

August 1, 2006

Dear Town Hall Participants,

Thank you once again for your participation in the 19th annual Pinal County Town Hall. As this is written, the Maricopa-Casa Grande highway is closed due to flooding. Numerous communities are declaring a state of emergency. Wild fires, monsoon storms and several accidents have occurred since Town Hall which have emphasized the importance of personal preparation and responsibility.

Enclosed is a summary of the primary presentations from Town Hall. Most of the PowerPoint presentations are available at the Town Hall web site which is a link on the county's web site (www.co.pinal.az.us; scroll down to Related Links; Pinal County Town Hall). Also a listing of Town Hall participants is included so networking and collaborative programs can be more easily facilitated.

To extend the information shared in this year's Town Hall, three follow-up sessions will be held. Anyone is welcome to attend whether or not the individual attended Town Hall. These sessions will have three objectives:

- a) To review the 2006 Town Hall topic;
- b) To preview the 2007 Town Hall topic;
- c) To further increase our citizens' awareness of the need for emergency preparedness.

These sessions will be held in February, 2007. The dates will be posted on the Pinal County Town Hall calendar (on this web site).

Your valuable comments and recommendations are assisting the Town Hall Advisory Committee in planning the 20th annual Town Hall. It will be April 25th – 27th at the Francisco Grande Hotel & Golf Resort.

Please contact me with any questions or suggestions. Thank you.

For the Town Hall Advisory Committee
Karl S. Peterson, Director
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“Safe At Home” – Residential Emergency Preparedness Taking Responsibility

Captain Curt Holiday – Chandler Fire Department
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Individual citizens can become involved in emergency preparedness for their home, neighborhood and community through involvement in a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

CERT	Community Emergency Response Team
BERT	Business Emergency Response Team
MERT	Monsoon Emergency Response Team

The Chandler Fire Department’s CERT training is a very successful model. More than thirty classes have been held. There are 300 individuals trained to assist with an emergency; 400 additional are on a waiting list for CERT classes. A thirteen-member council, made up of CERT graduates, manages the program.

The curriculum for the nine-week program is delivered from 6:30 – 9:30 PM one night a week. The topics of the sessions are:

- Disaster Preparedness
- Team Building
- Fire Suppression
- Medical Operations (I)
- Medical Operations (II)
- Search and Rescue
- Incident Management
- Disaster Exercise
- Post Mortem Review/Summary

The second session, Team Building, focuses on residential preparedness:

- exit drills for the home
- utilities (location, shut off valves)
- out of state calls/contacts (emergency calling planning)
- knowing your neighborhood
- the common elements of a disaster
- knowing how to respond
- building a team for effectiveness

ACTION STEP:

Inquire if there is a CERT opportunity in your community. If not, join with several others and your local Fire Department to organize a CERT opportunity.

“Safe At Home” – Residential Emergency Preparedness

Identifying Resources

Jennifer Velitchkov, Safety Consultant – American Red Cross
jvelitchkov@arizonaredcross.org

In a time of emergency/disaster each citizen/household should be self-sustaining for at least 72 hours. In advance of an emergency, families should prepare in the following ways:

- ✓ Develop an evacuation plan (from your home, from your neighborhood/ community) and practice it once a year.
- ✓ Keep an easily accessible listing of family members' contact information.
- ✓ Provide CPR and Basic First Aid training for all family members.
- ✓ Maintain a well-stocked first aid kit in home and vehicle(s).

The 72 Hour Self Sustainability Plan/Resources (Update/refresh every six months)

Water	Can Opener
Food (Power Bars, etc.)	Extra Batteries
Communications Plan	Flashlight
Change of Clothing/Shoes	Radio/Media
Blankets	Personal Hygiene Items
Chocolate	A Good Book
First Aid Kit	Family Games
Medical Information/Prescriptions	Cash
Pet Food/Care Items	
Important Documents (insurance, passport, will and the like)	

ACTION STEPS:

- Investigate the services of the Pinal County Red Cross Chapter.
- Purchase a starter emergency readiness or first aid kit from the Red Cross (www.arizonaredcross.org).
- Request training for your business/employees (contact Jennifer Velitchkov at jvelitchkov@arizonaredcross.org).
- Invite a Red Cross spokesperson to speak at your civic, religious or neighborhood meetings.

“Safe At Home” – Residential Emergency Preparedness

Rescuing Animals and Pets

Chip Wilson, President – Superstition Horsemen’s Association
Mickie Leach, Chairperson – Pinal County Hooved Evacuation Team
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It is an animal/pet owner’s responsibility to plan for the emergency care of their animals and pets. Animals’ stress is very high in these situations. Being approached by strangers, even those wanting to help, is dangerous for both the rescuer and the animal/pet.

Emergency Situation Options:

Turn Animals Loose

Not a wise choice. The animal is very endangered and also may endanger emergency personnel (e.g. panicked horse colliding with fire truck). Also animals will return to their “comfort zone,” even running back into a burning building. Do not, however, tie animals up limiting their mobility.

