



MONTGOMERY COUNTY IS STORMREADY

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Montgomery County, Virginia – Montgomery County was declared StormReady on Nov. 8. They will be recognized by the National Weather Service (NWS) in Blacksburg at a ceremony on Dec. 8, at 10:30 a.m. in the Montgomery County Government Center. Representatives from the National Weather Service will present County officials with two StormReady signs. Montgomery County is the 32nd community in Virginia to become StormReady.

Neal Turner, the emergency services coordinator, and Jamie MacLean, development planner for the Montgomery County Planning Department, have been working to make the County StormReady since the spring.

“Being StormReady is really about having a constant flow of information among various agencies and departments and the towns to get the information out quickly,” MacLean said.

The County’s StormReady status means that our community has developed an action plan in the case of severe weather. To be declared officially StormReady, a county or community must meet the following criteria:

- Establish a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center
- Must have more than one method of receiving severe weather forecasts and warnings and ways to alert the public of severe weather
- A system must be created that monitors local weather conditions
- The importance of public readiness must be promoted through community seminars
- A formal hazardous weather plan must be developed to include training severe weather spotters and holding practice exercises

“Having the StormReady designation from the National Weather Service is an awesome accomplishment for Montgomery County,” Turner said. “I think it shows the cooperative effort between departments within the County to develop emergency procedures and keep the citizens informed. Jamie had taken the lead to see we accomplished this and I appreciate her efforts to see this day come to fruition.”

A StormReady county emphasizes preparedness and awareness of what to do in emergency situations to help save lives during times of severe weather. The National Weather Service says Americans live in the most severe weather-prone country in the world with an average of 10,000 severe thunderstorms, 5,000 floods, 1,000 tornadoes and two deadly hurricanes each year. More severe weather includes winter storms, intense summer heat, wild fires and other deadly weather events. Severe weather events comprise about 90 percent of all presidentially-declared disasters and cause approximately 500 deaths per year and up to \$14 billion in damage.

“This designation would not be possible if it were not for Montgomery County and the National Weather Service in Blacksburg developing a great working relationship and commitment,” Turner said. “Partnering with agencies like the NWS is the means to provide better service to the citizens of Montgomery County. Throughout this project we had the full support of County Administrator Craig Meadows.”

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Residents can sign up to be notified in the event of severe weather through a system called Simry that will be available online. The county will also have a webpage with information about what it means to be StormReady and more information about notifications already in place. The website will be revealed at the ceremony on Dec. 8.

National Weather Service warning coordination meteorologists and state and local emergency managers reviewed Montgomery County's StormReady-ness application and visited the community to determine if the County would qualify to be declared StormReady. Signs will be displayed along the major roadways to recognize the County's StormReady status.

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