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FedHealth e-news **MAR 2014**

FedHealth's opt-in e-newsletter shares ideas, stories, program and product announcements, and other resources we hope you find of interest. (Note: **Most** links open a new window.)

Fedhealth e-news is also available **in PDF** in case you'd like to download and share!

This month's topics:

[SPOTLIGHT: America's PrepareAthon](#)

National Day of Action April 30, 2014 / Be Smart. Take Part. Prepare.

[Meet Cheryl Nelson - The Queen of Preparedness](#)

MrsVAIntl asks how can we encourage Americans to take action NOW?

[On The Front Lines](#)

Burleigh County Roughrider Snowmobile CERT

EM Mag: MIT Researchers Work to Make Robots Smarter

GovTech: FirstNet Moves into First Gear

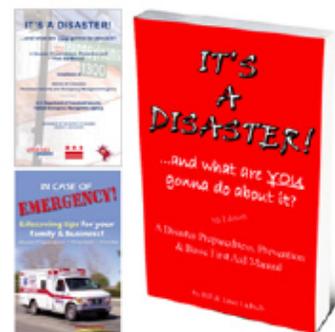
USFRA Nuke news and Updates discussion group

[Did You Know...](#)

Aerosols weaken hurricanes; Huge volumes of water between mantles; Wireless home router vulnerabilities

[Cool Links / Ideas](#)

Tree branch water filter; Weather Science & Math Educator Resources; Earthquake tips for Babies



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: America's PrepareAthon

America's PrepareAthon! is a national community-based campaign for action to increase emergency preparedness and resilience through hazard-specific drills, group discussions, and exercises.



Ready.gov explains the goal of America's PrepareAthon! is to build a more resilient nation by increasing the number of individuals who understand...

- which disasters could happen in their community;
- know what to do to be safe and mitigate damage;
- take action to increase their preparedness;
- and participate in community resilience planning.

The spring and fall events are designed to encourage Americans to **practice** preparedness before an emergency or disaster strikes. For example, each year the Great ShakeOut earthquake drills encourage millions of people to physically practice what to do during an earthquake, and America's PrepareAthon is modeled on the same principle. Participants must commit to take action and take at least one step (or more!) to prepare for a hazard they may face.

As mentioned above, the PrepareAthon! will occur twice a year -- once in the spring and once in the fall -- with the 2014 events planned on April 30 and September 30. Each event will concentrate on specific hazards and themes, but communities, organizations and families are encouraged to use the various resources throughout the year since disasters can happen anywhere and anytime.



According to Ready.gov the first **National Day of Action** is scheduled for **April 30, 2014** and will focus on taking actions to prepare for **four** specific hazards:

- Tornadoes
- Wildfires
- Floods
- Hurricanes

On **March 31st, 2014** agencies, organizations, businesses, schools and individuals can visit www.ready.gov/prepare and register to participate in America's PrepareAthon! During the

signup process organizers would like to know details about activities you are planning for the April call to action (similar to registering for ShakeOut events), plus you can join the [National Preparedness Community](#) to post events and network with others in the forum.

Later this month America's PrepareAthon! organizers will provide guides, social media tools and promotional materials for families and groups to use whether you just do the National Day of Action on 4/30 or hold drills or exercises year-round. The key is turning **knowing** into **doing**!

Additional Resources

In addition to the above and below links, consider learning more about FedHealth's customizable disaster preparedness and first aid manual for your public outreach efforts.

Our IT'S A DISASTER! book is 1 of 8 **Private Sector** resources listed on **FEMA's Public Private Partnership Tools page**, plus it qualifies as community education on grants and provides about a \$3 or \$4-to-\$1 return on match since we discount it up to **75% off** list (or as low as **\$3.50** each) and customize it for free.

Plus we have collaborative **Public-Private Partnership ideas** to help fund volunteers and schools and educate local communities while saving people money! It's a whole community approach to resilience and preparedness that can complement your Awareness campaigns. [Learn more and download a free mini ebook](#)



Some other informational tools include...

