information about current threats delivered to their cell phones, email or via the web, however they prefer.

Residents can customize what types of information they wish to receive and how they want to get them up at [www.nyalert.gov](http://www.nyalert.gov). Selected alerts can be modified or cancelled at the subscribers request whenever they wish. Personal information is completely protected and never shared.

“Residents who wish to help with a community-wide response to emergencies, should consider joining the Medical Reserve Corps,” says Allen Beals, MD, Commissioner of Health.

“Putnam’s MRC still needs all types of volunteers, both non-medical and medical. For example, help is always need with important logistical support or administrative tasks.” Interested

residents can find out more information by visiting the Putnam County website or calling Keiren Farquhar, the MRC coordinator at 845-808-1390, x43136.

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The Health Department’s mission is to improve and protect the health of the Putnam County community, composed of nearly 100,000 residents. Core services include community health assessment, disease surveillance and control, emergency preparedness, environmental health protection, family health promotion and health education. For more information, please visit the PCDOH website at [www.putnamcountyny.com/health](http://www.putnamcountyny.com/health) or visit the social media sites on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/putnamhealth](http://www.facebook.com/putnamhealth) and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

The Bureau of Emergency Services of Putnam County keeps county residents safe from harm, by providing services to all fire, EMS and related emergency management initiatives. This includes training and equipping special teams for fire investigation, fire police response and hazardous materials mitigation, and a credible assessment team (CAT). Additionally the BES maintains a countywide communications system and continually seeks ways to improve response to both natural and manmade disasters. For more information, please visit the Bureau of Emergency Services website at <http://www.putnamcountyny.com/pcbcs/>

The Putnam County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) recruits and trains volunteers to support and strengthen the county’s existing response system. Its mission is to engage volunteers to strengthen public health, emergency response and community resiliency. Local community-based MRCs mobilize volunteers who donate their time and expertise, not only to prepare for and respond to emergencies, but also to promote healthy living throughout the year. For further information, please visit the MRC at <http://www.putnamcountyny.com/health/mrc/>

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