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Focusing on National Preparedness

Month Dedicated to Informing Missourians About Emergency Procedures

As autumn begins to make its mark on our state, demonstrating its effect through changing leaves and bringing cooler temperatures, more and more Missourians are spending time indoors. This is a great time to focus on preparing, planning, and staying informed on the latest in emergency procedures.

National Preparedness Month (held in September) centers on promoting emergency preparedness, not just in our state but across our country. Much of the focus is on where people spend most of their time — in their homes, schools, businesses, and communities. This awareness month was established to help Americans understand what it truly means to be ready, beyond fire alarms, smoke detectors, extra locks, and added food supplies.

According to www.ready.gov, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Ready Campaign website, it's important to have an emergency preparedness kit, make a plan, and have as much information as possible regarding the different types of emergencies that can occur in your area.

A basic emergency supply kit contains:

- water (one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation);
 - food (at least a three-day supply of non-perishable items) and a can opener for food (if your kit contains canned food);
 - battery-powered or hand-crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert (be sure to have extra batteries for both);
 - flashlight with extra batteries;
 - first aid kit.
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Other items you might to include in your kit is a whistle to signal for help; a dusk mask to help filter contaminated air; plastic sheeting and duct tape to provide a make-shift shelter; moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties for personal sanitation; tools such as a wrench or pliers to turn off utilities; local maps; and a cell phone with a charger (or extra battery).

Constructing a plan is an important step you should take to be ready in case of an emergency. Your family and loved ones might not be together when a disaster strikes, so it is important to plan in advance for how you will contact each other and how you will meet in the midst of an emergency. FEMA has additional information, including a family emergency plan template at www.ready.gov/America/makeaplan/index.html.

Finally, citizens should be informed about the different types of emergencies that could happen where they live. Knowing what could happen in your area can help you find appropriate ways to respond to specific situations, therefore impacting the decisions you make and the actions you take.

Visit the Missouri Office of Homeland Security (www.dps.mo.gov/homelandsecurity) to find resources on preparedness in your community. And if you have any questions about emergency preparedness in your area or about any other legislative matter, please feel free to contact me at (573) 751-8793 or by e-mail at: delbertscott@senate.mo.gov.

Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.