FLOOD resources

[Flood Safety Tips](#) (3-pg PDF from our IT'S A DISASTER! book)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention mold cleanup tips](#)

[EPA's 20-page guide, "Mold, Moisture and Your Home"](#)

[FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program](#)

[Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety \(Floods\)](#)

[NOAA's Flood Safety](#)

[Ready.gov flood safety](#)

HURRICANE Resources

[Hurricane Safety Tips](#) (6 pg PDF from our IT'S A DISASTER! book)

[Hurricanes 101 \(hurricane basics and resources\)](#) / a 2013 post on our IAD blog

[Florida's Foundation "Make Mitigation Happen"](#) (21-pg PDF for FL but could help most everyone)

[National Hurricane Center](#)

[Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety \(Hurricanes\)](#)

[NOAA Tropical Cyclones Preparedness Guide](#) (12 pg PDF)

[Ready.gov Hurricane safety](#)

TORNADO Resources

[Tornado Safety Tips](#) (3-pg PDF from our our IT'S A DISASTER! book)

[Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety \(Tornadoes\)](#)

[NOAA Tornado safety tips](#)

[More NOAA tips](#)

[Ready.gov Tornado safety](#)

[The Tornado Project Online!](#)

WILDFIRE Resources

[Wildfire Safety Tips](#) (2-pg PDF from our IT'S A DISASTER! book)

[Wildfire Mitigation Tips \(on USFRA\)](#)

[Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety \(Wildfire\)](#)

[National InciWeb](#)

[National Interagency Fire Center](#)

[Ready.gov Wildfire safety](#)

[US Fire Administration Wildfire safety](#)

Or visit your state or local Emergency Management, Health or Fire or Police or Sheriff department's website to find local emergency information, safety tips and tools to help you and your loved ones get prepared.

And again... learn how to take action and get involved with **America's PrepareAthon** at www.ready.gov/prepare and follow them on Twitter [@PrepareAthon](#) or [Facebook](#).

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### Meet Cheryl Nelson - The Queen of Preparedness

Since **Cheryl Nelson – Mrs. Virginia International** is an advocate for America’s PrepareAthon! and Ready.gov, a Weather Ready Nation Ambassador, an emmy-nominated TV host, reporter and meteorologist, and the Queen of Preparedness, we wanted to share her post that appeared in FEMA’s [National Preparedness Community](#) Member Spotlight forum a few days ago. (This also appeared in Ready Campaign’s 13-Mar-2014 email.) Cheryl asks the burning question we all struggle with in the preparedness world...



The Queen of Preparedness by Cheryl Nelson:

As a young girl, I remember watching my parents board up the windows in our Connecticut home in preparation for Hurricane Gloria that hit New England in September 1985. I've had a passion for weather and preparedness since I was a child and by the age of nine, I knew I was going to be a meteorologist.

Now, with over a decade of experience as a broadcast meteorologist, I truly understand Mother Nature's fury. I will never forget the weather events that unfolded on April 28, 2008 while WAVY-TV Chief Meteorologist Don Slater and I were on the air for over five straight hours. It was during this time that a strong EF3 tornado tore through Suffolk, VA leveling homes to their foundations. EF3 tornadoes are extremely rare in Hampton Roads, Virginia. This event was a wake-up call for me and ignited my passion for natural disaster preparedness.



I was crowned Mrs. Virginia International 2014 last autumn with my chosen platform, Natural Disaster Preparedness. To the judges, this was an extremely unique and timely platform (given that Hurricane Sandy had recently devastated parts of New York and New Jersey) and they were excited that I had such a passion for this important issue.

Now, I am traveling around Virginia and to various other locations nationwide to educate Americans about natural disaster preparedness. Through speaking engagements, appearances at events and conferences, my goal is to better prepare our citizens, their families and pets to ultimately help save lives. At a recent event, "The World of Pets Expo" in Hampton, VA, I agreed to hold a large snake to attract attention and raise awareness for my platform.

It still amazes me that when I ask a crowd of people how many of them have a "preparedness kit," only a few hands go up. This needs to change. I am open to ideas and am asking you: **how can we encourage Americans to take action NOW?** Join the discussion on the [National Preparedness Community](#)

Learn more about Cheryl Nelson and follow her quest for the Mrs. International Pageant crown in Florida July 2014 at [www.CherylNelsonVA.com](http://www.CherylNelsonVA.com) and on Twitter [@mrsvaintl2014](#) and [Facebook](#)

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On The Front Lines



The **Roughrider Snowmobile Community Emergency Response Team**, formed in 2011, recently continued its first aid training. CERT programs use citizen volunteers during emergencies to support emergency officials and law enforcement. It is one of the National Citizen Corps programs which lie under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and FEMA.

