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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES ENCOURAGED TO BE “READY” FOR EMERGENCIES AS PART OF NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

Charleston, W.Va. – For many families, school is back in session this month. But students shouldn't be the only ones with homework. The West Virginia Citizen Corps program is encouraging parents to become familiar with their child's school emergency plan.

As part of National Preparedness Month (NPM), parents and schools are encouraged to visit [.ready.wv.gov](http://ready.wv.gov) for helpful tools and tips on what to do before, during and after an emergency. The web site lists potential hazards by geographic region and provides preparedness checklists, kids' activities, and more.

Whether people are faced with hurricanes, floods, wildfires, tornadoes, or terrorist attacks, emergency readiness helps assure that children are protected physically and psychologically in the event of a disaster.

Sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) *Ready* Campaign, NPM is a nationwide effort designed to increase awareness as well as encourage individuals, families businesses and communities to take action and prepare for emergencies. NPM is focused on helping Americans understand what it truly means to be *Ready*, which goes beyond fire alarms, smoke detectors, dead-bolt locks and extra food in the pantry. Being *Ready* includes: getting an emergency supply kit; making a family

emergency plan; being informed about emergencies and their appropriate responses; and getting involved in community efforts such as Citizen Corps.

This year, West Virginia Citizen Corps is collaborating with other FEMA Region III Citizen Corps programs – including Delaware, Maryland, Washington DC, Virginia and Pennsylvania – to distribute preparedness messages on the same day. Each office will send preparedness information to local media as well as social networking sites, blogs and web sites. This is the first time the regional offices have worked together to coordinate a mass outreach in this manner.

By following simple preparedness steps in advance, Americans can reduce the impact of emergencies on themselves, their family and their businesses. Individuals can visit .ready.wv.gov or call 1-800-BE-READY, to access free materials that will help them prepare their families.

Citizen Corps is a state and local initiative to involve community organizations, individuals and volunteers to build a culture of preparedness. At the state level, the West Virginia Citizen Corps program promotes the message of citizen preparedness and supports the integration of local trained disaster volunteers into the state's emergency plans. Across the state, local Citizen Corps Councils and volunteers actively engage in promoting and enhancing community preparedness.

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