Evacuate Animals

To the extent possible, have travel cages/trailers and other means of transport available. Some organizations such as the Humane Society and Pinal County Hooved Evacuation team may be able to help if time allows.

Leave Animals “At Home”

If this is the necessary choice, especially if time is short, consider the following:

- Large sign on front door/gate area listing what types of animals are present and where they are in the home/on the property.
- Provide a listing of contact numbers for emergency personnel.
- Detail animals’ names and medical records/information.
- Place food and water for 48 hours in animal’s area (use separate rooms for each animal/pet as possible).
- Collars, ID tags, leashes, food dishes, carriers and the like for smaller animals are very important (chip implants very helpful).
- Practice evacuation plans.

ACTION STEPS:

- Invite a representative of a group such as the Superstition Horsemen’s Association to speak to your organization.
- Develop an action plan for caring for your animals/pets when there is advance warning and/or when evacuation must be immediate.

“Safe At Home” – Residential Emergency Preparedness Keeping Connected

Judy Kioski, Gregory Roybal

Judy.Kioski@azdema.gov

Each presenter emphasized the importance of having a plan to keep informed and connected at the time of any emergency. The Arizona Department of Emergency Management later this year will activate Arizona 2-1-1, a vital tool for information and connectedness.

The most common natural disaster in Arizona is flooding. Others are identified as monsoon storms, drought, fire, power outages, incidents involving the Palo Verde nuclear facility and hazardous materials. Arizona has experienced 252 emergencies which have escalated to state level emergencies (150 flood scenarios). Pinal County has experienced thirty-one state level crises.

Emergency Information

The proposed Arizona 2-1-1 and personal communication planning will be key for individuals and families. The system will take pressure off 9-1-1 leaving it available for calls to emergency responders.

In emergency situations Arizona 2-1-1 will report evacuation routes, shelters available, road closure, where various types of assistance are available and who the people are who are in charge of the event.

In non-emergency times Arizona 2-1-1 will convey public information about preparedness, health bulletins (e.g. Asian Flu), general, health and human service announcements.

It is expected that Arizona 2-1-1 will be available by late 2006 with “one-stop” call centers located throughout the state.

ACTION STEPS:

- Research Arizona 2-1-1 at www.az211.gov.
- Develop a “Family Emergency Plan” within the next three months with a goal of keeping family members connected in a crisis situation.

“Safe At Home” – Residential Emergency Preparedness Could IT Happen In Pinal County?

Discussion Groups

Delegates’ awareness of the potential for disasters in Pinal County was heightened through group discussion. Based on current research, the following are the most likely incidents to affect Pinal County’s residents:

Natural Disasters

- Flood
- Fire
- Drought
- Micro-bursts, dust storms, Monsoon events
- Chemical/Hazardous Materials

Man-made Disasters

- Hazardous Materials
- Nuclear
- Transportation accidents (semi-trucks, trains, planes and so on)
- Pipelines
- Power outages
- Terrorist activities

It was suggested Pinal County could become a refuge for thousands fleeing Maricopa and/or Pima Counties at the time of a disaster. How would our county, cities and towns cope with such a massive influx of individuals?

Concern was raised for those unable to assist themselves in such situations such as the elderly and those with physical disabilities.

Participants indicated that the day’s sessions had heightened their awareness but, unfortunately, it may take a significant local event to motivate most to do the type of residential planning which ought to be done prior to such a situation.

The importance of Neighborhood Watch type of programs was emphasized, as well as being the “eyes and ears” for local law enforcement entities.

The need for a coordinated approach to planning for a disaster as well as coordinated communication and response in a crisis situation was discussed.

“Safe At Home” – Residential Emergency Preparedness

Katrina: Lessons Learned About Personal Responsibility

David Strayer, Division Chief – City of Casa Grande Fire Department
Tony LaFalce, Firefighter – City of Casa Grande Fire Department

The tragedy of Hurricane Katrina powerfully demonstrated the importance of individual responsibility and preparedness. Firefighters from Avondale, Casa Grande and Flagstaff, along with 2,000, traveled to the stricken area to provide assistance. It was clear that most had relied too heavily on “next level” assistance rather than preparing to sustain themselves and their families for several days. Both from observation as well as discussions with residents, many lessons were learned.

- The FEMA response was not consistently covered by the media (the focus was on New Orleans). Media may not be your best information source.
- The National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS) had not been institutionalized and were less effective than they might have been.
- Distribution sites need to be planned, implemented and monitored.
- Intergovernmental relationships and partnerships are critical.
- The role of the local, county, regional and national governments in a crisis was largely misunderstood.
- A 72-hour plan is a must for individuals/families.
- Assisting agencies may need to provide help for up to ninety days.
- Be Smart –Be Prepared!
- Know your local relationship with the Red Cross, Salvation Army, utility companies, church groups – would a consolidated or fragmented response take place?
- Interdependence and cooperation are the key (CERT Teams).
- Don’t risk your life or that of others – properties can be rebuilt.
- Maximize all the resources available.