Burleigh County Emergency Manager Mary Senger said the recent training was a refresher course for the team. The 27-member team consists of members from the Roughrider Snowmobile Association, said Tom Schroeder, a Burleigh County sheriff's deputy. Riders are from Bismarck and Mandan. Schroeder also is a member of CERT.



Schroeder said the snowmobile club had assisted in searches before the team was formed but, "wanted more training and structure" when they responded. He said members asked for more defined procedures to responding to emergencies. [Read full article on BismarckTribune.com](#) hat tip [Howard P @ DERA](#)



MIT Researchers Work to Make Robots Smarter by Colin Wood via **EM Mag** 21-Feb-2014 - Robots are doing more in the air, on the ground and in the water -- but sometimes they get confused and their systems break down. That's why researchers at MIT are developing a system that allows robots -- or other agents in distributed systems -- to make better decisions when there is no clear right answer.

For the past year, researchers from MIT's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL) have been working with robots and developing the model and algorithms for a new system that allows robots, cameras, humans and other agents to work together in scenarios where the outcome or environment is uncertain. Most of their research so far has been focused on warehousing environments, said Post-Doctorate Associate Christopher Amato, but the system is applicable to a wide range of applications including firefighting, search and rescue, or any other scenario that includes a heterogeneous pool of agents and an environment filled with uncertainties. [Continue reading on EmergencyMgmt.com](#)



FirstNet Moves into First Gear by Bill Schrier [Sr Policy Advisor in OCIO of Washington State] 12-Mar-2014 via **GT** - The **First Responder Network Authority**, charged with building a \$7 billion nationwide network for responders and now two years old, moved into first gear this week.

In fairness, FirstNet was never stalled or stopped, although it appeared that way when I wrote "[Is FirstNet Stalled?](#)" on its two-year birthday, February 22. Work was going on behind the scenes, and it burst out onto the stage this week:

- A new website appeared, www.firstnet.gov, freed of the clunky National Telecommunications and Information Administration logo and design;
- General manager Bill D'Agostino unveiled the most detailed org chart to date, which showed 40 full-time employees and another 50 or so on the way;
- Leases and office space in Boulder, Colorado, and Reston, Virginia, are virtually complete;
- Ed Parkinson (Director of Government Affairs), David Buchanan (State Plans) and Amanda Hilliard (Outreach) unveiled a "high level" 45 step plan for working with individual states to develop a plan and design for the construction of FirstNet in each state;
- The Strategic Planning process has a bit more detail;

- At least two FirstNet officials established twitter accounts and followed my twitter feed in the last week – and I’ve followed them back. This indicates a new openness and freedom in how FirstNet staff is operating. (But I’m not revealing their names in order to prevent the NTIA enforcement apparatus crashing down onto them for violating some obscure policy.)

Overall, I’m encouraged. As the State Point of Contact for Washington (the state, not the place inside the beltway), I especially appreciate the additional information we received this week. [Continue reading Schrier’s column on GovTech.com](#)

USFRA.ORG



We recently set up a discussion group called “[Nuke News and Updates](#)” on the **U.S. First Responders Association** forum in case you would like to review discussions going forward. USFRA members will be sharing news and updates about the on-going disaster at Japan’s Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant along with resources and stories about nuclear sites and incidents on North American soil and across the world. Please understand this network is NOT a political or anti/pro nuke group but rather a place to share safety information, news and resources about nuclear power plants, research reactors and incidents to help responders and the public at large. [Read more on USFRA.org](#)

Do you have a story or resource from the front lines you’d like to share? Send it to info@itsadisaster.net

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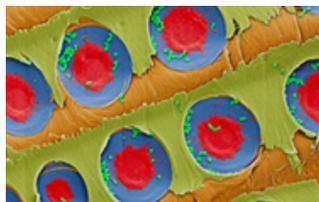
...Aerosols in the atmosphere produced from human activities do indeed directly affect a hurricane or tropical cyclone, but not in a way many scientists had previously believed. In fact, they **tend to weaken such storms**, according to a new study. Source: [ScienceDaily](#)

...According to a new report from the University of Alberta, Canada, diamond scientist Graham Pearson has discovered the first terrestrial sample of a water-rich gem known as **ringwoodite** that offers new evidence of the presence of **enormous volumes of water** deep beneath the Earth’s surface. The finding confirms theories regarding the huge volumes of water trapped at depths between 410 to 660 kilometers below the Earth’s surface, **between the upper and lower mantle**. Graham Pearson, a professor in the Faculty of Science, said, “That particular zone in the Earth, the transition zone, might have as much water as all the world’s oceans put together.” Source: [Science Recorder](#)

