

NEWS RELEASE

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WEST VIRGINIANS ENCOURAGED TO BE 'READY' FOR EMERGENCIES IN HONOR OF NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

Charleston, W.Va. – To mark National Preparedness Month this year, First Lady Gayle Manchin, along with the West Virginia Citizen Corps program, the West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and Volunteer West Virginia, will announce the launch of *ReadyWV*, a campaign to help West Virginians prepare for emergencies.

“Disasters will happen and we can’t always prevent them, but we can do our best to prepare for them,” Manchin said. “I encourage West Virginians to prepare their family members, their households, their businesses and their communities for emergencies. I applaud West Virginia Citizen Corps, West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management as well as Volunteer West Virginia for educating our fellow residents through the important statewide campaign.”

Jimmy Gianato, director of the West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, said that all disasters begin locally. “Preparedness must start at home,” Gianato said. “We encourage all individuals and families to be prepared to help themselves during the initial hours of an emergency. This web site provides some important guidance on how to help yourself and your family, as well as your neighbors, be prepared.”

ReadyWV encourages West Virginians to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies and strives to provide families, neighborhoods and local communities in West Virginia with easy access to basic information to help them prepare. The campaign’s web site, [.ready.wv.gov](http://ready.wv.gov), offers helpful tools and tips on what to do before, during and after an emergency using the tag line, “just in case.” The site lists potential hazards by geographic region and provides preparedness checklists, kids’ activities, and more.

Sponsored by the national *Ready* campaign, National Preparedness Month (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.

This year, NPM is focusing on changing perceptions about emergency preparedness and helping West Virginians understand what it truly means to be *Ready*. Preparedness 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.

By following simple preparedness steps in advance, West Virginians 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 and communities.

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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