



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**September is National Preparedness Month:
Putnam County Supports Ninth Annual Observance**

Brewster, NY- National Preparedness Month (NPM) is held each September to encourage Americans to prepare for disasters or emergencies in their homes, businesses and communities. Supported by County Executive MaryEllen Odell and her office, the Bureau of Emergency Services (BES) and the Department of Health (DOH), this year's month-long effort marks the ninth edition of the annual observance, established in response to the events of September 11. The event is sponsored by FEMA's Ready Campaign in partnership with the Citizens Corps Council, a national network of volunteers dedicated to ensuring hometown safety. Putnam County's Medical Reserve Corps is a part of this national organization. With its more than 250 members, it is a crucial addition to the county's emergency response plan.

The key messages for individuals during NPM are preparation and self-reliance. Residents should be prepared to manage three days without utilities including electricity and water, and access to supermarkets or other local services. Residents 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.

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The Putnam County BES, in collaboration with the county DOH, stress the importance of being prepared for *any type* of emergency—be it a weather-related natural disaster, like the October 2011 snow storm, or a man-made catastrophe like September 11. The following suggestions are offered as a start for individuals and families to plan their preparedness:

- Stock a first aid kit and emergency supplies to meet your family’s needs for three days at minimum. Make sure every family member knows where these supplies are stored.
- Have a battery-operated radio, with back-up batteries. Listen to media reports for up-to-date information. WHUD (100.7 FM Radio) and WFAS (103.9 FM, 1230AM Radio) provide local information. On television, News Channel 12 Hudson Valley provides the local view.
- Make sure at least one phone will operate without electricity. If you use a cordless phone, have a spare, hard-wired phone to plug directly into the phone jack, typically on the wall. With cell phones, have a car charger available for recharging purposes.
- Keep important phone numbers written down and available by each phone in the house.
- Know the best escape route from each room in the house.
- Plan locations where family members will meet in case they cannot get home. One spot should be near your home, another should be outside your neighborhood.
- Review and be familiar with your child’s school emergency plan.

Specialized services: NY-Alert, Medical Reserve Corp, and 2-1-1

In times of emergency, specialized services can make all the difference in individual and family safety. New York Alert, the Putnam County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and the 2-1-1 Call Center are some examples of free available resources.

NY-Alert is the New York State All-Hazards Alert and Notification system committed to providing current information about risks, threats and appropriate responses. With a free sign-up,

residents can receive warnings and information via their cell phone, email, web or other technologies. Personal information is completely protected and never shared. The selected alerts can be modified or cancelled at any time by the subscriber. For more information, visit: www.nyalert.gov

The Medical Reserve Corps supports the health and well-being of county residents during a time of public health emergency, or in the event of a disaster. The organization recruits and trains volunteers year-round and those who serve in the group come from all walks of life. MRC volunteers are not first responders during a disaster. While some may have strong medical qualifications, others contribute by serving as interpreters or with data entry or patient registration. Each volunteer is an asset to the program and new recruits are always needed and welcomed. For more information, call 845-808-1390 and ask for Keiren Farquhar, MRC Coordinator.

The United Way's 2-1-1 Call Center is available year-round, seven days a week from 8 am to 8 pm, and can be expanded to 24/7 coverage during times of disaster. This helpline can be reached by simply pressing 2-1-1 on the phone and call specialists provide “one-stop” access to information and referrals to health and human services organizations most appropriate for each caller. Specialists are available to communicate in more than 200 languages.

Numerous other resources exist to assist individuals and families plan their preparedness. Emergency preparedness has vastly improved during the last decade. Residents are encouraged to take advantage of these resources. Please visit FEMA's www.ready.gov, or BES website at www.pcbes.org. Another helpful resource is the website of the Centers for Disease Control at <http://www.cdc.gov/features/beready/>.