...many of the best-selling consumer and SOHO wireless routers are **wide open to attackers thanks to known software vulnerabilities and poor configuration**, a study by security firm Tripwire has found. Using the top 50 selling **home** routers for sale on Amazon, the firm detected software vulnerabilities in **three quarters** with a third of these having publicly documented flaws open for any attacker to exploit. Common problems included vulnerable management interfaces and dodgy authentication. After surveying router users in person, the firm found that many users don’t change the default admin password (an ancient problem), few had changed the default 192.168.1.x IP address (which facilitates CSRF attacks), and almost nobody bothered to update firmware assuming an update was even available. Source: [PCWorld](#)

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Cool Links / Ideas



If you've run out of drinking water during a lakeside camping trip, there's a simple solution: Break off a branch from the nearest **pine tree**, peel away the bark, and slowly pour lake water through the stick. The improvised filter should trap any bacteria, producing fresh, uncontaminated water.

In fact, scientists at MIT have discovered that this low-tech filtration system can produce up to **four liters** of drinking water a day -- enough to quench the thirst of a typical person.

In a [paper](#) published recently in the journal PLoS ONE, the researchers demonstrate that a small piece of sapwood can filter out more than **99 percent** of the bacteria E. coli from water.

They say the size of the pores in sapwood — which contains xylem tissue evolved to transport sap up the length of a tree — also allows water through while blocking most types of bacteria. (The above photo [courtesy of MIT researchers] shows a false-color electron microscope image showing E. coli bacteria (green) trapped over xylem pit membranes (red and blue) in the sapwood after filtration.) Read more on [MIT.edu](#) or [Science Daily](#)



[Last month](#) we mentioned **PLANT NOW's** cool Young Meteorologist Program, but we wanted to mention another great tool on their site called "**Educator Resources**" that integrate weather into science and math.

WEATHER SCIENCE - The weather system includes the dynamics of Earth's atmosphere and its interaction with the oceans and land. These resources can help everyone learn the science of weather, help educators reinforce their own content knowledge, and get kids engaged in science that affects us all each and every day

WEATHER MATH - Mathematics involved in meteorology include algebra, calculus, trigonometry, data collection, geometry, organization and analysis, graphing, computation and percentages, estimating, charts, scales, statistics, and a lot of problem solving. Check out these suggestions for how to use weather math with students to build on their experience, interests, and knowledge and how to develop hands-on activities and real-world opportunities for students to apply their math skills.

EDUCATOR EXCHANGE - Materials for teachers, including science lesson plans on weather, disaster preparedness lesson plans, hands-on classroom activities related to severe weather and professional development and learning opportunities for educators.

Learn more about YMP's [Educator Resources](#) and check out their Young Meteorologist Program's [Severe Weather Preparedness Adventure interactive game](#) featuring **Owlie** that educates kids on the dangers of severe storms and natural hazards.





Totally Unprepared recently shared some excellent tips and a cool infographic on how to make your **Baby's First Earthquake Kit** along with steps on how to **Earthquake-Proof your Baby's Room**.

Think about a baby's room for a minute. Bookcases and cabinets might be filled with toys and books that can become projectiles during a quake. Learn how to keep your child safe by securing tall furniture, cabinet doors, pictures and other items on [Totally Unprepared's blog](#).

Also download Totally Unprepared's "[Baby's First Earthquake kit](#)" infographic and use it as a guide to making your baby earthquake ready. And share it with new parents so they can learn what supplies to assemble should an earthquake strike. www.totallyunprepared.com

Got a cool link or idea? Email it to info@itsadisaster.net

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 Please help us spread the word about our customizable tools and fundraising programs by sharing this with others.

And if you know an agency, nonprofit, school, church, Scout troop, or volunteer group (like a CERT, MRC, Radio Club, Rotary, etc) who could benefit from our preparedness book and/or funding ideas, please have them visit [www.itsadisaster.net/ppp.html](http://www.itsadisaster.net/ppp.html) or call **1-888-999-4325** or [email](mailto:info@itsadisaster.net) us for a **FREE** information kit!

Also ... we're always looking for input, stories, news, products or services from agencies, volunteer groups, schools and others so feel free to email them to [info@itsadisaster.net](mailto:info@itsadisaster.net) .

Stay safe out there, j & B

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