It is not a matter of will it happen in Pinal County, it is a matter of when it takes place will individuals/families/neighborhoods be ready. Perhaps the key “Lesson Learned” from Katrina was this: “Help will come, but until it does those that prepared the best will most likely survive.”

ACTION STEP:

- Monitor disasters which take place. Would you have been prepared for such an event? What lessons can be learned from the experiences of others?

“Safe At Home” – Residential Emergency Preparedness

“An Impending Flu Pandemic – Myth Or Reality?”

Dr. Peter Kelly, Arizona Department of Health Sciences
Thomas Schryer, Pinal County Director of Public Health

Three Major Influenza Virus Strings

- 1918 – 1919 Spanish Influenza
- 1957-1958 Asian Flu Outbreak
- 1968-1969 Hong Kong Flu (we are still in this string of influenza)

Signs & Symptoms

- One week to ten days duration
- Sudden onset of fever
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Swollen eyes

Pandemic – Very Different from “Ordinary” Influenza

A major shift in the virus takes place resulting in a new virus to which all are susceptible, especially the elderly. The “Bird Flu” has moved from Asia to over 45 countries. In the 200 reported cases, 50 % were fatal. Each fatality had contact with infected chickens.

A flu pandemic WILL occur, however when it will appear cannot be predicted. The key is planning and prevention.

- ✓ 30 – 40% will contract flu in a pandemic
- ✓ 20% of the infected will die (estimate)
- ✓ 1700 or more in Pinal County will die
- ✓ many fatalities will be healthy adults and children
- ✓ everyone in Pinal County will be affected
- ✓ minimal health care services will be available
- ✓ hospitals will be at capacity with non-influenza patients
- ✓ federal and state governments will be UNABLE to help us; we must help ourselves
- ✓ economic and social disruption will be great

Business Considerations

- 40% of all employees will be ill, contagious or caring for others
- “just in time” inventory systems will result in limited inventory; run on supplies
- 40% of delivery/supply chain personnel will be unavailable for work
- local transportation (getting to work) will be disrupted
- Psychological affect on workforce will be extreme

- “social distancing” will dramatically change hours of operation or close businesses temporarily
- economic losses for small businesses will be most dramatic
- in a moderate global pandemic, GDP will be reduced by 2%
- Arizona would see a 1.4% - 5.5% reduction in GDP, a loss of revenue of \$2.4 – \$9.6 billion dollars.

Pinal County Goals

- Limit death and illness
- Preserve continuity of essential government and business functions
- Minimize social disruption
- Minimize economic losses
- Maintain orderly working/communication with cities, towns and tribal governments
- Provide consistent, accurate and candid information to residents before, during and after the event
- Be prepared to quickly recover from the affects of a pandemic.

Pinal County’s Role

- Disease tracking and control
- Environmental health response
- Health system coordination
- Mass fatality response process
- Communications/public information
- Coordination of laboratory services

What actions will take place?

- Close schools, theaters and other gathering places
- Social distancing will be encouraged
- Hand washing, hygiene regulations intensified
- Requirement to stay home when ill
- Media to pass along up to date, responsible information
- Federal government will give emergency powers to state, county and local governments

Protect Your Family

- ❖ Have an emergency plan
- ❖ Maintain an emergency kit
- ❖ Plan for the worst; hope for the best
- ❖ Stay away from people if you are ill
- ❖ Wash hands regularly
- ❖ Discontinue hugging, kissing, cuddling; sleep in separate beds
- ❖ Disinfect surfaces around the house
- ❖ Be proactive

“Safe At Home” – Residential Emergency Preparedness “Putting It All Together – Table Top Exercise”

Pete Weaver, Emergency Coordinator, Pinal County
Thomas Schryer, Pinal County Director of Public Health
Terry Doolittle, County Manager, Pinal County
Jerald Monahan, Chief Deputy, Pinal County Sheriff’s Office
Scott Miller, Chief, City of Casa Grande Fire Department
Barbara Schaffer, Pre-Hospital Coordinator, Emergency Management
Casa Grande Regional Medical Center

Scenario (PowerPoint on Town Hall Web Site)

Over a short period of time, three inches of rain in lower elevations, 12 inches of snow in mid-elevations and 42 inches of snow above 5000-foot elevations. The storm is due in two days, currently moving slowly across California.

What are the concerns of your agency?

- Doolittle: Assess the storm path, capacity of riverbeds.
- Weaver: Be sure phone line is up to date.
- Schryer: Develop profiles of special needs citizens who may need extra care; assess other health concerns, e.g. sewer systems.
- Schaffer: Check hospital generators.
- Miller: Check staff locations for the next 72 hours; fuel tanks full; sand bag distribution points ready; request EOC skeleton crew.
- Monahan: Rescind vacations; evaluate areas which may need evacuation.

What do you want the public to do?

- Doolittle: Flooding may limit access to their homes.
- Miller: Listen to the media for announcements; have emergency kit ready.
- Weaver: Acquire sandbags if you feel you will need them.

The county will communicate with cities, towns and tribal communities indicating action steps for them to pursue. There are no countywide warning systems (e.g. sirens) other than the emergency alert system in the media.